

# KINGDOM.

# LESSON 28

<b>1</b>	<b>PRAYER</b>
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*Group leader. Pray* for God's guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Commit your group and this lesson about preaching God's kingdom to the Lord.

<b>2</b>	<b>SHARING</b> (20 minutes) <span style="float: right;"><b>[QUIET TIMES]</b> <b>PSALMS 141,143,145 and 146</b></span>
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*Take turns and share (or read* from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times with God out of the assigned Bible passages (Psalm 141, 143, 145 and 146). Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares. Take notes.

<b>3</b>	<b>MEMORISATION</b> (5 minutes) <span style="float: right;"><b>[GOD'S GREATNESS]</b> <b>(4) HEBREWS 4:13</b></span>
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*Review* two by two.

**(4) God is all-knowing. Hebrews 4:13.** Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

<b>4</b>	<b>BIBLE STUDY</b> (85 minutes) <span style="float: right;"><b>[THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS]</b> <b>ROMANS 7:14-25</b></span>
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*Introduce.* Make use of the five steps method of Bible study to study **Romans 7:14-25** together.

In Romans 7:14-25, Paul teaches that there is a spiritual and moral war going on in the Christian. The Christian has, as it were, two natures: a sinful nature and a regenerate nature. The sinful nature is not his real nature, but it is nevertheless a power that often makes him a prisoner. Time and again, the believer commits certain sins, but he longs to be freed from these sins.

The moral law cannot deliver him from the power and the depravity of sin! From his own experience Paul shows the insufficiency of the law for holiness (sanctification)! In the inward conflict between sin and holiness, no law can help the Christian. The only hope of victory in the struggle between his sinful nature and his regenerate nature is in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

<b>STEP 1. READ.</b>	<b>GOD'S WORD</b>
LET US READ Romans 7:14-25 together. Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading.	

<b>STEP 2. DISCOVER.</b>	<b>OBSERVATIONS</b>
<i>Consider.</i> WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU? Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART? <i>Record.</i> Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook. <i>Share.</i> (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share). Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered. (Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things)	

## **7:14-20**

### **Discovery 1. What the law cannot do.**

**Although the law is holy, righteous and good, it cannot make Christians holy, righteous or good.**

#### **(1) A Christian has two realities in his human nature.**

The one aspect is called "flesh" (the law of sin that operates in the members of his body) (Romans 7:18), that is, their sinful nature, which is imperfect, weak and temporary (transitory). The other aspect is called "mind" (the law of the mind, the inner man) (Romans 7:22,25), that is, their regenerate nature, which is controlled within by God's Spirit (the Holy Spirit) and without by God's moral law.

Romans 7:14-25 describes the war (conflict or battle) between a Christian's sinful nature, which he derived from Adam, and his regenerate nature, which he derived from Christ (cf. Romans 5:17-19). Both the sinful nature and regenerate nature dwell in the spirit (soul) as well as in the body of the Christian.

**(2) A Christian want to do the good things, but often does evil things instead.**

In Romans 7:14-15, Paul argues that the moral law is unable to sanctify Christians. This is not due to the nature of the moral law, but due to the sinful nature, which still dwells in Christians. The law is spiritual in nature, because it reveals God's nature and will, which is holy, righteous and good (7:12). But the sinful nature of Christians is unspiritual, that is, it does not and cannot subject itself to God and God's holy, righteous and good will.

While non-Christians *voluntarily* and *permanently* yield themselves to be slaves of their sinful nature (present tense, active) (6:16), Christians are involuntarily (through the fall of their representative, Adam) sold to their sinful nature (perfect tense, passive) (Romans 7:14). Christians do not willingly give themselves to the service of sin, but their sinful nature is in the position or condition of a sold person, whose acts are not always the evidence of their inner inclination (Romans 7:14; cf. "prisoner of their sinful nature", Romans 7:23). Christians want to do the good things, but their sinful nature works so forcefully against them that they often do evil things instead (Romans 7:15).

Paul's spiritual and moral goal is nothing less than perfection (cf. Philippians 3:12-14; cf. Matthew 5:48; Hebrews 12:14). But at the end of each day when Paul evaluates his life, he realises that he falls far short of God's standard of perfection and loathes some of the evil things he has done. He realises that his goal is much higher than he actually can attain.

**(3) The moral law simply cannot make a Christian holy, righteous or good!**

In Romans 7:16-20, Paul concludes several important things. He concludes that although Christians hate their transgressions of God's moral law, they still admit that God's moral law is good (Romans 7:16). He concludes that the sinful acts, which Christians do, are no longer the criterion of the Christians' real character (Romans 7:17). Their sinful acts are indeed their own acts. But when these sinful acts are not performed with the full agreement of their regenerated nature, they no longer show the complete human nature of Christians or the real state of Christians. He concludes that the sinful acts, which Christians often do, only confirm that nothing spiritually or morally good or beneficial lives in their sinful nature (Romans 7:18-20).

Although the moral law commands what a Christian should do and the regenerate nature of Christians desires to do what the moral law commands, the moral law simply cannot destroy the sinful nature in Christians! Whenever God commands that a particular evil should not be done, God's moral command does not automatically destroy the inclination in Christians to do that evil thing.

Conclusion. The moral law cannot help Christians in the struggle between their sinful nature and their regenerate nature. The moral law simply cannot make a Christian holy, righteous or good.

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**7:21-25**

**Discovery 2. What the law cannot do. Although a Christian delights in God's moral law, only God's grace can rescue him from the absolute dominion of his sinful nature.**

**(1) The control of the Holy Spirit in the Christian is never perfect or total.**

In Romans 7:21-25, Paul states his final conclusion. The life-long struggle of Christians is between their sinful nature, which they derived from Adam, and their regenerate nature, which they derived from Christ. With their regenerate nature (inner being, mind, law of the mind), Christians *continually* delight (present tense) in God's moral law (Romans 7:22).

But a Christian soon discovers and painfully realises that his sinful or depraved nature *again and again* wages war (present tense) against his regenerate nature and makes him feel that he is a prisoner of his sinful nature. The sinful nature not only makes war against the Christian, but also often conquers the Christian (Romans 7:23)! It takes the spirit (soul) and body of Christians captive and makes them subject to its powerful corrupt influence. The power of the sinful nature is still so great, that Christians cannot resist it with their own will power or effort (cf. Romans 7:15,23). Christians do not become the willing servant of their sinful nature, but rather its miserable victim. As long as a Christian still lives in his present physical body, he remains the unwilling and reluctant servant of his own sinful nature. As long as the Christian still lives on this earth, his sinful nature will be present and the control of the Holy Spirit will never be perfect or total in him.

The present physical body of Christians is called "the body of death" (Romans 7:24), because their physical body is still the sphere where their sinful nature operates most specifically, causing spiritual death and finally physical death.

**(2) Christ will rescue the Christian again and again from the forceful operation of his sinful nature.**

The moral law by itself only makes the Christian more aware of his helpless and depraved condition. It drives him to seek victory in his struggle against his sinful nature where it only can be obtained, that is, from Christ (Romans 7:25). Only Jesus Christ can and will *certainly* rush to the rescue to save (future tense, expresses certainty) the Christian from his "body of death" (Romans 7:24).

Once for all the old unregenerate nature (old self) of the Christian has been crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6). Once for all the Christian has set him free (aorist tense) from sin and he has become a slave to righteousness (Romans 6:18) and a slave to God (Romans 6:22). But *again and again* Christ will come to rescue the Christian from the forceful operation of his sinful nature (1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 1:9). And at his second coming, Christ will *certainly, completely and forever rescue* the Christian from his sinful nature (Romans 7:24).

**(3) The Christian must make war against his sinful nature and make an end to the misdeeds of his sinful nature.**

**Conclusion.** The spiritual struggle of a Christian is between his sinful nature, which he derived from Adam, and his regenerate nature, which he derived from Christ. The sinful nature of the Christian is a power from which he cannot free himself. *Time and again* he serves his sinful nature as a slave. However, the regenerate nature of the Christian is also a power, because nothing less than the Holy Spirit lives in him! Therefore, *again and again* he also serves God's moral law as a slave.

Paul does not simply accept *this present condition*. He is deeply convinced that Jesus Christ will rescue him out of this condition. Therefore, he has the responsibility to make war against his sinful nature and put to death its misdeeds through the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Romans 8:13; Galatians 5:16-26).

**STEP 3. QUESTION.**

**EXPLANATIONS**

**Consider.** WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP?

Let us try to understand all the truths in Romans 7:14-25 and ask questions about the things we still do not understand.

**Record.** Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook.

**Share.** (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.)

**Discuss.** (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.)

(The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)

**7:14-26**

**Question 1. What phase of Paul's personal experience is portrayed in this passage? Is this the experience of an unregenerate person or of a regenerate person?**

**Notes.** There are people who argue that Romans 7:14-26 cannot be the experience of a born-again believer. They base their argument on the statement, "I am unspiritual" (Romans 7:14) and on the contrast between Romans chapter 7 on the one hand and Romans chapters 6 and 8 on the other hand.

Nevertheless, in Romans 7:14-26 Paul describes his experience as a born-again believer.

**(1) Paul is humble and realistic about himself.**

As a born-again believer Paul calls himself: "The least of the apostles" (1 Corinthians 15:9), "The least of all God's people" (Ephesians 3:8) and "The worst of sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). Likewise, in Romans 7:24 he describes himself as "a wretched man" (Romans 7:24) as long as he is not yet completely saved (delivered) from his sinful (depraved) nature. This will only happen at the second coming when he will see Jesus Christ face to face (cf. 1 John 3:1-3; Philippians 3:8-14)!

**(2) Romans 7:14-26 is more likely a description of a believer than an unbeliever.**

Paul's statements in Romans 7:14-25 are more likely the statements of a regenerate than of an unregenerate person. It is unlikely that an unregenerate person would say, "I agree that God's law is good" (Romans 7:16,22), "I do not approve of sin, I hate sin and deeply regret my sins" (Romans 7:15,19,24) and "I wish to do what is good" (Romans 7:18,19,21). It is unlikely that an unregenerate person would thank God, through Jesus Christ, as Paul is doing (Romans 7:25; cf. 1 Corinthians 12:3).

It is clear that in Romans 7:14-25, Paul describes how great the weakness of Christians is. In order to be sanctified, Christians need a much greater power outside themselves than their sinful nature inside them. They need no one less than Jesus Christ and his Holy Spirit! During his first coming to the earth Jesus Christ earned the necessary righteousness and the holiness for all believers. Throughout the whole history of salvation the Holy Spirit applies this righteousness and holiness to the personal lives of Christians. Only at the second coming will all Christians be completely like Christ (1 John 3:1-3; Philippians 3:20)

**(3) There is a great difference between Romans 7:14-26 and Romans 7:5,9a.**

**Romans 7:5,9a describes an unregenerate person.** When Paul was unregenerate, he lived *in the flesh* (the sinful nature) and *bore fruit for death* (Romans 7:5; cf. Galatians 5:19-21). As long as he lived apart from the moral law, he gave no serious attention to God's moral law. The moral law did not arouse sinful desires in his sinful nature and he lived an *undisturbed, self-sufficient and self-righteous* life, *unafraid* of God's punishment for sins (Romans 7:9a)!

**Romans 7:7-13 most likely describes a regenerate person.** It describes Paul's experience *just before, during and shortly after* his conversion. The change of *the past tense* in the verbs in Romans 7:8-13 to *the present tense* in Romans

7:14-25 must refer to a radical change from an unregenerate to a regenerate person! In Romans 7:14-26 Paul describes the weakness and struggle of a Christian as long as he still lives in his present mortal body on this earth!

**(4) Romans 7:14-26 and Romans 6:18,22 are not contradictory. The born-again believer is simultaneously a sinner and a saint: a believer who often still misses the goal of God, but is nevertheless a saint in God's eyes.**

**On the one hand the believer is *still often* "sold under sin" (present tense) (Romans 7:14).** His sinful nature still has such an influence in his life that he cannot yet live a complete sinless life (cf. Matthew 6:12; 1 John 1:8-10; 2:1-2). The sinful (depraved) nature is still a power that coerces and control the Christian (Romans 7:21,23,25). *Time and again* (present continuous tense) the sinful nature conducts war (Greek: antistrateuomai) against the Holy Spirit or resists the Holy Spirit living in the Christian and tries to drag the Christian back into his old life-style (Romans 7:23a; cf. Galatians 5:17). *Often (time and again)* (present continuous tense) the sinful nature (the law of sin) makes the Christian a prisoner of war (Greek: aichmalótizō) of the law of sin (Romans 7:23b).

The sinful nature (the law of sin) is so powerful that the Christian cannot resist it with his own will power or effort. Paul does *not* say that the sinful nature *always* conquers or that the Christian can only live a defeated life. He says that the sinful or depraved nature of a Christian is a power from which the Christian cannot free himself and which *at times or often (and thus not always)* conquers him in spite of the fact that the Christian does not want that.

**On the other hand the Christian "has *once for all* died to sin" (aorist tense) (Romans 6:2).** The Christian has once for all (aorist time) died (Greek: apothnéskō) to sin. He *remains for ever* (perfect tense) legally freed (justified) (Greek: dikaiomai) from sin (Romans 6:7). He has *once for all* (aorist time) been set free (Greek: eleutheroō) from sin (Romans 6:18,22) and has *once for all* (aorist tense) become a slave (Greek: douloō) of God and his righteousness (Romans 6:18,22).

He is commanded to *continually* (present tense) reckon himself (Greek: logizomai) dead to sin, but alive to God (in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:11). He *never* allow sin to rule as king (Greek: basileuō) in his mortal body to obey its evil desires (Romans 6:12). He is commanded *never* to offer (Greek: parhistémi/parhistanō) (imperative mood, present continuous tense) the parts of his body (for example, his ears and eyes, hands and feet, mind and heart) as weapons (instruments) of wickedness to sin, but *once for all* offer himself to God as those who have been brought from death to life and offer the parts of his body as weapons (instruments) of righteousness (Romans 6:13). He is commanded to just as he *once (earlier)* had offered (literally: as a slave) (Greek: parhistémi/parhistanō) (imperative mood, aorist tense) the parts of his body to impurity and ever increasing wickedness, so he *must now once for all* offer (imperative mood, aorist tense) (literally: as slaves) the parts of his body to righteousness leading to holiness. (Romans 6:19).

The dominating position and power of his sinful nature has *once for all time* been broken! Although *time and again* he does fall into doing sins (Romans 7:14-26), he does not want, cannot and will not continue to live in sin (he will not persist in sin) (Romans chapter 6)! Satan, the godless and wicked world and his sinful nature cannot stop the Christian from doing righteous works and from growing in holiness (Romans 6:13,17,19)! To continue living in sin means that the person is still "spiritually dead" , "still not born again" (cf. 1 John 3:6-9). But being once for all time justified leads to continually more holiness (holy living) and finally results (literally) in eternal life (Romans 6:23)!

With regard to his *position or state in Christ*, a Christian is already a saint. The 100% perfect righteousness and holiness of Christ (which Christ earned or acquired for the Christian) has already been imputed (ascribed) to him (NIV: credited to his account) (1 Corinthians 1:30). He has already been *separated* from the godless and wicked world *and dedicated* to belong to God.

With regard to his *process of growth in Jesus Christ*, a Christian is not yet complete or perfectly righteous and holy in his thoughts, motives, attitudes, words and deeds (his Christian walk, development or lifestyle) (cf. 1 Peter 1:15-16).

**(5) Romans 7:14-26 and Romans 8:7-8 are complete opposites.**

**The unregenerate person.** Romans 8:7-8 literally says, "The mind of the flesh is *continually* hostile to God. It *never* submits to the law of God (present continuous tense). Those who *remain* in the flesh (present continuous tense) are *never* able to please God (present continuous tense)."

The unregenerate person lives "in the flesh", that is, his depraved nature rules over him. Consequently he *remains* hostile to God and he *never* submits to God's law (present continuous tense) and he *can never* submit to God's law (present continuous tense) (Romans 8:7).

**The regenerate person.** Romans 8:5-6 literally says, "Those who *continually* live according to the Spirit (present continuous tense), set their minds *continually* on the things of the Spirit (present continuous tense), namely, life and peace." In contrast to the unregenerate person, the born-again Christian *continually* delights in God's moral law (present continuous tense) (Romans 7:22) and *continually* serves (literally: as a slave) with his mind (that is, his regenerate human nature) God's moral law (the will of God) (present continuous tense), even though *time and again* (present continuous tense) he does the opposite, namely serves with his mortal body the law of sin (that is, his sinful nature) (Romans 7:26)!

While the unregenerate person hates God (Romans 8:7), the born-again Christian *continually* hates (present continuous tense) the evil he often does (Romans 7:15)!

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## 7:14

### **Question 2. What is the difference between being “in the flesh” and being “unspiritual”?**

Notes.

#### **(1) All non-Christians are “in the flesh”.**

The non-Christian has only one nature: the sinful or depraved nature (Greek: sarx), which dominates and controls him. He does not have the Holy Spirit living in him (Romans 8:7-10). Although he voluntarily chooses to remain a slave of his sinful nature (Romans 6:16), he cannot voluntarily choose to be free from his sinful nature. He irresistibly offers the members of his body as instruments to serve unrighteousness and unholiness. He does not submit himself to the God of the Bible<sup>1</sup> who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ and also not to God’s will (as revealed in the Bible). He *cannot* even submit himself to the God of the Bible. He *cannot* please the God of the Bible at all. Thus, to only be “in the flesh” is “to be unregenerate”!

#### **(2) All Christians are “unspiritual” as to one aspect of their human nature only.**

The Christian has, as it were, two natures: his sinful nature and his regenerate nature.

**The law of God is spiritual (Greek: pneumatikos) (Romans 7:14).** That is, it reveals the nature and will of God, which is holy, righteous and good (Romans 7:12).

**The sinful nature of the Christian is called “unspiritual, carnal” (Greek: sarkinos) (Romans 7:14).** Thus, the sinful nature of the Christian is the opposite of what God’s law is. God’s law is “spiritual”, but the sinful nature in a Christian is “unspiritual”, that is, it is unholy, unrighteous and evil. The sinful nature of the Christians often causes him to do things, which he hates, and to neglect doing things, which he loves. The Christian knows that in his sinful nature there is nothing that is good or beneficial (Romans 7:18). Thus, to be “unspiritual, carnal” does not mean the same as “to be unregenerate”. The unspiritual nature of Christians is most evident in a Christian that has not (yet) grown to spiritual maturity (1 Corinthians 3:1,3) or in a Christian who is not filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

**The regenerate nature of the Christian is also called his “mind” (Greek: nous) (Romans 7:23).** It refers to him as a person who has the mind or way of thinking of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). The Holy Spirit lives in him and wages war against his sinful nature (Galatians 5:17). The regenerate nature of the Christian is his righteous and holy state in Jesus Christ (cf. Romans 5:18; Romans 6:4-8; 1 Corinthians 1:30). It is the reality of the Holy Spirit living in him (Psalm 51:10-11; John 14:16-18).

#### **(3) All Christians can become “spiritual”**

**and will eventually become completely glorified saints.**

**The spiritual man.** “The spiritual man” lives his life in accordance to God’s revealed will and is able to discern and make judgments between good and evil (1 Corinthians 2:15). The spiritual nature of Christians is most evident in Christians that have grown to spiritual maturity (Hebrews 5:14) and have been filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:19-21).

**The sinner-saint and the glorified saint.** In the period between regeneration and final glorification, every Christian experiences a constant war between his sinful nature and his regenerate nature. In this life, a Christian is a walking civil war (cf. Galatians 5:16-18)! The fact that a Christian experiences this conflict between his sinful and regenerate nature is a proof that he “is born-again.” The unregenerate do not experience this conflict.

- Before regeneration, a person is only “a sinner” (Romans 5:8).
- After regeneration, a Christian is “a sinner-saint” (Romans chapter 7).
- But in the future, at the second coming of Christ, a Christian will be “a glorified saint” (Romans 8:30; 1 John 3:1-3)!

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## 7:14

### **Question 3. What is the difference between “being a slave to sin” and “being sold to sin”?**

Notes.

#### **(1) A non-Christian is “a slave to sin”**

**during the unregenerate state (Romans 6:6,16-17,19).**

Romans 6:6,16,17 and 19 teach that before their regeneration, all people are slaves to sin. They have offered themselves as slaves to disobedience (past tense). They behave as people who had *voluntarily* sold themselves as slaves to sin that dwells in their sinful nature (cf. 1 Kings 21:20; 2 Kings 17:17). This is proved by the fact that in their unregenerate state they obey the wishes of their sinful nature and they offer the members of their body to serve impurity and ever increasing wickedness (unrighteousness). Because they are unregenerate, they are not free and also cannot free

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<sup>1</sup> May be he submits himself to some “god” of another religion (an evil power), but certainly not to THE GOD OF THE BIBLE, because the God of the Bible demands regeneration (John 3:3-8) and conversion (Mark 1:15) from all people!

themselves from the dominating power of their sinful nature. They do not submit themselves to the God of the Bible or his will and also cannot submit themselves. They cannot please the God of the Bible (Romans 8:7-8). Thus, “being a slave to sin” means “still being unregenerate”!

**(2) A Christian is “sold to sin”  
even when he is born-again (Romans 7:14).**

**The condition of “being a slave to sin” never returns.** When a person become a regenerate Christian, he has *once for all* been set free from the condition of “being a slave of his sinful nature” and has *once for all* become a slave of God (aorist tense, Romans 6:18,22)! The condition of “being a slave to sin” (Romans 6:6,16,17,19) never returns!

**The condition of “being sold to sin” remains the experience of a Christian during his life on earth.** The Greek text of Romans 7:14 says “have been sold to sin” (Greek: *pepramenos upo tén hamartian*) (perfect passive of *pipraskó*) and not “being a slave to sin (disobedience, impurity, wickedness)” (Greek: *doulos té hamartia/ eis hupakoé/ té akatharsia/ té anomia*) (Romans 6:6,16,17,19. How can this condition be said of regenerate believers? Romans 7:14-26 is best explained by its parallel passage in Galatians 5:16-26.

Galatians 5:16-17 says (to Christians), “Live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature (Greek: *epithumia sarx*). For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.”

Christians still *experience* “the desires of their sinful nature” (the flesh), but are *no longer dominated* by these desires and also *do not have to give in* to these desires. However, whenever they do not live in submission to the Holy Spirit, they will give in to these sinful desires. Then they do things which they would rather not do as Christians.

The Bible teaches that a born-again believer is *not yet perfect*. *Time and again* there arises a conflict in the believer. He still lives in his present weak body, which is subject to the sinful nature. And this sinful nature attacks him constantly and so severely that the Christian does not always do what he really wants to do.

Nevertheless, the Christian has something, which the non-Christian does not have, namely, the Holy Spirit living in him! The Christian has been “sold to his sinful nature” and sometimes still produces fruit for death (cf. Galatians 5:19-21; Romans 7:5), but he is “no longer a slave to his sinful nature”. “A slave to his sinful nature can only say “yes” to his sinful nature and can only sin, but a Christian can say “no” to sin! The Christian has become a slave to the Holy Spirit and usually produces fruit for God (the fruit of the Spirit) (Galatians 5:22-25; Romans 7:4).

Although his sinful nature is still a powerful reality in him (Romans 7:14-26), the Christian has crucified his sinful nature (the flesh) with its fruit (sinful passions and desires) (Galatians 5:24). The Christian has made a definite break with living in his sinful nature. He *longs for and wants to, can and will* live the new life in his regenerate nature. Or to put it in another way, he submits himself willingly to the Holy Spirit who lives the new life in and through the Christian. The Christian is in the process of already now being on earth what he in principle already is: a saint. Or to put it in another way, the Spirit is constantly busy to apply in the life of the Christian the righteousness and holiness of Jesus Christ (which Jesus Christ acquired for him) (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:30).

The Christian “is sold (Greek: *pipraskó*) (perfect tense, passive) to sin” (Romans 7:14) or “is a prisoner of war (Greek: *aichmalótizó*) (present continuous tense) of the sinful nature (the law of sin that works within the members of his body” (Romans 7:23). The Christian is thus an involuntary prisoner of war or hostage of a power that is alien to his will and from which he cannot free himself. He acknowledges that his sinful nature is still a present reality and still exercises a powerful influence over him. He is involuntarily subjected to the forceful operation of his sinful nature. This is evident from the fact that he time and again does things, which he does not want to do (Romans 7:15) and all the good things he cannot do (Romans 7:18). Thus, as in Galatians 5:17, the believer experiences a powerful spiritual and moral conflict (battle, war) raging in the members of his present body, in which the dictates of the sinful nature opposes the dictates of the Holy Spirit, which lives in him (Romans 7:23).

However, like Galatians 5:22-25, Romans 8:12-14 teaches that through the Holy Spirit living in him, the Christian does not have to live according to the dictates of the sinful nature and can put to death the deeds of the sinful nature. Through the power of the Holy Spirit living in him, the Christian can again and again resist the dictates of his sinful nature and do what he really wants to do, that is, to do the will of God.

But because the Christian also has a sinful nature and does not always live in dependence of the Holy Spirit, he often cannot resist the evil influence of his sinful nature and does not do or cannot do what he wants to do. Although the Christian is spiritually and morally born-again and lives under the dominion of the Holy Spirit, he is still strongly influenced by his sinful nature and does not obey the exhortations of the Holy Spirit. As long as the Christian lives in his present physical body with its sinful nature, his sinful nature will continue to attack him and the rule of the Holy Spirit in him will not be complete or perfect. That will only happen at the second coming of Christ (1 John 3:1-3).

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## 7:24

### **Question 4. What is the difference between “the body of sin” and “the body of death”?**

#### *Notes.*

The apostle Paul uses four terms connected to the body: Although there is a connection between these four terms, they also have differences.

#### **(1) The body of sin in Romans 6:6.**

“The body of sin” (Greek: to sóma tés hamartias) is the physical body of the unregenerate person. It is the physical body of the non-Christian, which is indwelt, conditioned, controlled and dominated by his sinful or depraved nature and which voluntarily, yet irresistibly, serves impurity and ever increasing wickedness as a slave. When a person becomes a Christian, he is set free from this “body of sin” (Romans 6:6,18,22). Nevertheless, his physical body still remains a “body of death” and a “body of humiliation”.

#### **(2) The body of death in Romans 7:24.**

“The body of death” (Greek: to sóma tou thanatou) is the physical body of the regenerate Christian. It is the physical body of the Christian, which is still indwelt by the sinful nature, but is now also indwelt by the regenerate nature through the Holy Spirit. It is the physical body of the Christian, which he time and again offers to sin, because the Christian is then not living in complete dependence on the Holy Spirit. As a consequence, the sinful or depraved nature (the law of sin) (Romans 7:21,23), which dwells in Christian, still continues to produce spiritual and especially physical death. That is why the body of the Christian is called “the body of death”.

#### **(3) The body of humiliation in Philippians 3:21.**

“The body of humiliation” (Greek: to sóma tés tapeinóseós) is the physical body of a Christian before his resurrection from the dead. It is the physical body of the Christian, which is still subjected to physical death. It means the same as “the body of death” that eventually dies. The last enemy that Christ will destroy is physical death (1 Corinthians 15:26).

#### **(4) The body of glory in Philippians 3:21.**

“The body of glory” (Greek: to sóma tés doxés) is the physical body of a Christian after his resurrection from the dead. Only at his second coming, will Jesus Christ use his all-controlling power to transform the “body of humiliation” into the “body of glory”, which will be like the glorious resurrected physical body of Jesus Christ! The body of glory will be imperishable, glorious, powerful and spiritual (1 Corinthians 15:42-44,54)

#### **STEP 4. APPLY.**

#### **APPLICATIONS**

*Consider.* WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS?

*Share and record.* Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from Romans 7:14-25.

*Consider.* WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

*Record.* Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application.

(Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

#### **1. Examples of possible applications from Romans 7:14-25.**

- 7:14. Study God’s moral law (including the Ten Commandments), because it expresses God’s nature in the form of commandments. It is spiritual, that is, it is holy, righteous and good.
- 7:15,23. Do not despair when you experience the continuous spiritual and moral war between your sinful nature and your regenerate nature. It is a proof that you are born-again.
- 7:18. Realise that there is not one good thing in your sinful nature. Therefore never experiment with your sinful nature.
- 7:24. Be absolutely convinced that only Jesus Christ through his Holy Spirit living in your body can rescue you *again and again* from the domination of your sinful nature.

#### **2. Examples of personal applications from Romans 7:14-25.**

I acknowledge that the forceful operation of my sinful nature causes me to do what I do not want to do. This happens because I am still immature, weak or unspiritual. Nevertheless, I take full responsibility for the sins I commit (cf. 1 John 1:8,10). I realise that my sinful nature is beyond my own power and beyond the power of God’s law to set me free from doing particular sins. Thus, I am convinced that my sinful nature is completely depraved and I will continue to confess (1 John 1:9) and repent of my sins.

I acknowledge that in myself, I often have a feeling of helplessness to resist or eradicate my sinful nature. Therefore, like Paul, I look for deliverance from the dominating power of my sinful nature to a Saviour outside myself! I need the acquired righteousness of Jesus Christ to justify me and to really set me free from certain sins. I also need Jesus Christ to sanctify me! Only God’s grace shown through Jesus Christ will certainly set me free in the present time from the absolute dominating power of my sinful nature.

**STEP 5. PRAY.****RESPONSE**

LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in Romans 7:14-25. (Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)

**5****PRAYER** (8 minutes)

**[INTERCESSION]  
PRAY FOR OTHERS**

Continue to pray in groups of two's or three's. Pray for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12)

**6****PREPARATION** (2 minutes)

**[ASSIGNMENT]  
FOR NEXT LESSON**

*(Group leader.* Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. **Commitment.** Be committed to make disciples, build the Church and preach the kingdom.
2. **Preach, teach or study** Romans 7:14-25 with another person or group of people.
3. **Personal time with God.** Have a quiet time from half a chapter of **Proverbs 1, 3, 4 and 5** each day. Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
4. **Memorisation. (5) God is all-powerful. Jeremiah 32:17.** Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
5. **Teaching.** Prepare **the parable of "the interceding friend"** in Luke 11:5-13 and **the parable of "the persistent widow"** in Luke 18:1-8. Make use of the six guidelines for interpreting parables.
6. **Prayer.** Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
7. **Update your notebook** on preaching God's kingdom. Include your notes on quiet time, your memorisation notes, your Bible study notes and this preparation.