

Series: Discipleship

Title: When A Disciple Struggles



Pastor/Teacher: Dr. James H. Mason, III

“I can anticipate the response that is coming: “I know that all God’s commands are spiritual, but I’m not. Isn’t this also your experience?” Yes. I’m full of myself—after all, I’ve spent a long time in sin’s prison. What I don’t understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. So if I can’t be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God’s command is necessary. But I need something more! For if I know the law but still can’t keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don’t have what it takes. I can will it, but I can’t do it. I decide to do good, but I don’t really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don’t result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time. It happens so regularly that it’s predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God’s commands, but it’s pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge. I’ve tried everything and nothing helps. I’m at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn’t that the real question? The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.”

(Romans 7:14-25 MSG)

You can summarize the book of Romans in five words: sin, salvation, sanctification, sovereignty, and service. Sin covers why we need God and why we need Christ in our lives. Salvation deals with how to become a Christian.

Now the book of Romans deals with another true reality even though we have been saved from sin, set free from sin, we still struggle with it. I struggle, you struggle, and your neighbor struggles. We all still struggle with sin. We have been saved from the penalty of sin, we are being saved from the power of sin but, sadly we still live in the presence of sin. However, one day we will be saved from it all because in Heaven there is no sin and there will be no one to tempt us with sin.

Now, before we get into this text, we must understand the difference between legalism and license.

The Apostle Paul who was discipled by Jesus Himself taught much about this. We are saved by grace, not the law. When we believed in Jesus, he saved us. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. However, that doesn't give us a license to now disrespect the law, and do whatever we want.

“No! Now that we are saved, we live under grace and not law. But even Paul says: “Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?”

(Romans 6:1-2 NLT)

<https://bible.com/bible/116/rom.6.1-2.NLT>

So now that we are saved, it's not about willpower, it's about God's power. Only Jesus can give us the power to overcome anything that we will deal with:

Now for the text, in Paul's discussion with the church in Rome he says something that is so powerful.

The great Apostle, says after all the years he's been saved, He struggles with SIN. What?

Why do we struggle?

We have two natures.

When the Lord saved us, He saved our spirit, but it remained in our bodies. We are like new people in an old house but the old house every now and then, acts up.

*** New nature (Eph. 4:22-24)**

“Throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. So, stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. And “don't sin by letting anger control you.” Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.”

(Ephesians 4:22-27 NLT)

<https://bible.com/bible/116/eph.4.22-26.NLT>

*** Old nature (Gal. 5:16-18)**

“So, I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.

But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses. When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!”

(Galatians 5:16-23 NLT)

<https://bible.com/bible/116/gal.5.16-23.NLT>

I. I Must Confess _____

“So, the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin.”

(Romans 7:14 NLT)

<https://bible.com/bible/116/rom.7.14.NLT>

“Yeshua answered them, “Amen, amen I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.”

(John 8:34 TLV)

<https://bible.com/bible/314/jhn.8.34.TLV>

“So now [if that is the case, then] it is no longer I who do it [the disobedient thing which I despise], **but the sin [nature] which lives in me.**”

(Romans 7:17 AMP)

<https://www.bible.com/bible/1588/ROM.7.17.AMP>

It's in me but I can't let it control me.

II. I Must Not Be Controlled _____

“I don’t really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don’t do it. Instead, **I do what I hate.** But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. So, I am not the one doing wrong; **it is sin living in me that does it. And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can’t.**”

(Romans 7:15-18 NLT)

<https://bible.com/bible/116/rom.7.15-18.NLT>

What is sin?

Sin is any violation of the divine standard.

Sin is lethal.

“But [only] from the tree of the knowledge (recognition) of good and evil you shall not eat, **otherwise on the day that you eat from it, you shall most certainly die [because of your disobedience].**”

(Genesis 2:17 AMP)

<https://www.bible.com/bible/1588/GEN.2.17.AMP>

“Behold (pay close attention), all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.”

(Ezekiel 8:14 AMP)

<https://www.bible.com/bible/1588/EZK.18.4.AMP>

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God [that is, His remarkable, overwhelming gift of grace to believers] is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

(Romans 6:23 AMP)

<https://www.bible.com/bible/1588/ROM.6.23.AMP>

“Then when the illicit desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin has run its course, it gives birth to death.”

(James 1:15 AMP)

<https://www.bible.com/bible/1588/JAS.1.15.AMP>

Death is any illegitimate separation.

- Physical death
- Emotional death
- Relational death
- Economical death
- Eternal death

III. I Must Continue _____

“I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God’s law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! **The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So, you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God’s law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.**”

(Romans 7:21-25 NLT)

<https://bible.com/bible/116/rom.7.21-25.NLT>

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

(John 1:29 AMP)

<https://www.bible.com/bible/1588/JHN.1.29.AMP>

Sin is dealt with when I change, confess, conform, and commit.

“So repent [change your inner self—your old way of thinking, regret past sins] and return [to God—seek His purpose for your life], so that your sins may be wiped away [blotted out, completely erased],”

(Acts 3:19 AMP)

<https://www.bible.com/bible/1588/ACT.3.19.AMP>

“If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just [true to His own nature and promises] and will forgive our sins and cleanse us continually from all unrighteousness.”

(1 John 1:9 AMP)

<https://www.bible.com/bible/1588/1JN.1.9.AMP>

“And do not be conformed to this world [any longer with its superficial values and customs], but be transformed and progressively changed [as you mature spiritually] by the renewing of your mind [focus].”

(Romans 12:2 AMP)

<https://www.bible.com/bible/1588/ROM.12.2.AMP>

IV. I Must Commit _____

“So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. **So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God’s laws, and it never will.** That’s why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God. **But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.”**

(Romans 8:1-2, 5-9, 14 NLT)

<https://bible.com/bible/116/rom.8.2-14.NLT>

Yield not to temptation,
For yielding is sin;
Each vict’ry will help you,
Some other to win;
Fight valiantly onward,
Evil passions subdue;
Look ever to Jesus,
He will carry you through.

Refrain:

Ask the Savior to help you,
Comfort, strengthen and keep you;
He is willing to aid you,
He will carry you through.

2 Shun evil companions,
Bad language disdain;
God's name hold in rev'rence,
Nor take it in vain;
Be thoughtful and earnest,
Kindhearted and true;
Look ever to Jesus,
He will carry you through. [Refrain]

3 To him that o'ercometh,
God giveth a crown;
Through faith we will conquer,
Though often cast down;
He who is our Savior,
Our strength will renew;
Look ever to Jesus,
He will carry you through.

Author: H.R. Palmer (1868)

Answer Key:

- I. I Must Confess That SIN Lives In Me**
- II. I Must Not Be Controlled By The Sin That Tries To Destroy Me**
- III. I Must Continue To Rely On The Only Savior That Can Deliver Me**
- IV. I Must Commit To Living By The Spirit That Lives Within Me**

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this message?
