

GOD'S WORD IS LIFE

Key Greek Terms

Romans 7:1-25

1. νόμος (nomos) - "law"

- **Occurrences in Romans 7:** Appears multiple times (vv. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 16, 22, 23, 25).
- **Meaning:** The word "νόμος" refers to the law in general, but in Paul's writings, it often refers to the Mosaic Law. Paul discusses the relationship between believers and the law, showing that believers are no longer under its authority after dying to the law through Christ (v. 4). The law reveals sin (v. 7) but is not sinful in itself (v. 12).
- **Theological Significance:** Paul argues that while the law is good and spiritual, it becomes a means by which sin manipulates and brings death to individuals.

2. ἁμαρτία (hamartia) - "sin"

- **Occurrences in Romans 7:** Appears prominently in vv. 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20, 23, 25.
- **Meaning:** "ἁμαρτία" is the Greek word for sin, meaning to "miss the mark" or a failure to live according to God's righteous standard. Sin is depicted not just as actions but as a power that dwells within human beings, effecting every thought, word, and deed.
- **Theological Significance:** In Romans 7, sin is personified as a force that takes advantage of the law, bringing about death (v. 11). Paul presents sin as something dwelling in his flesh (vv. 17, 20) and controlling human behavior, despite the desire to do good (v. 23).

3. σὰρξ (sarx) - "flesh"

- **Occurrences in Romans 7:** Occurs in vv. 5, 18, 25.
- **Meaning:** "σὰρξ" commonly refers to the human body or human nature, but in Paul's writings, it often refers to the sinful nature.
- **Theological Significance:** Paul contrasts the weakness of the flesh with the desire to follow God's law. The flesh, dominated by sin, is incapable of obeying the law perfectly (v. 18). Paul's struggle in this chapter revolves around the tension between his inner desire to follow God and his bondage to the flesh.

4. καρπός (karpos) - "fruit"

- **Occurrence in Romans 7:** Appears in v. 4.
- **Meaning:** "καρπός" means "fruit," a term used metaphorically to refer to the results or outcomes of a particular condition or action.
- **Theological Significance:** In v. 4, Paul speaks of bearing fruit for God as the result of being united with Christ. The imagery contrasts the "fruit" of sinful actions with the "fruit" of righteousness that comes through life in the Spirit.

5. θάνατος (thanatos) - "death"

- **Occurrences in Romans 7:** Appears in vv. 5, 10, 13, 24.
- **Meaning:** "θάνατος" refers to physical or spiritual death. In this passage, it often connotes spiritual death or separation from God as a consequence of sin.
- **Theological Significance:** Paul argues that the law, though good, resulted in death for him because sin exploited the law to bring condemnation (vv. 10-11). The struggle between sin and the desire to follow God leaves Paul lamenting his "body of death" (v. 24).

6. καταργέω (katargeō) - "to abolish, render powerless"

- **Occurrence in Romans 7:** Appears in v. 2.
- **Meaning:** "καταργέω" means to "nullify" or "render inactive." In this context, it is used to describe how the law of marriage no longer binds a widow after the death of her husband.
- **Theological Significance:** Paul uses marriage as a metaphor for the believer's relationship to the law. Just as a widow is released from the law of marriage upon her husband's death, believers are released, freed from the law through their union with Christ's death (v. 4).

7. ἐπιθυμία (epithymia) - "desire"

- **Occurrence in Romans 7:** Appears in v. 8.
- **Meaning:** "ἐπιθυμία" refers to a strong desire or craving, often associated with sinful desires or lust.
- **Theological Significance:** Paul notes that the commandment not to covet (v. 7) actually stirred up sinful desires within him, showing the paradoxical effect of the law: it reveals sin, but also incites sinful desires due to the fallen nature, which is inclined to sin.

8. σῶμα (sōma) - "body"

- **Occurrences in Romans 7:** Appears in v. 24.
- **Meaning:** "σῶμα" refers to the physical body but in Paul's writings can also be used to refer to the human being as a whole, especially in relation to sin and death.

- **Theological Significance:** Paul cries out in v. 24, “Who will deliver me from this body of death?” He views the body as the locus where sin operates, and this exclamation reveals the depth of his struggle with the sinful nature.

9. ἐγώ (egō) - "I"

- **Occurrences in Romans 7:** Occurs throughout the passage (vv. 7-25).
- **Meaning:** "ἐγώ" is the Greek word for "I." Paul uses this term extensively in the latter half of the chapter to describe his personal experience with sin and the law.
- **Theological Significance:** Paul's repeated use of "ἐγώ" emphasizes the personal and intense nature of the struggle with sin.

10. χάρις (charis) - "grace"

- **Occurrence in Romans 7:** Appears in v. 25.
- **Meaning:** "χάρις" means "grace," the unmerited favor and kindness of God.
- **Theological Significance:** Paul concludes the chapter by thanking God for deliverance through Jesus Christ. Despite the intense struggle between the desire to do good and the power of sin, Paul recognizes that deliverance comes through the grace of God, ultimately setting the stage for the discussion of life in the Spirit in Romans 8. Chapter seven flows out of chapter six where Paul made clear that deliverance has come through the free gift of grace in baptism.