

GOD'S WORD IS LIFE

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THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Session Six: Study Outline for Romans 7:1-25

Introduction: Dying and Rising with Christ

This chapter invites us to grasp the radical change that occurs in our lives through baptism—not symbolically, but actually. Paul explains how believers are no longer bound by the law or sin, but instead set free by grace. Through baptism, we die to sin and rise to new life with Christ. This passage encourages us to live out the freedom and transformation Christ provides.

Purpose:

Paul emphasizes the reality of moving from a life ruled by sin to a life transformed by grace. Jesus' death on the cross made this possible. Dying daily to sin is the continual experience of those who are baptized into Christ.

Themes:

- Union with Christ in His death and resurrection
- Freedom from sin
- Living under grace
- The life-long struggle with the Old Adam
- Beginning of a new life in Christ

Objective:

Our aim is to understand how Paul describes spiritual transformation through baptism. He contrasts life in bondage to sin with life empowered and liberated by grace.

I. Union with Christ in Baptism (Romans 7:1-6)

Dying to the Law:

- **Verses 1-3:** Paul uses the analogy of marriage to explain how death breaks the bonds of the law. Just as a widow is free to remarry after her husband's death, believers are free from the law through Christ's death.
- **Verses 4-6:** In Christ, we have "died" to the law so we can "belong to another"—Christ Himself. Our new life bears fruit for God, as we now live in the Spirit, no longer bound to the old written code.

II. Struggle with Sin (Romans 7:7-13)

The Purpose of the Law:

- **Verses 7-8:** Paul explains that the law itself is not sinful; rather, it reveals sin. Without the law, we wouldn't have understood our sinfulness. The law exposed Paul's covetousness, which is an example of how the law awakens awareness of sin.
- **Verses 9-11:** Paul's experience is illustrative of humanity's general struggle. The law brought awareness of sin, but sin took advantage of that awareness and brought death.
- **Verses 12-13:** The law is holy, righteous, and good. Yet, sin uses the law to deceive and bring death. The law shows us our desperate need for Christ.

III. The Conflict Within (Romans 7:14-25)

The Struggle with the Flesh:

- **Verses 14-17:** Paul describes the tension between the flesh and the Spirit. Although the law is spiritual, Paul confesses that his flesh is still prone to sin. He acknowledges that he often does what he hates, revealing an inner conflict between his new identity in Christ and his old sinful nature.
- **Verses 18-20:** Despite his desire to do good, Paul finds himself doing the opposite. His fallen nature prevents him from carrying out his good intentions. This shows the ongoing struggle between the believer's new life in Christ and the old self.
- **Verses 21-23:** Paul identifies a principle at work: while he delights in God's law inwardly, there's another law in his members waging war against the law of his mind, making him a prisoner of the law of sin in his body.
- **Verses 24-25:** In a moment of transparency, Paul cries out in frustration, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" He immediately answers his own question—Jesus Christ is the deliverer! While the struggle continues, victory comes through Christ.

Conclusion: Living in the Tension of Grace and Struggle

Romans 7 paints a vivid picture of the life-long struggle every Christian faces. Though we are freed from the law and sin through our union with Christ, we continue to wrestle with our old nature. We are, as Luther put it, at the same time righteous and sinful. Yet, the chapter ends with a powerful reminder that our ultimate victory lies in Christ. Through Him, we are freed from condemnation and empowered by grace to live a new life.

