

Developing A Deeper Dependency and Intimacy
Through The Struggle
Rom 7:4-25

James Helton, October 19, 2025, Tru Community Church

Last week we dove into Romans 6

- Where Paul lays down the reality of what's happened in Christ
- We died to sin
 - That is our new position.
 - Through Christ's death, burial, and resurrection
 - We've been spiritually relocated.
 - Sin is no longer our master.
 - We are not under law but under Grace.

But here's the catch...

- We still live in a body that still remembers the old master.
- To put it another way...
 - Grace breaks the chains...
 - BUT the flesh still knows the rhythm of slavery.

Before Grace can feel like freedom we need to know what made us prisoners and slaves in the first place.

- That is where the Law comes in.
- Vs 7 - Is the law sin? NO!
- The law is not the villain.
 - It is the flash light.
 - It is the mirror.
 - It reveals sin.
 - It wakes us up.

As we look at chapter 7...

- Paul sounds less like a polished apostle and more like a man in a war with his own soul.

Vs 15 - I do what I hate.

- After chapter 6 this doesn't sound like a spiritual victory lap.
- It sounds like your Tuesday night when temptation knocks and you opened the door.
- Or your Sunday morning guilt trip when you sing about a God that you feel distant from.

- But we don't like to admit that's us...
- So we skip it.
- We pretend like we are all good.

We skip the struggle.

- When we skip it...
 - We set ourselves up for a lie.
 - The idea that salvation is the same as “instant transformation”.
 - That once your saved the struggle ends
 - the flesh shuts up and the Spirit takes over like a magic button.

Grace doesn't skip the struggle...

- It meets us in the struggle!
 - Even Jesus knew we would go through struggles...
 - Luke 9:23 - Take up your cross and follow Me.
 - John 14 - Jesus promises the Holy Spirit. Vs 27 He says, Peace I leave with you, not as the world does. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.
 - John 15:18 - If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first.
 - John 16:33 - I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

But we have been taught another lie...

- That maturity looks like fewer or no struggles. (perfection)
- But in the Kingdom
 - Maturity often looks like louder cries for help.
 - You see if you're still crying out then you're still in the fight.
 - And if you hate your sin then you're not numb, your are ALIVE!
 - The cry of Romans 7 is not proof of failure...
 - It's the proof of Faith.

Here in Romans 7, Paul is inviting us into the mess...

- Not a place to stay BUT a place to be REAL.
- And in being REAL...

- We become DEPENDENT.
- Dependence is the beginning of spiritual maturity...
 - Not self reliance.
 - Not pretending.
 - But standing in the tension between what God has declared over you and what your body still remembers from sin.
 - I Am Not Ok (Jelly Roll) lyrics.
 - This is the space between the promise and the process.

Paul didn't write this chapter to confuse you...

- He wrote it to free you.
 - Not from the struggle...
 - But from shame.
 - Not from the presence of sin...
 - But from its power.
 - Not so you would feel defeated...
 - But so you would be desperate.

Romans 6 shows — Positionally.

- You are free, justified, and adopted.

Romans 7 shows — Conditionality.

- Your flesh still wages war, your soul still limps sometimes.

Paul is speaking in the present tense.

- He is not saying he is unredeemed...
 - He is saying that even as a redeemed man there's a war going on inside.

Vs 21-23 - I want to do what's right, but I find another law at work in me, waging war.

- That is not sin reigning.
- That is not defeat.
- That is the sound of a man refusing to make peace with his flesh.

Paul is showing us what maturity looks like.

- Not the absence of struggle...
 - But the presence of a FIGHT!

The presence of a fight doesn't mean you are far from God.

- It means you are ALIVE.
- Dead people don't wrestle.

Some read Romans 7 and relate it to spiritual immaturity.

- But it is really about spiritual awareness.
- Immaturity doesn't cry out in need of help.
- Immaturity defends.
- Immaturity compares.
- But maturity drops to it's knees with a trembling heart and says...
 - "God, I need You more than ever. I can't fix myself."

Paul is not flaunting failure...

- He is demonstrating dependence.
 - Vs 25 - Thanks be to God.
- When you come through Romans 7 broken and exhausted...
 - The Spirit doesn't condemn you...
 - He comforts you and empowers you to stand again.
 - Hard Fought Hallelujah (Brandon Lake & Jelly Roll)

The presence of ongoing struggles does not invalidate your salvation.

- It's the evidence that grace is working.
 - Grace doesn't eliminate the struggle...
 - It empowers you to walk through it!

Vs 24 - Wretched man am I - who will deliver me from this body of death?

- That's not the language of someone distant from God.
 - That's not despair for despair's sake.
 - That is the sound of holiness trying to breath into a body still prone to sin.
 - It is the groan of someone who knows what righteousness looks like, wants to live it, and yet finds himself still stuck in a zone of desire and failure.
- war
- This moment here in Romans 7 is not spiritual regression...
 - It's spiritual clarity!

Wretched man is not the moan of the defeated...

- It is the roar of someone who refuses to fake it anymore.

Wretched in the Greek is = Talaporos.

- Exhausted from battle.

- It's the word for a soldier who's fought long and hard and is struggling under the weight of war.
- This is the cry of someone who hasn't given up...
 - But is worn-out from trying to fight sin in their own strength.

Vs 24 - Who will deliver/rescue me from this body of death?

- The Romans had many means of execution.
- One such way for murderers was to chain them to their victim's dead body and leave them to rot along side of the dead body.
- Paul being a Roman citizen would have known about this.
 - It is likely the metaphor he is imploring here for the believer still tethered to sinful flesh.
- Vs 24 - Who will deliver me from this body of death?

The answer can be found in the next verse...

- Vs 25 - Thanks be to God through Jesus!

You see...

- Salvation doesn't end the war...
 - It ignites it!
- You are not really at war with sin when you are spiritually dead.

The war within is the sound of NEW Life.

Romans 7 is not about pity...

- But transformation.
 - Not transformation of "I've arrived".
 - But "I know Who to run to!"

So if you feel that tension that pulls you between the holiness you long for and the habits your ashamed of...

- That's NOT failure.
- That's proof of Life!

This internal war points us to a deeper Dependence and Intimacy with the God Who deeply loves us.

- And ultimately sets the stage for the chapter that has NO condemnation.
- But we don't arrive at chapter 8 by skipping the fight...

— We arrive bloodied, bruised and yet Believing anyways.

The journey of sanctification - that Pastor Dave talked about last week...

— Doesn't skip steps - it is a promise and a process.

— Remember that Grace doesn't skip the struggle...

— It meets us in the struggle!

As we have seen...

— Romans 7 is NOT - NOT a sign of defeat or failure.

— It is the soil in which Dependency and Intimacy with Christ grows!

Next Steps/Application:

1. If you are pretending everything is OK — STOP!
Be real with God, yourself and those around you.
2. Are you living the lie that now you are saved the struggles are over or that you are perfect? Remember the struggles can lead us to a deeper dependence and intimacy with Jesus.
3. Maybe you need to sit this week in the Hard Fought Hallelujah and cry out to the God Who deeply loves you.



WALKING IN **V**ICTORY
THROUGH ROMANS

ROMANS 7:4-25

4 So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. **5** For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. **6** But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.



ROMANS 7:4-25

7 What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” **8** But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead. **9** Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died.



ROMANS 7:4-25

10 I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. **11** For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. **12** 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? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produce death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.



ROMANS 7:4-25

14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. **15** I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. **16** And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. **17** As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. **18** I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. **19** For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do — this I keep on doing. **20** Now if I do what I do not want to do; it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.



ROMANS 7:4-25

21 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. **22** For in my inner being I delight in God's law; **23** but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. **24** What a wretched man 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 in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.



Last week

What happened in Christ...

- We died to sin
- We've been spiritually relocated
- Sin is no longer our master
- We are not under law but under grace



Grace - Freedom

7 What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.”

Is the law sin? NO!

-It is the flash light.

-It is the mirror.

-It reveals sin.



Don't skip it

15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.

This doesn't sound like the victory lap after chapter 6.
We pretend like we are all good.
So we skip the struggle and set ourselves up for a lie.

*Grace doesn't skip the struggle...
It meets us in the struggle!*



Maturity

Lie = maturity looks like fewer or no struggles (perfection)

In the Kingdom...

Maturity often looks like louder cries for help.

If you are crying out - you are still in the fight.

Romans 7 is not proof of failure...

It's the proof of Faith!



Stepping into the mess

Not a place to stay - BUT a place to be REAL.

In being REAL...

We become Dependent.

Dependents is the beginning of spiritual maturity...

Standing in the tension between what God has declared over you and what your body still remembers from sin.

This is the space between the Promise and the Process.



From Confusion to Freedom

Paul wrote Romans 7 to free you

Not from the struggle...

But from Shame.

Not from the presence of sin...

But from it's power.

Not so you would feel defeated...

But so you would be desperate.



Position & Condition

Romans 6 = Position

You are free, justified, and adopted!

Romans 7 = Condition

Your flesh still wages war, your soul still limps sometimes.

Paul is not saying that he is unredeemed.

He is saying that even as a redeemed man there's a war going on inside.



Waging War

21 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. **22** For in my inner being I delight in God's law; **23** but I see another law at work in the members of my body, **waging war** against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

This is not sin reigning.

This is not defeat.

That is the sound of a man not making peace with his flesh.



Fight

Maturity is not the absence of struggle...

But the presence of a FIGHT!

The presence of a fight doesn't mean you are far from God.

It means you are ALIVE!



Maturity

Romans 7 is not about spiritual immaturity.

But about spiritual awareness.

Immaturity doesn't cry out for help.

Immaturity defends and compares.

BUT maturity drops to it's knees with a trembling heart and says... "God, I need You more than ever. I can't fix myself."

Paul is not flaunting failure...

He is demonstrating Dependence.



Hard Fought



Not Invalidate

The presence of ongoing struggles does NOT invalidate your salvation!

It's the evidence that grace is working.

Grace doesn't eliminate the struggle...

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Wretched man

24 What a **wretched** man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

This is not someone who is far from God.

This is not despair just for despair sake.

That is the sound of holiness trying to breath into a body still prone to sin.

It is the groan of someone who knows what righteousness looks like, wants to live it, and yet finds himself still stuck in a war zone of desire and failure.



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Deliver/Rescue

24 What a wretched man I am! **Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

Romans had many execution methods

Paul might be using this method as a metaphor for the believer still tethered to sinful flesh.

Who will deliver me from this body of death?



Deliver/Rescue

24 What a wretched man I am! **Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

25 Thanks be to God —through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Salvation doesn't end the war...

It ignites it!

The war within is the sound of NEW Life!



Transformation

Not as in “I’ve arrived”

BUT as in “I know Who to run to!”

The tension you feel that pulls you between the holiness you long for and the habits your ashamed of...

That’s NOT failure - That’s proof of Life!



Dependence and Intimacy

This internal war points us to a deeper Dependence and Intimacy with the God Who deeply loves us.

And ultimately sets the stage for the next chapter that has NO condemnation.

But we don't arrive at chapter 8 by skipping the fight...

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Journey

The journey of sanctification...

Doesn't skip steps

It is a Promise and a Process

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