

03-16-14

Series: [The Anatomy of a Church](#)

# The Anatomy of a Church (14)

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[Acts 20:28](#)

(Continuation from 03/09/14)

## PERSONAL HOLINESS

### STRUGGLE AND CONFESSION: THE BELIEVER IS TO BE FREE FROM THE LAW, [Romans 7:1-25](#)

#### Frustration with the Flesh

Near Watsonville, California, there is a creek that has a strange name: **Salsipuedes Creek**. *Salsi puedes* is Spanish for “*Get out of it, if you can.*” The creek is lined with quicksand, and the story is that many years ago, in the early days of California, a Mexican laborer fell into the quicksand. A Spaniard, riding by on a horse, saw him and yelled out to him, “*Salsi puedes!*” which was not very helpful. The creek has been so named ever since.

That is what the flesh is like. We struggle to correct these tendencies, to get out of the effects of our sinful nature, but we cannot do it in our own strength. In this portion of Romans, Paul expresses the frustration that every single Christian faces with his flesh, his old sinful nature. Let’s look into the chapter and see what we can learn from the conflicts Paul faced.

#### THE CONDITION OF CARNALITY—[Romans 7:14](#)

[Romans 7:14 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>14</sup>“For we know that the Law is spiritual, **but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.**”

God’s Law makes sin exceedingly sinful. It magnifies what is wrong. It is not bad, it is good. We know that God’s Law is spiritual. It is beautiful, noble, and excellent because it comes from a holy God. The Law is spiritual, but we are not. We are carnal, fleshly, and sinful in our nature. Anyone who claims to be sinlessly perfect is nuts! Even though we are saved, we still have an old sinful nature in us that wants to rebel against God.

We are a walking civil war every day. We are Dr. Jekyll and sometimes Mr. Hyde. Like the moon, we have a dark side. When I was a boy, we used to play King of the Hill. It was fun. We would play on dirt hills and the object was to push or throw off the one at the top of the hill. What goes on in our heart is much like King of the Hill. The Holy Spirit and our old, sinful self are constantly at war within, competing for the King of the Hill, the throne of our heart.

Paul says, “**we are carnal, sold under sin.**” People captured in a war were sold as slaves. When the flesh gains control, we become its slave.

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**Romans 6:16 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup>“Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?”

Even though you are saved, you are still capable of becoming bound by your sinful flesh. You can become adulterous, addicted to pornography, tobacco, alcohol, drugs, gambling, stealing, lying, etc.

**2 Timothy 2:26 (NASB)**

<sup>26</sup>“And they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”

The last words of General John Sedgwick, uttered while peering at enemy lines during the Civil War Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse in 1864: “They couldn’t hit an elephant at this distance...” Sedgwick underestimated the enemy. Christians do the same thing when they underestimate the power of sin in their own lives.

Paul was a man of God. He reveals that the closer you get to the Lord, the more aware you become of your own sinfulness and the more repulsive it becomes to you. Paul is concerned about sin. People who could care less about the Lord are not concerned at all about it or how their sin affects other people. You never know the ripple effect of your sinfulness.

On November 9, 1938, the Nazis launched a massive countrywide massacre that not only led to the arrest of 30,000 German Jews, but caused such devastation to synagogues (191 set on fires) and to Jewish shops, homes, and buildings (more than 1000 torched or destroyed) that it was called *Kristallnacht* which means “**Crystal Night or Night of the Broken Glass.**”

The Nazis had been looking for a reason to launch an all-out attack on the Jewish community of Germany. They found it in the shooting of a German embassy official in France two days before on November 7th. It was on this day in Paris that a young German Jew, distraught over learning his parents had been driven destitute out of Germany and into Poland, went into the German Embassy and shot a German official. **Herschel Grynzpan** wanted to kill the German ambassador, but fired upon the first German he encountered. That person turned out to be **Ernst vom Rath**, a minor German Foreign Office official, who died two days later, giving Hitler the opportunity for which he had been looking. Unbeknownst to **Grynzpan**, however, **Rath** was at that very time under investigation by the Gestapo for his anti-Nazi attitude and was himself very opposed to anti-Semitism. **Grynzpan** not only shot a friend, but his sin created problems for an entire race of people, the Jews. Your sin has far reaching effects. Never underestimate its power. In our own strength, we do not have power to conquer our flesh. We must rely upon the Lord’s help.

**John 15:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup>“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

## The Confessions of a Man's Struggling Soul, [Romans 7:14-25](#)

**(Romans 7:14-25) Introduction:** this is a great passage of Scripture in that it portrays the struggling soul of the believer as he ploughs through life. It is a rare picture of the life of Paul, of what he sensed and learned and experienced as he struggled to please God and to become conformed to the glorious image of the Lord Jesus. It is the confession of a man's soul as he struggles through life.

1. **The law is spiritual (v.14).**
2. **Confession 1: he is carnal, sold under sin (v.14-17).**
3. **Confession 2: he is void of any good thing (v.18-20).**
4. **Confession 3: he finds two laws or forces within (v.21-23).**
5. **Confession 4: he is a desperate, wretched man who needs a Deliverer (v.24).**
6. **Confession 5: the Deliverer is Jesus Christ (v.25).**

### 1. [\(Romans 7:14\) Law: the law is spiritual.](#)

**Romans 7:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup>“For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.”

It is spiritual in at least three senses.

#### 1. **The law was given to man by the Spirit of God (*pneumatikos*).**

The Greek word used is the very name of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the source of the law.

#### 2. **The law is the expression of the will and nature of God.**

The law is spiritual because it describes the will of God and tells man just what God is like. The rules of the law reveal both the mind and nature of God.

#### 3. **The law is spiritual because of its purposes (see below note # 1, [Law, Purpose—Romans 7:12](#) for discussion.**

### Note # 1 [Law, Purpose](#)

**Romans 7:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup>“So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.”

1. **The law is holy:** set apart and full of purity, majesty, and glory—set apart in that it reveals God's nature and will—set apart in that it exposes sin, all that is contrary to God's nature and will. The law is holy in that it is different and set apart from everything else on earth. The law is God's way of

holiness, the way to live a life of holiness, the way that is so different and so set apart that no man can reach its purity.

**2. The law is just:** righteous, fair, impartial, equitable, straight. The law treats a man exactly like he should be treated; it shows no partiality to anyone. It also reveals how a man should treat others. The law is just in that it reveals exactly how a man should live. It shows him how to live in relation to God and to his fellow man, and it judges him fairly and impartially.

**3. The law is good:** it shows man how to live and tells him when he fails to live that way. It exposes his sin and demonstrates his desperate need for a Savior. The law tells man the truth about the nature of man in a most explicit way, and it points him toward the need for *outside* help in order to be saved.

[Psalm 19:7 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>7</sup>“The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”

[Psalm 119:142 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>142</sup>“Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth.”

[Romans 7:12 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>12</sup>“So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.”

[Romans 7:14 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>14</sup>“For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.”

[1 Timothy 1:8 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>8</sup>“But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully.”