



VICTORY

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We are engaged in a struggle with the sinful nature and that's why Paul says, *For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.* <sup>20</sup>*Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.* <sup>21</sup>*I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.* <sup>22</sup>*For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:* <sup>23</sup>*But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.* (Romans 7:19-23) He's talking about the presence of the sinful nature.



*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* (Romans 7:24) This battle is so fierce! At times we feel miserable, because the battle seems so unequal. The sinful nature has so much power, and sin is so attractive. So at times we feel like Paul, *Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?* And what is the answer?

*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* (Romans 7:25) **I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.** There is the answer. We will never succeed trying to keep the law, saying to ourselves, "These are the standards, these are the rules and I am going to try my hardest to keep them." That's not the path to victory; in some way or other we will fail. But if we are in Christ we now don't need to live under the law. His Spirit lives in us. He has written His law of love in our hearts, and as we depend on Him, on the power of His Spirit, on His guidance and direction, we find victory. That's how God's law, the law of love, is fulfilled in our lives.

Jesus has given us victory in the struggle because **He already kept the law, and He lives in us.** If we depend on ourselves, we will fail. But if we keep our eyes on Jesus and our trust in Him, we will experience the victory He has already given us.

When we sin our attitude should be like this, "Lord, I've sinned, I've failed by allowing that thief to come in. Some areas of my life need to change, but You do it, by Your Spirit. I am still a new creation and in this very moment I'm completely new in You."

*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.* (Romans 7:25) With our mind we serve: God's law but the sinful nature that lives in us continues to serve the law of sin.

*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* (Romans 8:1) **There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.** What is condemnation? When a criminal is sentenced in court, he is under condemnation. He is sentenced to punishment because he is guilty. **The law correctly pronounces us guilty. In Christ, God pronounces us not guilty!**

Let that truth sink deep into your spirit. Yes, our sin has to be condemned and punished, but the Bible tells us that if we are in Jesus, now we are not condemned because Jesus was condemned and punished on the cross on our behalf. He took our place. That's why **if we are in Jesus, God disciplines us but He doesn't condemn us.**

*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* (Romans 8:2) Now we live under a new covenant, not under the law of laws and sin and death; but in the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, who set us free from slavery to sin and spiritual death.

*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: <sup>4</sup>That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* (Romans 8:3-4) If we live by the Spirit, we will bear fruit. In Christ we are already pleasing to and accepted by God, because Christ already fulfilled God's standards (Matthew 5:17) and we are in Him. And as we depend on Him in everything, He enables our obedience and we bear fruit. That's how God's will is fulfilled in our life. This is such a different way to live from trying to keep God's laws so that God will work in our lives! The law is already fulfilled in Christ, and He lives in and through us (Galatians 2:21).

*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh.* As we've said, the law can't set us free from our sin, no matter how hard we try. The law just cannot change us. It can show us our sin but can't give us the power to change, due to the weakness of our flesh, our sinful nature. *God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:* When Jesus died on the cross, our sin was fully punished and the power of our sin was killed. That's why we can have a new life, free from the slavery of sin, free to bear fruit for God. *<sup>4</sup>That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* Jesus fulfilled the law, and His Spirit lives in us, so as we live by His Spirit, God's will is fulfilled in our lives.

The other day while preaching on the streets I was talking with a young man who had not accepted Christ. As we talked about the need to be born again, I asked him, "How can we be born again?" He replied, "Well, I suppose we would have to die in order to be born again." "Exactly." I said, "It's not our mortal body that has to die so we can be born again, but our old self, our sinful nature. In fact it already died in Jesus, and when we ask Him into our hearts and trust in what He did for us, He makes us into new people, we are born again." We have died in Christ and been raised to a new life in Him. (Colossians 3:1-3). The sinful nature no longer has us enslaved. It will always be present until we receive new bodies in heaven, but it is no longer our master. We are free, and we must choose to walk in that freedom.

*For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.* (Romans 8:5-6) If you are in Christ, His Spirit will stir you to think on the things of God and to see things His way. *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. <sup>8</sup>So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.* (Romans 8:7-8) It doesn't matter how religious we may have been, the truth is that **before we were born again it was impossible for us to please God.**

*But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.* (Romans 8:9a) If the Spirit of God lives in you, you are not in your sinful nature. Yes, at times you fail by letting that thief, your old self, come in. However, your spiritual position remains the same, you are still in the Spirit. *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* (Romans 8:9b) There are only two kinds of people in the world, those who have Christ and those who do not have Him. There is no-one in-between. Either you have Him or you don't have Him. If you don't have Him, you don't belong to Him. You need to invite Him into your heart, surrendering your life to Him. If you have Him you are His, and you are in the Spirit. Period.

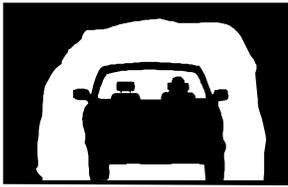
**THE LAW  
PRONOUNCES US  
GUILTY. IN  
CHRIST, GOD  
PRONOUNCES US  
NOT GUILTY!**

*And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Romans 8:10-11)* Your spirit is alive because of righteousness, the presence of the Holy Spirit in you. There is power in Jesus! We have said that the battle against temptation and sin seems unequal. Yes, it is unequal because He who lives in us is more powerful than he who lives in the world! (1 John 4:4) When temptation comes, you must remember that the power that lives in you is the power of the All-Powerful God. So you have the power to say “no” to wrongdoing. The battle **is** unequal, thank God!

*Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. <sup>13</sup>For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. (Romans 8:12-13)* We are debtors. We owe a debt. Christ died for us, He’s put the power of His Holy Spirit in us, and so we should not live in obedience to the sinful nature. If we live like that, we will die spiritually. *But if ye **through the Spirit** do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* It’s very important to note that it says, **through the Spirit**. The sinful nature tries to deceive, seduce, and stir you to sin, because Satan hates you and wants to destroy you. However **you can put the deeds of the sinful nature to death by the power of the Spirit who lives in you.**

We have the responsibility to make right choices according to the will of the Spirit of God. That’s how we put the deeds of the sinful nature to death. We have to be led by the Spirit. Here’s an example of how that process works.

I am a new creation. When I accepted God, He changed me totally. Before, I was a very angry person and I would get angry very easily. I enjoyed saying unkind things to people. I liked hurting people with my words. But when Jesus entered my life, my old self died. Christ changed me by giving me a new life.



But that sinful nature is always present, wanting to express itself. So, like all Christians, every day I have to choose to honor God and put the deeds of the sinful nature to death. Here’s the example. At times when I’m driving, another motorist does something that annoys me. And at times I am very tempted to react by saying something ugly to the other motorist, acting in an angry way. The temptation is real! But I know that to react that way would not reflect the new nature which God has given me. In fact, it would reflect my old, sinful nature. So, when tempted in that way I have to choose not to accept it. I choose to respond like this, “Lord, you live in me by your Spirit. I know that Your Spirit doesn’t want me to react like that. So I will not open my mouth and say bad things. I am no longer a slave to anger. I will not react out of anger.” And perhaps in that moment the Spirit leads me to pray for that other motorist. That’s an example of putting the deeds of the sinful nature to death by living according to the Holy Spirit.

So to finish. The law of God is good, it shows us His holiness. It shows us how sinful sin is. However if we’re in Christ we no longer live under the law, because He already kept all the law. Now the law of God, His will, is written in our hearts, and from within, from our spirit where Jesus Christ lives, He guides us, shows us how to act, and gives us the power to fulfill His will.

*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? <sup>25</sup>I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 7:24-25)* At times, when we see what God wants in our lives, we get discouraged, because we end up not doing the good that we should do. Perhaps we do the wrong that we don’t want to do. At times we struggle with sins that don’t want to die very easily. But our hope is in this, that Jesus Christ lives in us. He already fulfilled the law. He is the All-Powerful and when we depend on Him and respond to His voice, we experience victory in our lives.

**WE ARE FREE,  
AND WE MUST  
CHOOSE TO WALK  
IN THAT  
FREEDOM.**

I'll give you one more example before we finish. In my youth, after coming to Christ, I struggled with a specific sin, and it didn't matter how hard I tried, I couldn't get over it. So I frequently got really discouraged. I know that the law of God, written in my heart, didn't permit me to do this thing. But I felt so weak in the face of the temptation. One day while I was in a Christian friend's house, I took a book off the bookshelf and opened it just anywhere. My eyes fell on a part that said something really simple, "If you are in Christ you are now a new creation and sin does not have power over you." In that moment God showed me, "Peter, you are a new creation, you are already free from this sin. You don't have to live like a slave any more. Jesus lives in you, He has made you into a new creation and He has already set you free from this sin." And in that moment I found freedom and didn't go back to committing that sin. The law hadn't given me the victory, it only condemned me. **It did its job by making me miserable and showing me I needed a Savior.** But when I realized that Jesus had set me free from the condemnation of the law and the slavery of sin, and that He lived in me giving me the power to overcome, I found the victory.

**NOW THAT WE  
ARE FREE, LET'S  
BEAR MUCH  
FRUIT FOR GOD!**

Thank God, if you are in Christ, you are no longer under the law of sin and death. Thank God, we already have the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Now that we are free, let's bear much fruit for God! Amen.

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**"IF ANYONE THIRST, LET THEM COME TO ME AND DRINK"- JESUS  
(JOHN 7:37)**