

BIBLE STUDY

Romans 7 1 through 25

The continuing presence of sin in the flesh and the
sufficiency of Jesus Christ

Customized for Ruperto Bravo Benavente R B B

American English

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Purpose and central conclusion

This study examines Romans 7:1–25 within the full argument of Romans. Its purpose is to show that a justified believer does not reach sinless perfection in the flesh. Sin remains an opposing power, although it no longer defines the believer's identity or overturns justification by faith. Hope rests in Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, not in perfecting the flesh.

Paul does not make sin acceptable or obedience unnecessary. The law reveals sin but supplies no power to defeat it; no good dwells in the flesh; the believer's inner person delights in God's law; and deliverance comes through Jesus Christ. Romans 8 continues the answer: there is no condemnation in Christ, and Christian life proceeds by the Spirit.

Method of study

Direct texts establish the immediate argument of Romans 7. Complementary texts clarify universal sin, continuing human weakness, the security of Christ's work, and the present ministry of the Spirit and the Advocate. Each unit distinguishes textual explanation, doctrinal relationship, and pastoral application.

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Direct Texts

Passage	Contribution
Rom. 7:1–6	Death to the law’s dominion and union with Christ in order to bear fruit.
Rom. 7:7–13	The law is holy; sin exploits the commandment and is exposed.
Rom. 7:14–20	Conflict between the good that is desired and sin dwelling in the flesh.
Rom. 7:21–23	The inner person delights in God while the members resist.
Rom. 7:24–25	The cry for deliverance and the thankful answer in Jesus Christ.

Complementary Texts

Passage	Contribution
Rom. 3:9–26	All are under sin; justification comes by grace through faith.
Rom. 5:1–11	The justified have peace with God and hope grounded in Christ.
Rom. 6:1–14	Grace does not authorize sin; believers are to consider themselves alive to God.
Rom. 8:1–4, 9–17, 26–39	No condemnation in Christ; the Spirit indwells, helps, and intercedes.
Gal. 5:16–25	The flesh and the Spirit oppose each other; fruit comes from the Spirit.
1 John 1:8–2:2	To deny present sin is self-deception; Christ is Advocate and propitiation.
James 3:2	We all stumble in many ways.
Heb. 4:14–16; 10:10–14	Christ sympathizes with weakness; his sacrifice is once for all and sufficient.

Phil. 3:12–14, 20–21	Paul does not claim perfection; he awaits the transformation of the body.
1 Cor. 15:50–57	The corruptible will put on incorruption in resurrection.

1 The Context of Romans

Rom. 1:18–3:26; 5:1; 6:1–14; 7:1–6; 8:1–4

Textual explanation Romans 7 is not a doctrinal island. Romans 1–3 establishes universal guilt; chapters 3–5 announce free justification; chapter 6 affirms union with Christ and rejects grace as permission to sin; chapter 7 shows the law’s inability to overcome sin; chapter 8 presents life and hope in the Spirit.

Doctrinal relationship Justification changes our standing before God but does not make the flesh a source of righteousness. The believer is accepted in Christ and learns not to trust the self.

Application Read the chapter as part of the movement from universal condemnation to the final assurance of Romans 8:31–39.

2 Dead to the Law and Joined to Christ

Rom. 7:1–6

Textual explanation The marriage illustration establishes jurisdiction: death ends the former legal bond. Through Christ’s body, believers died to the regime that held them. They are not left without a Lord; they belong to the risen Christ and bear fruit for God.

Doctrinal relationship Death to the law does not declare God’s moral will evil. The law is no longer the covenantal regime through which

righteousness and life are sought. Christian service takes place in the newness of the Spirit.

Application Obedience grows from union with Christ. It does not purchase acceptance; it is fruit produced because acceptance has been received by grace.

3 The Law Reveals but Does Not Heal

Rom. 7:7-13

Textual explanation Paul strongly rejects the idea that the law is sin. “You shall not covet” exposes sin within desire. The commandment is holy; sin seizes the opportunity, deceives, and brings death.

Doctrinal relationship The law gives light and diagnosis. It names transgression and dismantles self-sufficiency, but it does not by itself impart the life required to defeat the power it uncovers. The sinner needs Christ and the Spirit.

Application When Scripture exposes sin, do not blame the commandment or hide the fault. Confess the truth and turn to God’s provision.

4 The Conflict Paul Describes

Rom. 7:14-20

Textual explanation The “I” agrees that the law is good, wants the good, and hates the evil, yet finds a contrary force in the flesh. “It is no longer I” does not remove responsibility; it distinguishes renewed identity and desire from indwelling sin.

Doctrinal relationship Romans 7 presents two realities: an inner person that approves God’s law and flesh in which no good dwells. Regeneration creates new affections, but the flesh does not become sinless.

Application The struggle does not automatically prove the absence of faith. Grief over sin and desire for good may reveal an inward life that is no longer at peace with evil.

5 Always in Need of Grace

Rom. 7:18–23; 1 John 1:8–2:2; James 3:2

Textual explanation “In me, that is, in my flesh, nothing good dwells” is carefully qualified. Paul does not deny the Spirit’s indwelling. John warns that denying present sin is self-deception, and James acknowledges that all stumble.

Doctrinal relationship While we remain in the mortal body, sinlessness cannot be credited to the flesh. This does not mean continual condemnation; it means continual dependence on grace, Christ’s advocacy, and the Spirit’s sanctifying work.

Application Maturity is not outgrowing the need for Christ. It is knowing our weakness more truthfully and approaching the throne of grace more confidently.

6 The Cry and the Answer

Rom. 7:24–25

Textual explanation “Who will deliver me?” is decisive. Paul does not ask for another technique, discipline, or rule. He asks for a person able to rescue him from the body of death, and answers with thanksgiving through Jesus Christ.

Doctrinal relationship Deliverance is present and future. In Christ there are already justification, a new belonging, and the Spirit’s power; at resurrection the mortal body will be fully transformed.

Application Let conflict lead to gratitude and dependence rather than despair. The focus moves from the failure of the self to the sufficiency of the Lord Jesus.

7 Romans 8 Completes the Answer

Rom. 8:1-4, 9-17, 26-39

Textual explanation The chapter division must not separate Romans 7's cry from Romans 8's answer. There is no condemnation for those in Christ. God did what the law could not do because of the flesh, and the Spirit indwells, leads, helps, and intercedes.

Doctrinal relationship Assurance rests not on never stumbling again, but on the Son's work, the Spirit's witness, and God's faithful purpose. Nothing can separate those in Christ from his love.

Application Do not use Romans 7 without Romans 8. Confess weakness honestly while affirming freedom from condemnation and the hope of glory.

8 Sanctification without Perfectionism

Rom. 6:11-14; Gal. 5:16-25; Phil. 3:12-14

Textual explanation The continuing presence of sin does not make sanctification unreal. Paul commands believers not to let sin reign, to walk by the Spirit, and to press toward the goal. He also says he has not already reached perfection.

Doctrinal relationship Distinguish presence, dominion, and condemnation. Sin remains present; it must not reign as master; and it cannot condemn the one justified in Christ. Confusing these categories creates presumption or despair.

Application Present your members to God, walk by the Spirit, confess sin, restore the fallen, and persevere while looking to Christ.

9 The Hope of a Redeemed Body

Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3:20–21; 1 Cor. 15:50–57

Textual explanation The body of death is not resolved by claiming that the flesh is already perfect. Believers await the redemption of the body. Christ will transform the body of humiliation, and corruption will put on incorruption.

Doctrinal relationship Salvation has past, present, and future dimensions: we were justified, are being sanctified by the Spirit, and will be glorified. Future hope keeps us from assigning to the present a perfection reserved for final transformation.

Application Face frailty without denying victory. Death will be defeated, and the work God began will reach its completion.

Frequently Asked Objections

Does Romans 7 describe only an unbeliever?

Historical readings differ. Yet delight in God's law according to the inner person, desire for good, and the placement between Romans 6 and 8 make the passage deeply relevant to the believer's struggle. The canonical conclusion remains: the flesh is powerless and deliverance is in Christ.

Does "it is no longer I" remove responsibility?

No. Paul does not deny performing the act. He explains that sin conflicts with the desire of the inner person. The same letter commands believers not to present their members to sin.

Does saying we remain sinners encourage carelessness?

No, when the whole argument is kept. Romans 6 rejects continuing in sin; Romans 7 destroys confidence in the flesh; Romans 8 teaches life by the Spirit. Grace forgives and forms a new life.

Can sanctification remove all sin before glorification?

The New Testament teaches growth, maturity, and real victory, but warns against claiming to have no sin and places full bodily transformation at Christ's coming.

Does every fall mean salvation was lost?

Romans 8 declares no condemnation in Christ and concludes that nothing separates the believer from God's love. Sin must be confessed and addressed; assurance rests in Christ, not imaginary sinlessness.

Conclusion

Romans 7:1–25 leads to humble confession: the law is holy but cannot transform the flesh; the believer desires good yet finds sin operating in the members; the inner person does not make peace with that evil; and the answer is not autonomous effort but Jesus Christ. We remain people who sin and need grace, but those in Christ are not defined by condemnation. The Spirit works genuine sanctification while we await the redemption of the body. Christian life is therefore neither a claim of perfection nor moral resignation: it is honest conflict, confession, dependence, the Spirit's fruit, and enduring gratitude to the Savior.

Study Questions

1. How does Romans 7 connect with Romans 6 and 8?
2. What is the difference between the goodness of the law and the law's inability?
3. What does "You shall not covet" reveal about inward sin?
4. Why is "it is no longer I" not an excuse for sin?
5. What does it mean that no good dwells in the flesh?
6. What marks of the inner person appear in Romans 7:15–23?
7. Why does Romans 7:24 ask "who" rather than "what"?

8. How does Romans 8 answer Romans 7?
9. How do presence, dominion, and condemnation differ?
10. What biblical balance avoids perfectionism and moral indifference?
11. How do confession and Christ's advocacy function in 1 John 1:8–2:2?
12. What hope comes from the future redemption of the body?

Bibliographic Reference

Reina-Valera 1960 Bible. Francisco Lacueva's Greek-Spanish Interlinear New Testament. Greek observations are limited to verifiable points; no unverified wording is attributed to the interlinear.

ROMANS 7:1-25

THE LAW, SIN, THE INNER CONFLICT, AND DELIVERANCE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST



1 The Law's Authority Rom. 7:1
The law exercises jurisdiction over a person for as long as that person lives.



2 Death Brings Release Rom. 7:2-3
Marriage illustrates how death ends the former legal bond.



3 Joined to the Risen Christ Rom. 7:4
Through Christ's body, believers died to the law and now belong to the risen Lord, bearing fruit for God.



4 A New Way to Serve Rom. 7:5-6
We now serve in the newness of the Spirit, not under the old way of the letter.



5 The Law Reveals Rom. 7:7
The law is not sin; the commandment exposes what lies hidden within the heart.



6 Sin Deceives Rom. 7:8-11
Sin seizes the commandment, awakens coveting, deceives, and brings death.



7 Holy, Righteous, and Good Rom. 7:12-13
The law remains good; sin uses what is good and thereby reveals its evil character.



8 Willing but Unable Rom. 7:14-16
Human determination recognizes what is good but cannot conquer sin by itself.



9 Sin Dwelling in the Flesh Rom. 7:17-20
Paul desires to do good but finds no power within his flesh to accomplish it.



10 The Inner Conflict Rom. 7:21-23
The inner person delights in God's law while another principle wages war within the members.



11 Who Will Deliver Me? Rom. 7:24
This cry acknowledges human helplessness and the absolute need for a Deliverer.



12 Thanks Be to God Rom. 7:25; 8:1-2
The answer is Jesus Christ. The Spirit accomplishes what the flesh and the law could not achieve.

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