



Romans

Right With God

Wrestling With Sin

Lesson Thirty

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum

Romans

Right With God

Lesson Thirty

Page 2 of 4

Wrestling With Sin

Today we come to one of Paul's most personal confessions. Paul, the great apostle, the one who wrote a third of the New Testament, the one who could claim to be a Pharisee of Pharisees, the one to whom Jesus appeared on the road to Damascus, the one who could say, several times, "imitate me;" yes, that Paul, was a sinner! In Philippians 3:6 he testifies that at one time, "as for legalistic righteousness, (he was) faultless." Yet, now he says that he constantly wrestles with sin. In our Scripture for today, Paul makes himself an example of the great human problem: wanting to do right, but doing wrong. Read Romans 7:13-25

Verse thirteen confirms our lesson title for last session. He says that his spiritual death was because he disobeyed the Law and the Law proved that *sin is utterly sinful*. And with verse fourteen Paul vividly paints the picture of his own struggle with sin. It gets worse and worse until in verse twenty-four where he cries out, "O wretched man that I am, who will set me free..." Paul tells us that he wanted to do the right thing. He knew the Law and was most willing to try to live up to the Law. He said, however, that in the middle of his effort to do the right things, he found himself doing the things he hated. He had the right attitude toward the Law, so the Law couldn't be the cause of his disobedience. So, he said in verse seventeen, it was sin in him that was doing the wrong thing. He headed toward good, but didn't make it. Sin is falling short.*

Sin was dwelling in his humanity. He lived in a constant state of internal war. What his inner self, his spirit wanted to do was good. But what his outward self, his humanity, wanted to do was not good. Life was hopeless. Sin was going to win. The enemy had Paul right where he wanted him.

Paul felt like a prisoner of war. Sin had him captured and controlled. He was forced to do what his spirit didn't want to do. He felt like he was condemned to death. Sin imprisoned him and was driving him strait to death. Law, he said, rules in a good way. But sin rules in a bad way. He lives under the "principle," the rule, of sin.

Then he said, "O wretched man that I am..." (New International Translation). The same verse from The Message Translation says, "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?" Now, remember that Paul is using his own personal experience to help us see how bad sin really is. He speaks for all of us who are in the situation he has been in. Paul is not really feeling hopeless here, but he speaks from experience. He remembers how bad life was without hope. Then he asks, for all of us, "Who will rescue me...?" Other translations ask, "Who will set me free...?"

Romans

Right With God

Lesson Thirty

Page 3 of 4

Please note that Paul didn't ask, "What will rescue me...?" He knew it had to be someone, not something to set him free from being a prisoner of war, held captive by sin.

Then, you can hear him just shout, "Thanks be to God, (it is) through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Thanks be to the God who gave the law, who called Abraham and accounted his faith as righteousness, who was the God of the Jews, and who was the Father of Jesus. Deliverance is coming through Jesus, our Lord. Thanks be to God! How? One human delivered all humans to sin. From Adam, sin, like DNA, is passed on to all of us. But one human, Jesus Christ, did not sin and conquered all sin of all humans on the cross.

In verse twenty-five Paul goes back to the wrestling: slave to the law or slave to sin. But, look at the next verse, the first verse of the eighth chapter, we hear Paul rejoicing, "Therefore there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, because...Christ Jesus...set me free!" Victory! Well, that's our next lesson...can't wait!

Scripture Memory: "Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Romans 7:24b, 25a

*Underlined statements in this Teacher's Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher's Guide.

For the Teacher:

Lesson Goal: To teach students that even though we fail, Jesus is there to free us from our sinfulness.

1. Paul is so frustrated that he repeats himself. Verse nineteen is repetition of verse fifteen. Verse twenty is repetition of verse seventeen.
2. Paul has previously proved that the Law cannot be blamed for our sin. He also has said that death is certain. In this Scripture, Paul said that the Law is not responsible for our death, sin is.
3. Verses fourteen through twenty explain Paul's struggle with sin. He places before the Romans a great contrast. Spiritual as opposed to flesh or humanity. God is Spirit, see John 4:24. Humanity, created in the image of God, failed the loyalty test and became sinful. So, flesh is in opposition to God.
4. Verse twenty five is important to the understanding of this lesson, and chapter eight. He first made a strong exclamation. He was delivered from the power of sin by God's gift of Jesus. Then he seems to go back to his conundrum. Look at the words closely: He says that his deliverance is through Jesus. Then he said, "I myself." He is contrasting the blessing of God with his own weakness. He is telling the reader again that it is all of God. Not even one small credit is due to Paul's own strength. Paul wrestles; God overcomes.
5. The Message translation renders verses twenty-four and twenty-five in a more understandable way: "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."
6. Though there is disagreement, this passage is surely spoken of from the point of view of a person who Jesus has redeemed. Paul never suggests that a Christian would be sinless. See also Galatians 5:16, 17.

Romans

Right With God

Lesson Thirty

Page 4 of 4

Student Worksheet

Wrestling With Sin

=Paul said in verse seventeen, it was sin in him that was doing the _____ thing. He headed toward good, but didn't make it. _____ is falling short.

=He lived in a constant state of _____. What his inner self, his spirit wanted to do was _____. But what his outward self, his _____, wanted to do was _____ good.

=He remembers how bad life was without _____. Then he asks, for us all, "Who will _____ me...?" Other translations ask, "Who will set me _____...?"

=Please note that Paul didn't ask, "What will _____ me...?" He knew it had to be someone, not _____ to set him free from being a _____ of war.

=Thanks be to the God who gave the _____, who called Abraham and accounted his _____ as righteousness, who was the God of the Jews, and who was the Father of _____. Deliverance is coming through Jesus, our _____. _____ be to God!

Scripture Memory: "Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Romans 7:24b, 25a

A Roman Road to Salvation:

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Everyone is a sinner and needs salvation.

Romans 6:23a "For the wages of sin is death." The law of God is unchangeable. If someone sins the penalty must be paid, the payment is death.

Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ died for us." God loves us so much, according to John 3:16, that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins.

Romans 6:23b "But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." The penalty for sin is spiritual death, but God, through the death of Jesus on the cross, took the penalty for the sins of all people, and now everyone can have eternal life. See also, II Corinthians 5:21

Romans 10:9, 10 "That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." To personally receive the gift of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus, you trust God to be what He says He is. Believing that "God raised Him (Jesus) from the dead" is to accept all that the Bible says about God and His Son, Jesus. Then you speak (confess) the words, "Jesus is Lord," as a statement of faith. Believing "with your heart" means that you believe with your mind and with everything that you are.

Romans 10:13 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." You have the promise of God Himself that if you do what Romans 10:9, 10 says, you will become God's child and have eternal life.

Romans 12:1, 2 "I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will." Becoming a Christian is a life-long act of faith and worship.