

For Our Information

Joyce Venable is dealing with sinus problems this week.

Amy Simpson is in New Orleans for a work conference this weekend.

David and Paula Laubach are in Jonesboro this weekend.

RC Ragsdale is on vacation in Japan this week.

Ricky & Theresa Ragsdale are still dealing with health issues.

Many brethren in the southeast are dealing with the effects of the hurricane at this time. We need to remember them as we go to God in prayer.

Keep your brothers & sisters in mind

We seek only to serve God according to His Will!

contrast is clear. **Romans 7-8** shows the beauty of the gospel with the marvelous reminder: *"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (8:1).*

Why is this important? Because it focuses on how we need to be thinking of ourselves as those redeemed by the blood of Christ. We understand the struggle with sin, but rather than see ourselves as those in whom sin dwells, we must see ourselves as those in whom Christ and the Spirit dwell. *"However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you" (8:9).* This is not a claim to personal perfection, but it is a reminder of our need to reflect the power of God's mercy through living by the Spirit of God.

(No matter which "Paul" is being discussed, the message in this passage should be clear. We cannot overcome sin by our own power. We need Christ in our heart! DLH)

Contact Us

We want opportunities to speak with others about our work in the Lord's Kingdom.

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Seeking His Righteousness

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Conflicted Man

Doy Moyer

We all know what it's like to struggle inside. We understand the conflict of wanting to do what is right on the one hand, and not doing it on the other. Because of how much we all identify with that struggle, we commonly point to **Romans 7** as the example of this problem. Even Paul struggled with it. So what is the issue?

The question has to do with which part of Paul's life he was referencing. The fact that Paul speaks in the present tense through that section (**vv. 13-34**) does not prove that Paul was speaking of his life as a Christian. This way of speaking (first person, present) is not uncommon as a literary or



Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Romans

7:24-25



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1512 Tanner St. Malvern, AR

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rhetorical device to make a bigger point. We can back up a little in the context to see how Paul was setting up this section.

We Know Sin Through Law

Paul argues that he would not have known sin but through the Law (of Moses), but when the Law came, sin became alive and he died (**vs. 9**). Thus the Law became the means through which Paul died spiritually, even though the Law itself was good. Even so, through the commandments of the Law, sin was demonstrated to be “utterly sinful” (**vs. 13**). At this point, Paul launches into the contrast between being “sold into the bondage of sin” and being set free in Christ. However, to get that bigger point, we must read into **chapter 8** (the chapter break between 7 and 8 is not ideal).

When we read these chapters together, we find the contrast to be very pointed. That contrast is well stated in **8:2**: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.” What Paul is describing in **chapter 7** is what happens when someone tries to rely on the “law of sin and death.” He describes the indwelling of sin and evil and being under bondage to sin, but these are not descriptions of one who has been set free from that bondage. These describe one who tries to work out the problem of sin on his own, apart from Christ, before being set free in Christ. Perfect law-keeping would be required if that were the case, but the Law couldn’t provide complete forgiveness of sin (cf. **8:3**), and since all have sinned (**3:23**), such perfection would not be possible. Forgiveness is needed.

Store In My Heart

Galatians 1:6-8

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-- not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

Though there is only one Gospel, the good news of the Savior, Jesus the Christ, there are many distortions of that one Gospel. They will turn you away from Christ and cost you eternity.

Test the teaching you are receiving against the Word of God. All errors will be revealed if they are exposed to the Truth.

A much fuller comparison and contrast can be done, but what convinces me that **chapter 7** is referring to the unregenerate man without Christ is the following comparison:

In **7:17** Paul speaks of “sin which dwells in me.” In **7:18** he says that “nothing good dwells in me.”

Compare that to **8:9-11**, where the Spirit and Christ are said to dwell in the child of God.

How can sin dwell where Christ is? And if “nothing good dwells in me,” and Christ and His Spirit also dwell in me, what does this say about Christ and the Spirit? These simply cannot be reconciled as dwelling in the same place. Therefore, Paul must be speaking about two different circumstances.

When one tries to work out sin without Christ, he will fail. “Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (**Romans 7:24-25**)

Through Christ We Can Overcome Sin

None of this is to say that Christians never struggle with sin or commit sin, but it is to say that we cannot live in sin (cf. **1John 3:9**), and we must never rely solely on our own strength to overcome it. Perhaps we find ourselves in deeper struggles like that described in **Romans 7** because we are relying too much on ourselves. In that case, we are following the pattern of the flesh far too much and need to be reminded of what Christ came to do for us. If we set our minds on the flesh, then we cannot please God (**8:8**). If we set our minds on the “things of the Spirit” (**8:5**), we will have life and peace (**vs. 6**). That