

The Christian's Post Salvation Blues Romans Seven

In Romans, we have learned two great truths:

1. **In Christ**= God's position for the Believer. Thru identification with Christ we are graced forever, meaning we have eternal life, forgiveness and acceptance with the Father.
2. **Christ in you**= God's provision for the believer. We have Jesus living in us so He can live His life thru us.

This lesson asks the question: *Why then doesn't it work?*

Romans 7:7-8:4 is Paul's autobiography of his own personal struggle to walk in the Spirit and claim by faith a life of Victory. After Paul was converted he discovered what each believer has discovered: Victory may be promised by Christ and still not be possessed by the Christian. That which is doctrinally true, may not be experientially true in our lives. Only God can turn doctrine into truth and only He can turn Bible knowledge into revelation.

The First Few Days!

Soon after salvation we walk in the joy of the Lord and think we'll never sin again. We are saved, forgiven and full of good purpose & intentions. Then we are tempted, we yield to temptation, then comes the guilt & doubt. We then have what I call the "Post Salvation Blues."

Romans 7:7-8

We see Paul's personal struggle with sin. Saved on the road to Damascus, Baptized soon after, he joins the Christian fellowship in Damascus and thinks all is well. Then one day, while walking down a street in the city, he sees a beautiful woman, and "wham." He "covets" her! [Covet & lust are the same word in Greek] He is surprised & ashamed! This is the quickening of Paul's new conscience as a born again believer. Note: this was not the 1st time Paul had ever coveted. It was just the 1st time it had ever been shown to him as "sin." [See **Matt 5:27-28**] His new life in Christ will not tolerate sin as his old nature did.

Ten Commandments

The 1st nine commandments God gave Moses have to do with deeds; the 10th commandment "thou shall not covet" has to do with desire. The 1st nine say, "Thou shall not," then the last one says to you, "Thou shall not even want to!" Wow! That puts us all under the guilty sign! You haven't won the victory over sin Christian when you win over deeds. Victory only comes when you've won over desire. The average Christian is like a prisoner who has been pardoned; the jail cell is open, yet he still sits in the cell. For all practical purposes he is still a prisoner, eating prison food, living prison life. Pardoned, yet still a prisoner. His freedom is provided [in Christ] but he has not yet possessed it by faith. How do we get out of Jail and walk in freedom and victory? You can learn much from Paul's struggles in Romans 7. He seems to have gone thru three stages before moving into walking in the Spirit.

I. Defeat- Romans 7:14 "I am sold into bondage to sin."

The first step toward victory is to admit defeat, as a lost man Paul discovered he could not live up to the demands of the Law so he threw himself upon the mercy of Messiah and was forgiven. Now as a saved man he discovers he still cannot live up to the demands of the law. He is still a prisoner to sin. [That is his sin nature] Until a Christian admits defeat and declares, "I am of flesh" he'll keep on trying to live the Christian life in his own strength. What's worse is that the born again believer now has a strong desire to overcome sin, but cannot do it! We must learn that we are not saved by grace to live by works! The Christian's life does not begin with Christ, then move on to something better. We don't live for Him; He lives for us by living in us & thru us! Have you come to the place of defeat? Are tired of being sick and tired?

II. Disillusionment – Romans 7:15-19

The Williams translation of Rom. 7:18 says, "I have the desire to do what is right, but not the power to do what is right."

That is frustration. Continually being sorry for sin, repentant, then more failure leads to frustration & disillusionment about the Christian life. We begin to say, "Well it may work for some, but it doesn't work for me." Thus the defeated Christian, trying to please God becomes disillusioned. Have you noticed that the problem with sin is that you can love it and hate it @ the same time! We wish we would not do it, but we do it anyway! How disillusioning. So what do we do? We keep re-dedicating ourselves, like Avis "we try harder" and still fail. The result being the harder we try the worse it gets! The Law beats us every time. That's why, like Paul, we must learn that even for the believer, this kind of self motivated religious activity dries up the soul's thirst for God. We gradually become bitter, resentful and legalistic. This brings us to stage three in Paul's discovery of life in the Spirit.

II. Despair- Romans 7:21-23

Paul finally just gave up! He settled down to live in defeat. Verse 23 says, "...waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which dwells in me." Paul says, "I am a prisoner. Every time there is a battle, I know I'm going to lose [to my sin nature] every time there is a temptation, I know I'm going to yield." That's a despairing Christian. Like some of us, Paul just gave up on the idea of walking in victory over sin. He was a prisoner to his old man within him and he just gave up. So for Paul after years of trying to live for God, he was at the end of himself, "O wretched man that I am." He is now ready for faith [total dependency upon Christ as his life source.] Often this is God's way with us. He must let us struggle & even fail in order to show us the flesh. Often we are so self reliant and self-righteous that we will not surrender to Christ's life within us until we are forced to. You see Paul would never have known nor acknowledged he even had a sin nature without the struggle. His defeat led to the discovery of the "old man."

Notice how thru defeat Paul discovered his sin nature. "I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good." [Romans 7:21] Before salvation the Holy Spirit shows us our sins. After salvation He must show us "self." This truth cannot be intellectually learned. Only thru our failures can God show us the ugliness of Sin in us. You will never walk in the Spirit until you come to an absolute despair of self. When you get to the 'O wretched man that I am,' then God has you where He can reveal Christ as your life. By the way, "wretched" means exhausted from hard labor! Are you exhausted from trying to be a Christian? If you are not, you will be!

When I'm empty, He will fill me up

Once you accept your wretchedness, and claim Jesus as Lord, the Holy Spirit's 1st executive decision will be to fill you with His Spirit. From Romans 7:14-25, the pronoun "I" is used 25 times & the Holy Spirit is not mentioned once! No wonder Paul had the blues! Beginning in Chapter 8 all Paul talks about is the power of the indwelling Spirit to set us free from the flesh. Something happened to Paul that needs to happen in all of us. No more trying just trusting; no more working just walking. In **Romans 8:4** Paul uses the phrase "in us" rather than "by us." Paul had thought the requirements of the law were to be fulfilled "by us." Now he knows the law is fulfilled 'in us.' There is a world of difference between "by" & "in." Have you made this marvelous discovery? Are you struggling in Romans 7 or are you walking in victory in Romans 8?