

Romans 7:14-25 The Most Relatable Passage in the Whole Bible

Paul the Apostle closes off Romans 7 with the account of the wretched man. Was this man Paul or someone else? Now or before? As we unpack this chapter, we find something helpful for everyone.

Topics- Sanctification, Sin, Addiction

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*Wedding Photo - Counseling Advice

*Lewis- "No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good."

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WHO IS THE WRETCHED MAN OF VERSE 24?

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Important grammar/tense shift:

-v7-13 = Past Tense & Death

-v14-25 = Present Tense & Battle

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"Carnal" = sarkinos(σάρκινος); made of flesh, fleshy, fleshly, characterized by the flesh

- "Carnal" = sarkikos(σάρκικός); fleshly, carnal, characterized by or governed according to the flesh — 1 Corinthians 3:1, 3

-A rough English analogy would be something like "fleshy" vs. "fleshly."

1 Corinthians 3:1-4 — And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?

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"sold under sin."

-Sold = pipraskō(πιπράσκω) to sell one into slavery

-C.f. 23- "bringing me into captivity"

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14-15a

THREE THINGS GOING ON:

- the law is spiritual (pneumatikos)
- but I am carnal (sarkikos)
- I do not understand. (ginōskō)

1 Corinthians 2:14 — But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know[ginōskō] them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Galatians 5:17 — For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

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“If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good”

-“If, then” > This is a logical argument.

-“I do what I will not to do” > Paul acknowledges that he does not WANT to do these things. He is opposed to them.

-“I agree with the law that it is good” > “it” is the law.

-Thus, Paul's heart is obedience to God, even if his actions sometimes fail.

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“bringing me into captivity to the law of sin”

You cannot “take captive” that which was not previously free.

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“Oh wretched man” ≠ “Poor me!”

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“O wretched man that I am!”

-WHO IS THE WRETCHED MAN?

1. Unregenerate, under Law (Pre-conversion Paul)

-Champions: John Chrysostom & Douglas Moo

Also: Origen- (Early) Augustine, Jacob Arminius, John Wesley, Adam Clarke, and more

2. Awakened but not yet converted

-Champion: D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

3. Believer striving under law & self-effort

-Champion: H. A. Ironside

-Also: William R. Newell, Thomas L. Constable, James M. Gray, Leslie M. Grant, Arno C. Gaebelin...

4. Defeated believer before Spirit-empowerment (Baptism with Holy Spirit)

-Champions: Andrew Murray & R.A. Torrey

-Also: William Boardman, Lewis Chafer; Charles Ryrie and Ray Stedman...

5. Mature believer

-Champion: James Montgomery Boice

-Also: (Late) Augustine, John Calvin, Martin Luther, John F. MacArthur Jr., John Piper, Chuck Smith, David Guzik, John Owen, Charles Hodge, John Murray, R. C. Sproul, C. E. B. Cranfield, F. F. Bruce, Mike Winger, Voddie Baucham, and many others.

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WHO IS THE WRETCHED MAN?

-1. Unregenerate, under Law

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-3. Believer striving under law & self-effort

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I think Paul is writing as Paul...

1 Corinthians 15:9 — “the least of the apostles”

-Ephesians 3:8 — “less than the least of all the saints”

-1 Timothy 1:15 — “of whom I am chief”

What did Paul struggle with?

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WHO IS THE WRETCHED MAN?

-1. Unregenerate

-1b. The Legalist

-1c. The Carnal Christian

-2. Awakened but not yet converted

-3. Believer striving under law & self-effort

-4. Defeated believer before Spirit-empowermen

-5. Mature believer

WHO IS THE WRETCHED MAN?

-It's me!

While we all don't have the same spiritual identity, we all face the same fundamental impossibility:

-Our flesh cannot produce the righteousness of God.

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O wretched man that I am!

-What will deliver me from this body of death?

-What law can deliver me?

-What experience will deliver me?

Can medicine cure me?

-Can escape distract me?

-Can fulfillment satisfy me?

The most utterly helpless feeling does not come from weariness of pain, but from weariness of pleasure.

Romans 7:24 — O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me...

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Paul & First Person Pronouns:

-5) 2 Corinthians 11:1–10 — 1 first-person reference every 11.0 words

-4) Galatians 1:9–18 — every 9.1 words

-3) 2 Corinthians 12:5–14 — every 8.5 words

-2) 1 Corinthians 9:14–23 — every 8.2 words

-1) Romans 7:15–24 — every 6.4 words

Romans 7:14–25:

-SELF = 38

SPIRIT = 0

-Romans 8:1–17:

-SELF = 1

-SPIRIT = 15

-(Self - "Jesus has made me free")

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Zechariah 4:6 — 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.

Amos 3:3 — Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?

-“I agree with the law that it is good.” (v16)

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God doesn't ask you, “How are you doing?” He asks you, “Where is your heart at?”

“For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.” (v22)

Psalms 119:174 — I long for Your salvation, O LORD, And Your law is my delight.

Psalms 119:176 — I have gone astray like a lost sheep; Seek Your servant, For I do not forget Your commandments.

Psalms 119:94 — I am Yours, save me