

CONCERNING THE WAY

October 19, 2010

LESSON 114: PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS



Chapter 7

Sanctification and the Demands of the Law

Read Acts 15:1-11 for background to the first section of this chapter. It is not possible for us as Gentiles in the 21st century to understand how big a deal the Mosaic Law was to a Jew in Paul's day. The Law never saved anyone, but by the time of New Testament events many of the Jews, including the religious leaders believed that it was the Law that saved you. The concept of salvation by grace was very difficult to grasp for a Jew who had been brought up to observe every little detail of the law and all the other traditions that had been added to it.

Paul is addressing the first part of this chapter, verses 1-6, mostly to Jewish members of the Roman church who were having a hard time accepting that salvation is by grace alone without keeping the Law.

Romans 7:1 Or do you not know, brothers and sisters (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law is lord over a person as long as he lives?

This is a continuation of the discussion Paul started in chapter 6 verse 14, saying that we're not under law, but under grace. Paul is specifically speaking to those who know the law here, which could have included Gentiles as well as Jews in the Roman church. There must have been Christians in that church who were insisting that you must obey the Law to be saved, in addition to trusting Christ. Many people still today in the church believe we must do external, religious things to please God.

Romans 7:2-3 For a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of the marriage. (3) So then, if she is joined to another man while her husband is alive, she will be called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she is joined to another man, she is not an adulteress.

Paul is using a metaphor of marriage to explain an important truth. Under the Mosaic Law, as long as her husband was alive, a woman was bound to him. Divorce was permitted, but if she married another man while her husband was alive, she was "called an adulteress". But when the husband died, she was free to marry another, she was not an adulteress. She was released from the law.

Romans 7:4 So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you could be joined to another, to the one who was raised from the dead, to bear fruit to God.

Like the example of a woman's husband's death freeing her to marry another man, we have died to the law through Christ's death so that we can be joined to Him. What a wonderful metaphor, to consider ourselves joined to Christ! As in a marriage relationship, we should live to please Him, and put Him first in our lives – out of love, not out of obligation. In a real sense believers are united to Him

as His bride (Ephesians 5:25). God's purpose in all this is in order that we might bear fruit to God (Romans 6:22; Galatians 5:22-23; Philemon 1:11). Only a person who is spiritually alive can bear spiritual fruit, that is, holy living (John 15:4-5).

For Gentile believers, we know from Romans 6:6 that our old man was crucified and we must recognize that we are no longer a slave to sin. But for the Jewish believer, there was the additional fact that he was under the Law, which bound his conscience, and gave sin power over him. For the Jew must obey the Law; it had been given to his nation by Jehovah, and they had covenanted at Sinai that their obedience would be the condition of their relationship to Him.

Paul has been saying that we have died with Christ (6:4-8), are dead to sin (6:11), and that we are not under the Law (6:14). But now he goes even further, and this would have been really disconcerting to a Jew. Since we died with Christ, we died to the law. Our old connection with Adam's family, which is bound to sin, is severed, and we are now joined to Christ, notice, "to bear fruit to God". Now our body and soul belongs to Jesus! Bearing fruit to God is then a natural thing, just like an apple tree naturally produces apples. If we are connected to Christ, we are naturally going to bear fruit. Fruit bearing in the Christian life is a common theme in Paul's writings (Romans 1:13, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 2:10, 5:9, Philemon 4:17, Colossians 1:16).

This is a major truth! We had to die to the law so that we could be joined to Christ! The Law of Moses was good, but it wasn't God's ideal, it was only temporary. God never intended the Law to be a tool of salvation – it didn't have the power to do that (Galatians 2:16). But when God showed His grace at Calvary, that old "marriage" to the Law was annulled and now marriage to the One who really loves us is possible. We've been freed from bondage to the Law, and can enjoy our new relationship with Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:19).

Understand that all of this happens apart from any effort on our part. We do not divorce ourselves from the law, and we do not put ourselves to death. It was God alone who both planned and carried out this whole process of salvation.

Romans 7:5-6 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful desires, aroused by the law, were active in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. (6) But now we have been released from the law, because we have died to what controlled us, so that we may serve in the new life of the Spirit and not under the old written code.

Notice Paul moved from second person plural to first person plural here, including himself along with all believing readers. This passage makes the most sense if we understand that Paul is continuing to speak primarily to Jewish Christians (notice he speaks of the law that controlled them, and the "old written code"). But the principle applies to Gentiles as well. Paul is speaking of before we had accepted Christ (when we were in the flesh), before our "old man" had been crucified. Then, all we were able to do was bear bad fruit (fruit for death). Our sinful desires were aroused by the law, and we were controlled by it. But now we all serve God in the new life of the Spirit and not under the old written code of the law. "New life of the spirit" can refer to both the new regenerated spirit we are given when we come to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit whom we are to walk in now, instead of according to the law.

As Christians we sometimes try to live for God in the flesh, by obeying a set of religious rules, and doing religious things – observing ceremonies and special days, expecting that will make God happy. These things only lead to fleshly pride in ourselves, not to a closer relationship with God.

Getting out of fleshly religion and into a spiritual relationship with God is difficult for some people to get. For many of us it is something you learn as you grow older. Your relationship with Christ becomes closer and more precious as the years go by.

Again, Paul is primarily speaking to Jews here, so it may be hard for us Gentiles to identify with this chapter. The law controlled every aspect of the Jew's daily life. We have a hard time imagining that, unless you grew up in a very legalistic church. But it does apply to us today. We do not serve God according to the law, we have been released from the written code. And if God has released the Jew from the Law, to which he was so inextricably bound, then how presumptuous it would be for us Gentile believers to think that we are under the Law! We have to get rid of that mind-set! All believers now serve in the new life of the spirit, and that is the way of perfect freedom. Paul is basically referring to the New Covenant here – Jeremiah 31:31.

Sanctification and the Battle Within

This next section is the most controversial in the entire book of Romans. People try to interpret this section in different ways, according to their preconceived theology, their denomination doctrine, and so on. Some say Paul is only writing hypothetically. Some say he was speaking about an unnamed unbeliever. Some say he is speaking of himself before he became a Christian, others say he is speaking of himself as a Christian believer at the time he wrote it. There are good people on different sides of this issue, but if you look at the passage without theological bias, it's not hard to interpret it correctly.

Romans 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Absolutely not! Certainly, I would not have known sin except through the law. For indeed I would not have known what it means to desire something belonging to someone else if the law had not said, "Do not covet."

From here until the end of the chapter, Paul speaks in the first person singular, speaking of his own personal experience. This is so amazing that Paul opens up to us here to describe himself. Countless numbers of people have read these verses and have been comforted with the fact that even this great saint struggled with sin. We can all identify with Paul.

One thing we should realize before we go through this - **the indwelling Holy Spirit is the Christian's sole power against the flesh and Paul is not going to speak about that until the next chapter.** This is about his struggle with sin as he tries to live a life pleasing to God by obeying the Law, by his own efforts. Paul has already told us that we are to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, because that is the fact of what happened when we trusted Christ. But we have trouble with that in our experience. It doesn't always feel like we're dead to sin.

The law is not evil, it is good, it came from God. It spelled out specifically what is right and wrong, good and bad, moral and immoral. So it is very good. The United States was founded on the principles of the Mosaic Law. You can't really define sin apart from the Law.

"The direct reference in this word "desire" is to Deuteronomy 5:21, where the correct translation is, "Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's house, his field, or his man-servant, or his maid-servant, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is thy neighbor's." Now, Saul of Tarsus had been occupied with the outward things, positive and negative) of the Law. But when God quickened to his heart the real meaning of the word covet, or desire—showing him that "desire not" forbade the reaching out of the

heart after anything other than loving God with all the heart, soul, and mind, and his neighbor as himself; he discerned for the first time that such desire is sin. For desire, in a creature, for aught else but God's glory, is sin. Imagine Gabriel in God's presence entertaining desire for something for himself: It would be the beginning of another Lucifer!" William Newell

Romans 7:8 But sin, seizing the opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of wrong desires. For apart from the law, sin is dead.

As good as the Law was, it became a base of operations for Satan. "Seizing the opportunity" is a very military phrase in the Greek. Satan launches his attacks from the law, that's where he assaults us from. For example, Satan can use the tenth commandment against us by tempting us with the desire to have something that belongs to someone else. If there were no law, he couldn't use that against us. "All kinds of wrong desires" – sin goes beyond the letter of the 10th commandment, as Newell said in that quote.

Romans 7:9-10 And I was once alive apart from the law, but with the coming of the commandment sin became alive (10) and I died. So I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life brought death!

Some think Paul is speaking in general about the fall of mankind and the giving of the Mosaic Law, but there's no basis for that in the text. Paul is speaking of his own experience and there's really two valid ways to take this. One is that when he got to the point where he became old enough to be aware of the Law (the coming of the commandment), that's when sin came alive to him. When we are young we're not aware of specific laws and commandments, other than what are parents have told us not to touch or do! But as we learn about law we become aware of sin in our lives.

The other way to understand what Paul is saying is that he is referring to when he understood that just obeying the letter of the Mosaic Law wasn't enough to save him. This makes more sense to me. There seems to be a pattern in every Christian's life. Early on after one has accepted Christ most of us are focused on what not to do – obeying the Ten Commandments and the traditions of the church. We think if we can just do that, we're living the way God wants us to. The problem comes when we realize that just obeying a set of laws isn't good enough. That's not what living the Christian life is about.

I can identify with what Paul is saying, and hopefully you can, too. When I came to the place in my Christian life where I really understood the demands of the Law (amplified by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 and summed up in Mark 12:29-31), I realized what a great sinner I really was. That's when I died, that is, that was the end of me as a self-satisfied, self-secure person. I realized that I could never measure up to the whole law. I lost all hope in myself, and in any other believer, even the greatest saints.

Romans 7:11 For sin, seizing the opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it I died.

The law was intended for good, and it does produce good things. It gave boundaries that keep us safe, told us how to have a relationship with God, it protects us from being robbed and murdered, etc. The problem isn't with the law, but with people. The problem is us, and so the law condemns us.

Why does Paul say it deceived him? Because he thought that if he tried to obey the law in every way it would please God and make him righteous. But all it did was expose him as a sinner and it

condemned him to death, as it does all of us. “I died” – in other words, it killed any hope he had in himself.

Romans 7:12-13 So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good. (13) Did that which is good, then, become death to me? Absolutely not! But sin, so that it would be shown to be sin, produced death in me through what is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

Paul seems to be making a distinction here. The “law” is the entire Mosaic Law, but he seems to be referring to the moral law when he says “commandment”, as he does also in verses 8-11. And in verse 7 he is speaking of one of the ten commandments – coveting. You see, the Mosaic Law is one Law containing 613 rules and regulations, but there are three natural divisions – moral, ceremonial, and civil. Paul seems to be focusing here on the moral laws, some of which are in the “ten commandments”.

So, of course the law is holy – it was given by God. The commandment (moral issues) is also holy and good. These laws have always been in effect, from the creation of Adam on. They didn’t start with Moses. Those are the laws that really end up condemning us. The ceremonial and civil laws don’t have the same connection with sin that the moral laws do, therefore it is the moral commandments that condemn us, because we can’t keep them all. So God’s solution was to have us die to the law through our identification with Jesus Christ. Now we are connected directly to Christ, and we can produce fruit naturally because of that connection.

The Believer and Sin

We have to stop and set these next verses up. There are some that teach that from here to verse 24 Paul is speaking of himself before he accepted Christ. Let me say this clearly – there is not a speck of evidence to support that notion. Every indication of this chapter is that he is speaking of his own struggles with sin after he was saved, and therefore speaking of every believer’s experience.

Every believer still has at least some periods in his life where he struggles with sin. If you don’t think you have this issue, you must be pretty good at denial. We all have “hot buttons” that Satan likes to push. So, the Holy Spirit put this in here through the experience of Paul so that we can identify with it. Even one of the greatest saints that ever lived, the apostle Paul himself, struggled with sin.

We have seen that, since we have died to sin, then sin no longer has power over us. But, as Paul went on to discuss in the last chapter, we can still let sin reign in us. It can still be a problem, mainly because of our fleshly unredeemed bodies. So we believers can still sin. And when we do, we need to confess it, and God is faithful and just to forgive us and restore us (1 John 1:9). This is not a salvation issue, because that was settled forever at the cross, where we died.

Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual – but I am unspiritual, sold into slavery to sin.

The Law comes from God who is Spirit (John 4:24) and expresses God’s will for human living. Paul, using himself as the example, said the problem is that I am unspiritual (*sarkinos*, “fleshy, made of flesh”). Some translations may use the word “carnal” here. If Paul were speaking of himself before he became a Christian, he would not have used this word. That word is never used for an unsaved person, but a Christian who is fleshly or unspiritual (1 Corinthians 3:1). In addition he was sold as a

slave (perfect tense, “had been sold and remained in that state”) to sin. This is all of us by nature.

Paul is speaking in the first person singular here in the present tense, so the natural way to understand it is that he was speaking of himself at that time. That’s how his readers would have understood him. Obviously he was describing his present conflict as a Christian with indwelling sin and its continuing efforts to control his daily life. He is saying that, even though we’re saved, in ourselves we are still unspiritual, still with a propensity for sin.

Romans 7:15 For I don't understand what I am doing. For I do not do what I want – instead, I do what I hate.

Paul sounds like a little boy whose honest answer to why he did something wrong is, “I don’t know.” That’s the way we still are as adult Christians sometimes. This can be said by an unregenerate person in his highest moral and ethical moments, but it can also be said by a regenerate person. There is no reason to think that Paul was not describing his experience as a believer at that time.

We recognize that the law is spiritual because God made it, but we have to admit that we are carnal (unspiritual) sometimes. When a believer sins, he knows that he is sinning. He knows what is right and wrong and wants to do right. But sometimes we sin. There is a conflict going on within us that will last our whole earthly lives. It is a war between our spirit and our flesh. The flesh includes more than just our bodies, even though that’s usually what sin works through. “The flesh” is our propensity to sin that we inherited from Adam. It was crucified, yes, positionally it is dead, but it is still present within us.

Elsewhere in his writings Paul exhorts believers to continue to deal with the flesh, and our “old man”, in Colossians 3:9-11, Ephesians 4:22,24, so you can see that it can still be a problem for a believer.

Romans 7:16-17 But if I do what I don't want, I agree that the law is good. (17) But now it is no longer me doing it, but sin that lives in me.

An important step in our sanctification is to recognize that the law is right. Before we come to Christ we hate the law – we rebel against it in our minds as well as our actions. But after we are regenerated we come to love the law of God. We agree that it is right, but we realize we can’t keep it.

Verse 17 is an incredible discovery! Don’t take this lightly. It’s not my real self that is doing it! There is something else working in me, and that is sin.

Romans 7:18-19 For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For I want to do the good, but I cannot do it. (19) For I do not do the good I want, but I do the very evil I do not want!

For true spiritual maturity, every Christian must get to the point where we realize, like Paul did, that nothing good lives in me. “My flesh” is not just physical flesh, but our old selves, the old nature that keeps trying to come back even though it is crucified. We have to realize that all our “righteousness are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6)

Most Christians have no trouble wanting to do good. But we all have trouble carrying it out sometimes. But we have no trouble doing that sin that keeps entangling us. The word translated “do” in these verses mean “practice”. Paul, this wonderful saint of God, knew that he still had sin. He

recognized that he practiced sin. He knew that in himself he had no ability to do good. He didn't try to fool himself and others that he was perfect. Paul is baring his soul to us, being completely honest about his struggle with sin. What a great lesson to us! This is what the average Christian goes through. We have no power in ourselves. We are dependent on the Holy Spirit as our only spiritual power, just as on Christ as our only righteousness!

Romans 7:20-21 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer me doing it but sin that lives in me. (21) So, I find the law that when I want to do good, evil is present with me.

Paul is still speaking in the present tense – he says that “evil is (not was) present in me”. He wants to break the power of sin in his life, but by himself he can't do it. The law Paul speaks of is not the Mosaic Law, but the spiritual aspect of the universal law of entropy which rules the physical creation ever since God's curse on the ground because of Adam's sin. Everything in this world deteriorates and eventually tends toward evil; everything falls apart unless we do something to maintain it. Evil will not be completely eradicated until Christ comes back to establish His Kingdom.

“He now states as a settled conclusion, what he has experimentally discovered. And we all need to consent to the fact—even if we have found God's way of deliverance, that evil is present. It is the denial of this fact that has wrecked thousands of lives! For evil will be present until the Lord comes, bringing in the redemption of our bodies.” Newell

This law or principle is proved by our experience. It is a fact that, despite our best intentions, we still tend to sin when we want to live righteously. This “law of sin” can bring our members into captivity. The more a Christian pursues living their life in grace and under the cross, the more sensitive he becomes to the reality that even one's best actions are in some sense tainted by sin.

Romans 7:22-23 For I delight in the law of God in my inner being. (23) But I see a different law in my members waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that is in my members.

Our bodies are not in themselves sinful, but the law of sin can still reign in our flesh using our bodies to do sinful things. There is a war going on between our minds and our bodies. We know things are wrong in our minds, but that doesn't seem to matter to our flesh. So sometimes we do things in our flesh that we know with our minds is wrong. A good example is our mouth. How often do you say something, maybe in anger or irritation, that, as soon as it is out of your mouth, you know you shouldn't have said it?

There are many things that we do that we don't consider sin. We need to constantly realize that we are capable of sin in the smallest things – a careless word, a careless thought or attitude. We may have pet attitudes that we have that we don't want to admit are sin and we don't want to give them up. We can be prisoners, slaves to things like this, and it can be all kinds of things, involving anger, unforgiveness, pride, lust, greed, etc.

So, we have a tension here between Paul's knowledge and ability. This is true for all Christians.

1. We know the law is spiritual (vs. 14)
2. We know nothing good dwells in us (the flesh) – vs. 18
3. When we want to do good, evil is present – vs. 21

Paul has come to the conclusion that as long as the believer is alive, there will constantly be war

between the old sinful nature, which often expresses itself in the parts of our bodies, and our delight in the law of God, which can be expressed only when we're controlled by the Holy Spirit. But when we ever try to win these battles by ourselves, we're always defeated. Those repeated attempts just cause frustration.

“This principle is continually doing two things: waging war against the law of the believer’s mind and making him a prisoner of the law of sin at work within his members. The indwelling principle of sin is constantly mounting a military campaign against the new nature, trying to gain victory and control of a believer and his actions. The new nature is called “the law” of the “mind” (verse 25) because it has the capacity for perceiving and making moral judgments. Further, despite a believer’s identification with Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection and his efforts to have Christ-honoring attitudes and actions, he cannot in his own power resist his indwelling sin nature. In and of himself he repeatedly experiences defeat and frustration.” John Walvoord

Romans 7:24-25 **Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? (25) Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.**

Paul is making his conclusion here, and what a conclusion! He is so convicted about his propensity to sin that he calls himself wretched. All self-hope is gone. We have all been here, haven't we? We've all felt wretched when we realize as Christians that we still have a propensity to sin and can't get rid of it. These things that we hold on to in our lives can make us so miserable!

Paul recognized that as long as he was in his mortal body he would face the conflict with the indwelling sin principle and would have defeat in his own strength. The old nature, which Paul was struggling with, which every believer must struggle with, is self-centered instead of Christ-centered. As long as the measure of things is “I-me-mine,” instead of the will of God, then we will always get to the point where we also say—“O wretched man that I am!”

He asks “Who will rescue me?” He knows he can't rescue himself. He doesn't say, “How can I be rescued?”. There's no process, no five step plan, no best-selling self-help book at the Christian book store – none of that will rescue us from this “body of death”.

In the same way we look for help outside of ourselves to save us and forgive us our sins, the Christian struggling with despair to find victory over sin by self-effort, looks outside himself to the same person, Jesus Christ—in whom he is, and in whom he died to sin and to law! That deliverance that comes through Christ is worked in us by the Holy Spirit, as we'll learn in chapter 8.

The sinner is not forgiven by what Christ now does, but by faith in what He did do at the cross, for, “The word of the cross is the power of God.” Just so, the believer is not delivered by what Christ does for him now; but in the revelation to his soul of identification with Christ’s death at the cross: for again, “The word of the cross is the power of God.” Newell

Paul in verse 25, his conclusion, was also looking to the final triumph of Jesus Christ for His people. Just as believers are identified with Him in His death and resurrection by faith here and now, so they will join their resurrected and exalted Lord for all eternity in new bodies, free forever from the presence of sin (Romans 8:23; Philemon 3:20-21). I like the ISV translation for verse 25:

Romans 7:25 **Thank God through Jesus the Messiah, our Lord, because with my mind I myself can serve the law of God, even while with my human nature I serve the law of sin.**

Paul gives us some relief here, a reprieve. And in chapter 8 he will go on and explain that reprieve. He comes to the conclusion that only Jesus Christ can enable us to live a sanctified life. It is not our life we live in the body, but it is His life we live (Galatians 2:20). The secret to successful living in the body of our flesh is not to try to battle Satan, and not to try to overpower our flesh. The secret is to submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ and ask Him to live His life through you.

So Christians can and do still struggle with sin. How do we deal with that? Where do you start to climb out of it? First we must admit that we are struggling. And that is what is so difficult for so many people. But that is the first step. We must recognize that we have a conflict within, and sins that we don't want to admit to. The next step is to recognize that only God can change us. He is the One who saved us and forgave us our sins, and He is the only One who can mature us, sanctify us, mold us into who He wants us to be.

We should admit to God every day that we have a problem. We should always be searching ourselves. That's why I am always saying we must constantly have a repentant heart. Not a heart of pride, not feeling good about reaching a level of a perceived perfection, but real honesty with God and other people about yourself. How often do you say I'm sorry to someone for something you did or said? When was the last time you asked someone to forgive you? We just don't want to do that, do we? The natural thing is to protect ourselves, to defend our actions, that we are in the right.

To sum up Paul's Great Discoveries in this Struggle of Chapter Seven:

1. That sin dwelt in him,—though he delighted in God's Law!
2. That his will was powerless against it.
3. That the sinful self was not his real self.
4. That there was deliverance through our Lord Jesus Christ!

So does it have to be this way throughout our entire Christian life? No, I don't think it is God's will that we struggle like this always, even though every believer has to go through this. As the gospel concerning our death with Christ both to sin and to the legal principle becomes more and more clear to us, and our faith becomes stronger; and our reliance upon the Holy Spirit becomes more constant, we will walk victoriously as Paul obviously did. The point is that we must have help from outside, beyond ourselves! This, of course, is the indwelling Holy Spirit, as the eighth chapter will vividly portray in our next lesson.

“When the demand, however, arises in our hearts that we be what we find written in the Epistles, the effect is the same exactly as in Paul's case as regards the discovery of powerlessness. The “Holiness” people call it, as we said, “becoming convicted for holiness.” The conscience becomes suddenly awakened. We see that we have been content with a righteous standing, without a really holy walk. If we have seen that we died with Christ; and are properly instructed, we shall, upon such awakening,

(1) Know that there is deliverance in Christ for us, whether we are yet able, or not, in living faith to reckon that we are dead unto sin and alive unto God.

(2) We shall be, or become, willing to have God show us how, or wherein, we are still holding fast to

any sin, or any indulgence of the flesh.

(3) We shall be brought, by God's grace, to agree to the sentence of death that has already been pronounced on this particular thing, when our old man,—all our old self, was crucified with Christ.

(4) Then we shall enter into the place of reckoning ourselves dead to sin, and to this darling sin, and to all sin,—as God commands His saints who have died with Christ.

(5) We may have, if necessary, a struggle here: as James shows:

Read James 4:4-10 here, and I'll remind you that James is speaking to believers.

“Double-minded—those believers who have been half for the world, while half for heaven. “Be afflicted, and mourn and weep.” (Not that God is unwilling, but that we are!) “Let your laughter” (which has been the fool's laughter of this condemned world!) “be turned to mourning, and your joy” (which has been the joy of worldlings, not of heaven-bound saints) “to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall exalt you!”

This is the path for worldly Christians. Not that the grace of God is insufficient: but they have been rejoicing with a condemned world! And they must come out of that, though in bitterness. However, the bitterness need not be,—if we are willing! “If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the fruit of the land.” And nothing will persuade our hearts like the goodness of God, in the gift of His Son, and the work of the cross, already accomplished on our behalf.

Whether, then, it be a soul under law, or one in greater light: there will be the discovery of our own utter powerlessness, and of deliverance—from sin and self, in our Lord Jesus Christ! And this is the object of the revelation of Paul's great struggle,—not mere information, but application of these lessons to ourselves. For if we go through Chapters Six and Seven unexercised of soul, how shall we learn the blessed walk in the Spirit of Chapter Eight?” Newell

What Believers Should Do When They Sin

Seek restoration: the Spirit intercedes for our weakness	Romans 8:26
Return to walking by the Spirit	Galatians 5:16,25
Run from being involved with the sins of sinners	Ephesians 5:7
Return to pleasing the Lord	Ephesians 5:10

Seek to understand God's will for your life	Ephesians 5:17
Put on the full armor of God	Ephesians 6:13-18
Put no confidence in the flesh	Philippians 3:3
Turn back to the truth	James 5:19-20
Return to walking in the light	1 John 1:7
Confess your sins for forgiveness and cleansing	1 John 1:9
Watch carefully what you do in the future.	2 John 1:8