



Remarkable Truths From Romans

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A Tale of Two People

Paul has told us about the wonderful transformation we have in Christ; the truth that we now have peace and hope and grace, in which we rejoice.

Romans 5:1 – 2: *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

And then we read this unusual statement from the Apostle Paul:

Romans 7:15 - 25

For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

If you read just this passage from Romans 7, what impression would you have of Paul's spiritual well-being?

Romans 7:15 – 25 does not describe the ideal Christian experience or the normal experience. Paul is simply warning us to be aware that a genuine Christian can find herself in this ugly loop of doing what she doesn't want to do, not living up to who she is in Christ.

Justification vs. Sanctification

Hebrews 10:14: *For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.*

1 Timothy 4:7: *Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness.*

Justification is once and for all time. However, for those who have been justified, we are still in the process of being sanctified. This is an on-going process until we finally reach Heaven and have our new sinless bodies, like Jesus.

Ephesians 4:17 - 24: Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!—assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Feed the New, Starve the Old

This is the most vital step needed to make sure our new nature is victorious over the old one.

The **NEW** Person

The **OLD** Person



So, what does your daily spiritual diet consist of? There is no substitute for the disciplines of reading/studying God's Word, praying daily and with others when possible, putting yourself in the right places to hear and learn God's truth.

The Process of Sanctification

There is a process we go through as we journey this world with God. Along the way we have times of defeat, when we fall through the spiritual cracks and it feels like we've crashed. And then there are certain things, certain sins, that plague us continually.

Those "Besetting Sins"

Hebrews 12:1- NKJV: *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...*

Do you find that you have a continual battle with certain sins, as I do? We know they are wrong and we long to be done with them, but they don't go away so easily.

Identify your besetting sin. Name it. Pray about it. But don't allow it to keep you from the victory that is yours in Jesus.

Those Dry Periods

What about those dry periods—those longer times of just feeling like a failure? There's no joy, no peace, no desire to be holy.

First, what are some of the things that cause the old person to win over the new person?

- Health issues
When you are in physical pain or distress, don't be surprised to discover that your normal spiritual enthusiasm and passion has paled.

- Waiting rooms
God refuses to move on our timetables, and often we are left with unanswered questions and for our part, no reasonable reason why God hasn't done something to help us.
- Neglect of needed disciplines
- Broken or lost relationships
Loss of a friend or lack of harmony in close relationships are heart-wrenching, and they tend to destroy our enthusiasm and trust in God. This would include grieving over the death of a loved one.
- Weak or incomplete theological knowledge
When you just haven't gotten to know God better and better, then your trust factor gets weaker.

Ever been there? It may last a day or a week—or longer, depending on whether you take action to stand in God's truth and not Satan's lies.

Stand Against the Enemy

Step No. 1 is to recognize your sad condition and confess it to God, like Paul did: "Wretched woman that I am! How do I get out of this evil spiral and continue losing the battle to my "body of death"—the old me?"

Step No. 2 is to find a friend who will pray with you about this, who will understand but also hold you accountable.

Step No. 3 is to start doing what you know you must do. This is what Jesus wrote to the church at Ephesus:

Revelation 2:4 – 5a: *But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first.*

Here's what Jesus told these believers to do because they had lost their joy.

- Repent
- Fall back in love with Jesus
- Do what you know you should do but you're not doing.

Have you lost your first love? If so, it's because you've abandoned Jesus. You've got your eyes, your thoughts, your concerns, your desires on something or someone else, and you've taken your eyes off Jesus.

- Read the Gospels. Every day read at least two or three chapters from the Gospels, beginning with Matthew and going through John.
- Start a Gratitude Journal. Everyday list what you are thankful for that day.
- Refuse to complain about anything or anyone.
- Talk about Jesus, sing about Jesus. Make Jesus the center of your thoughts and your words.

The Victory Is Ours

Thankfully, Paul's letter didn't stop at the end of chapter 7.

Romans 8:1 – 4:

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.