

COMMENTARY ON ROMANS SEVEN

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First and foremost, we must understand what Paul is arguing for. What is the context and object of Paul's argument? Paul is trying to vindicate the law from the charge of causing sin.

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid!" Rom. 7:7

"Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Rom. 7:12

The rest of Paul's argument explains how the law, or the work of the law upon the mind, is not the fault of sin. But that sin is the fault of the sinner, of the choice of the sinners own inner heart. So Paul explains how the fault is not with the law, but with the sinner.

And we must also understand that Paul is not explaining his own Christian experience. Paul is going on a narrative to explain how the law of God, working on the mind of a sinner, brings the man into a state of misery. "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." Rom. 7:9-10. Paul started off explaining how a sinner is careless, but then the commandment comes and convicts him and he becomes miserable.

"For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal sold under sin." Rom. 7:14

The law commands me to walk after the spiritual things, to live a life of morality, but I am living for myself, for my own selfish gratification, I have given myself to sin (Isa. 50:1; 52:3).

"For that which I do I allow not, for what I would that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." Rom. 7:15

That which I choose, my convicted mind condemns. That which my mind requires, I do not choose. But what my mind condemns, that I choose.

"If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good." Rom. 7:16

If then I choose that which my mind condemns, I mentally consent unto the goodness of the law.

"Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Rom. 7:17

Therefore, it is not my convicted mind that causes me to sin, but it is the choice of my

own inner heart. Sin comes out of the heart (Matt. 15:19; Mk. 7:21), it is a choice to let sin reign inside of you (Job 11:14, Matt. 23:26, Rom. 6:12).

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" Rom. 7:18

I know, through the conviction of the law upon my mind, that my heart is in total rebellion against God.

"For to will is present with me: but to perform that which is good I find not." Rom. 7:18

The ability to will is present with me, but to actually perform that which my mind confirms as good I find that I do not choose.

"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." Rom. 7:19

For the good that my mind tells me should be chosen, I do not choose. But the evil which my mind condemns, that I choose.

"Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Rom. 7:20

If my heart chooses that which my convicted mind condemns, it is not my convicted mind's fault, but it is the fault of the choice of my own inner heart. Sin comes out of the heart (Matt. 15:19; Mk. 7:21), it is a choice to let sin reign inside of you (Job 11:14, Matt. 23:26, Rom. 6:12). The fact that I do what I know I shouldn't, this proves that sin is still in my heart.

"I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me." Rom. 7:21

I see then a habit, that when my convicted mind commands me to do good, my heart is still evil.

"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." Rom. 7:22

My inner conscience sees the goodness of the law of God.

"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Rom. 7:23

I see another influence that is in me, the influence of my flesh which seeks gratification, which is contrary to the law that my mind delights in, and I am brought into the bondage of being governed by my passions instead of by my conscience.

**"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"
Rom. 7:24**

What a miserable person that I am, without any peace of mind! Who can possibly deliver me from choosing to serve the pleasures of my flesh, from unlawfully gratifying my passions, which leads me to such spiritual and miserable death?

"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" Rom. 7:25

I am thankful to God that through Jesus Christ our Lord, a wicked rebellious heart can be subdued, and we can have peace of mind. Through the atonement, the body of sin is destroyed, that is, the life of serving self-gratification is crucified (Rom. 6:6).

"So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Rom 7:25

In summary, the mind of a convicted sinner affirms the law of God, but they themselves are still serving sin, still seeking their own self-gratification, still using their members as instruments of unrighteousness (Rom. 6:13, 19).

And it is important to understand that Paul's argument does not stop here! He continues his argument:

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:1

The mind of those who choose to obey the Spirit, instead gratifying their flesh, no longer condemns them. They have peace of conscience and are no longer convicted sinners. They are no longer miserable and wretched, under the condemnation of their minds.

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:2-4

The law of God could never subdue the hearts of rebels, as proven through Romans 7. And so what the law could not do, the Gospel can do. The grace of God shown as the cross of Christ is powerful enough to subdue our hearts and bring us to submission and obedience, so that we love God (1 Jn. 4:19). Therefore the righteousness of the law be fulfilled in our hearts (Rom. 13:8; 13:10; Gal 5:14; 1 Thes. 3:12-13; Jas. 2:8), so as no longer have sin reigning and dwelling in our hearts. The law does not change a selfish heart, the Gospel of Christ does.

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." Rom. 8:5

Individuals who seek to gratify the flesh choose to do things that please their flesh, but individuals who choose to live according to the spirit do things that please the spirit.

**"For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."
Rom. 8:6**

To choose to be purposed after selfishness is misery, but to be purposed to obey your conscience is real life with peace of mind.