



July 6, 2025

The Struggle!

Romans 7:14-25

Do you ever feel a tension, a struggle between life before Christ and a victorious Christian life? Join the crowd! Paul acknowledges the old nature and the new nature are at war within a believer. There are two common approaches to this passage: 1) Paul is either referencing his life as a believer and the struggle with sin, or 2) life in his previous unredeemed state. In other words, his pre-Christian experience. In Romans 7:14-25 the use of the first-person singular is continued, but the past tense is replaced by the present. I believe the use of the present tense brings clarity. Paul appears to be describing the reality of the Christian life; we are in a war! His transparency about the struggles of the Christian life should encourage all of us. The good news is that no matter how difficult the struggle, our hope and our help come from the person of the Lord Jesus Christ! Chuck Swindoll said, "If Paul's portrait teaches us anything, it's that self-improvement carried out in the energy of the flesh is a vain pursuit."

Key Thought: There is a struggle in the life of the Christian between the old nature and the new nature which can only be overcome by the power of Jesus Christ!

(Romans 8:23; Ephesians 6:10-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 Peter 5:8-9)

1. PAUL'S DESCRIPTION OF THE STRUGGLE! (vs.14-23) - Our radical inability!

Galatians 5:17 (NASB95) For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

a. The struggle is real

b. The struggle is spiritual *(2 Corinthians 10:3-5)*

c. The struggle is continual not constant

While "continual" and "constant" can sometimes be used interchangeably, there's a subtle difference. Continual usually implies a recurring event with interruptions, whereas constant suggests an uninterrupted, steady state or recurrence. Paul is referring to an occasion and not total captivity to sin, not the totality of his life. It would be wrong to think that Paul was constantly living in sin.



2. PAUL'S DECLARATION OF VICTORY AND HOPE! (vs. 24-25) - Christ's radical ability!

Just as salvation is "through Jesus Christ our Lord," so escape from the flesh is also through Him.

a. The cry for help (v. 24)

b. The cry of hope (v. 25) (*1 Corinthians 10:13*)

TAKE AWAY:

1. Pursue a passion for God through spiritual disciplines! (*James 4:8; Ephesians 4:24*)

Don Whitney wrote "Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life." He defined spiritual disciplines as:

The spiritual disciplines are those practices found in Scripture that promote spiritual growth among believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are habits of devotion, habits of experiential Christianity that have been practiced by God's people since biblical times.

One characteristic of the spiritual disciplines is that they are means and not ends. The end — that is, the purpose of practicing the disciplines is godliness — is to "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness" (1 Timothy 4:7 NASB).

And so we are not godly just because we practice the spiritual disciplines. That was the great error of the Pharisees. They felt by doing these things they were godly. No, they are means to godliness. Rightly motivated, they are the means to godliness.¹

2. Purpose to live intentional with other Christians in the local church (biblical community)! (*Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Eph. 4:14-16*)

In a letter to Mary Van Deusen in 1950, C. S. Lewis wrote, "For the Church is not a human society of people united by their natural affinities but the Body of Christ in which all members however different (and He rejoices in their differences and by no means wishes to iron them out) must share the common life, complementing and helping and receiving one another precisely by their differences."

Paul said we are members of one another (1 Corinthians 12:12). We are all different parts of the same body, and because we are different, we are able to complement and help each other. When we are all doing our part and contributing to the body, we enable the body to grow (Ephesians 4:16).

Romans 8:37 (NASB95) But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

¹ <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-are-spiritual-disciplines>