

- Paul adds in v16 that when he did these evil things, he realized that it was not the fault of the law. The law is fundamentally good. So why did Paul do these things? In v17, Paul states that there is in him a principle of sin (called a “law” in v21). This principle within him made him captive to sinful deeds. He personifies sin as having taken up residence in him - “*sin that dwelleth in me.*”
- Sin is an indwelling presence that remains in a believer’s life.
 - Every believer struggles with indwelling sin (cf 1 Jn 1:8). The presence of indwelling sin was confessed by Job (Job 40:4; 42:5-6) and Isaiah (Isa 6:5). David, a man after God’s own heart, testified to the power of sin in his life (Ps 32 & 51).
 - No believer is able to understand why he sins; it is a mystery beyond his understanding (cf 7:15,18,19,23).
 - The believer in no way excuses sin. Even though we are captive to the law of sin, it is our responsibility to refrain from sin. Paul longs for holiness & deliverance (7:24).
 - Every believer is assured of deliverance from indwelling sin through Christ Jesus, but not while in this body of sin (7:25).
 - Though the believer is plagued with indwelling sin, his sin can never condemn him (8:1).
- VV18-20 repeats vv14-17. Paul has just said that sin lives in him, now he carries this further by saying that nothing good lives in him in his sinful nature. Again, Paul states the dilemma of a man who wants to do good and cannot (v19). Paul had the desire but not the power to do good. Every Christian who is honest acknowledges this inner struggle against sin that goes on throughout life. Romans 7 isn’t about Paul still living in sin; it is about sin still living in Paul. The more he draws near to God the more he is aware of his sin and his inability to perfectly meet the high standards of God’s law. Such is the Christian life. A Christian never becomes more sinful; he becomes become more aware of his sin.
- In verse 21, Paul restates the conflict that he has been describing in verses 14-20. There are two powers pulling Paul in opposite directions, both represented by “I.” The one is “I,” ie. “the flesh;” the other is “I,” ie. “the inner man.” Paul insists that he has the will to do good. But the trouble is that evil is right there within him. He cannot escape it. He calls it a “law.” This principle within him made him captive to sinful deeds.
- The real Paul rejoices in God’s law (v22). The unbeliever does not delight in the law of God. Only a child of God could say that. Paul is seeking to obey the law, not just outwardly, but with the “inner man.” But obeying it is another thing altogether. He sees “*another law*” at work within him – “*the law of sin*” (v23). Paul concludes that as long as the believer is alive there will be a constant warfare between the old sinful nature and his delight in the law of God. Note well the contrast between the willing servant of sin in 6:16-17 (he is lost!) and the unwilling servant of sin in 7:14-25 (he is saved!).

(ii) *The Despair, 7:24*

- After describing his struggle with sin, Paul draws what would be the logical conclusion: “*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*” It is the cry of despair & hopelessness so far as self-effort is concerned. It is Paul’s hatred of his own sin that caused him to cry out about the presence and power of indwelling sin in his life. He is overwhelmed with a sense of his own powerlessness and sinfulness. Paul is desperate for deliverance. We must come to the same place of desperation to find victory. The closer a man draws to God, the more he sees the corruption of his old nature and the more he desires to be free from all inclination to sin. We need to hate our sins (Ps 97:10a).

(iii) *The Victory, 7:25*

- The chapter ends with a triumphant note: “*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God: but with the flesh the law of sin.*” As soon as he looked to Jesus, Paul thanked God for the victory through Jesus Christ. Paul does not pretend that looking to Jesus takes away the struggle – but Jesus works through us. The glorious truth remains; there is victory in Jesus! The message of the gospel is that there is victory over sin and death, as we surrender our lives to Jesus and let Him live out victory through us (Phil 4:13).
- “*So then*” - Paul sums up with clear-sighted honesty, the tension, with all its real anguish and all its real hopefulness, in which the Christian never ceases to be involved so long as he is living this present life. The believer’s struggle is that between the mind and the flesh, between the law of God and the law of sin. These two entities – the mind and the flesh - within the believer struggle for control so long as the believer is in the flesh.
- The Christian life is a constant battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. To win the war within, we must understand the nature and magnitude of the conflict between indwelling sin and the new man. How can we combat the sin within us as a believer? 3 action steps:
 - First, you must hate your sin. There is a daily hating of our old self that must take place in us.
 - Second, you must confess your sin. By confessing our sin, we are taking responsibility for our own sins against God.
 - Third, you must repent of your sin. We must turn away from the sin that we confess.