

The Letter of St. Paul to the ROMANS

VI

OPENING WORSHIP

To begin your Bible study, read together **Psalm 6**. We struggle with the burden of our sinful flesh, which constantly leads us to stumble into sin. Yet, as we are brought again to grieve over sin, we remain in a state of grace, forgiven and victorious for Jesus' sake.

INTRODUCTION

As long as we're in this world, we're going to struggle with sin. Our residual sinful nature remains unconverted until the day we die. Only as we are released from this earthly existence will also be released from the battle with our flesh.

Our ultimate objective as Christians isn't to "try harder" or "strive more." While we want to daily put off the sinful nature, so that it doesn't dominate us, our ultimate objective is to remember that God has set us free from the condemnation of our sin, rescued us from this body of death and, while he gives us strength for the battles, he tells us that the ultimate battle has been won, and our victory is complete in Christ.

FRUSTRATIONS OF THE FLESH

Read Romans 7:7-25 and consider:

Paul relates an interesting characteristic of the law (v. 8). We might call it the "Wet Paint" effect. What does the law do?

People generally enjoy preaching they consider to be practical. Frequently, people ask for more "how-to" preaching (how to be a better parent, how to be a better citizen, how to evangelize, how to be a better worker, etc.). such preaching is characteristically law-based (dos and don'ts). How does this section (especially verse 10) illustrate the negative effect of do-and-don't, how-to preaching?

What is a better way to apply the law in preaching and teaching (more consistently with its purpose)? What role does the gospel have *vis-à-vis* the law?

Describe the difference between "the evil I do not want to do" and a sinful lifestyle that is conscious, premeditated and deliberate?

At the grave of President Ronald Reagan in Simi Valley, California, one line of his epitaph reads, "I know in my heart that man is good." How does this philosophy compare with what the Apostle Paul says here in verse 18?

For discussion: Why was Paul so negative about human character? Why is it so necessary to have this understanding of what human beings are really like? How should we approach people, as we try to share Jesus with them?

Note Paul's magnificent conclusion in verses 24 and 25! What is the only answer to the depraved human condition?

NO CONDEMNATION IN CHRIST

Read Romans 8:1-17.

Verse 1 draws an amazing conclusion and renders a powerful verdict. What does this mean for you? (Tie this in to the previous chapter and the discussion of human character and our personal struggles with sin.)

The law does nothing but kill and condemn. What's God's antidote to the law (verses 3-4)?

Once again we note a contrast between unbelievers and believers. How do they differ?

Write your observations below:

	An unbeliever	A believer
What is the person's mind set on?		
What characterizes the person's mind?		
What is the relationship with God?		
What is the relationship with God's law?		
What controls the person?		
What is the person's final destiny?		

God says frequently that we are heirs and recipients-to-be of an inheritance. Tie these thoughts together: children of God; brothers of Christ; members of God's family; future recipients of an inheritance; the Holy Spirit is a down-payment; suffering in this life.

Read Romans 8:18-27.

What kinds of suffering have you experienced in your life?

What is the purpose of suffering (go back to Romans 5 for some insight)?

Adam's sin did more than just bring death to him and his descendants. What effect did it have on the world?

In our weakness, we often fumble around with our prayers, sometimes praying foolishly and inarticulately. What comfort do you find in verses 26 and 27 from the Spirit's work?

VERSE TO REMEMBER

Romans 7:24, 25 *What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

For next time read Romans chapters 7 through 9.

In the face of your struggles with sin, what consolation do you have in Christ?