

# DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

*Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.*

## *Romans*

A New Life

### Lesson #9: Our Struggle with Sin

#### INTRODUCTION

Society has changed a lot over time. Why hasn't "the law" (Bible) changed along with it?

#### OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

##### Read Romans 7:7-25

*Note: Paul seems to be using the first-person pronoun of himself, but also as a representative of people in general and of Christians in particular. Sin is dead in the sense that it is "inactive" until a prohibition comes along and rouses it to defiance. One of the functions of the law is to identify the penalty for sin. The law offered life if it was obeyed, but it lacked the power to enable individuals to overcome sin. The closer we come to God, the more we realize how imperfect we are.*

1. How might people know that something like covetousness is wrong unless the law says so? Don't people have a conscience? **Rom 2:15** What if society says it's OK? **Ex 20:17**
2. Why does prohibition produce covetousness? **Gen 2:17**
3. Why is it wrong to blame the law for our sinful behavior?
4. What is wrong with calling something OK when it is really sin? Wouldn't that take away its power?
5. Why would it be wrong to blame the law for spiritual death? vv. 13-14
6. What does it mean to be a slave to sin? How can Christians no longer be slaves to sin?
7. How is sin compared to a war? vv. 21-23
8. To whom is our anguish and struggle with sin beneficial? vv. 24-25
9. Why is it important to realize that only Christ can rescue us from the power of sin?

#### APPLICATION

Pray to help others realize that Jesus can rescue them from whatever their condition is – just as He rescued you from your wretched conditions.

*The real battle with sin is internal, in the heart and mind. Counseling, therapy, or even strong will-power often can modify a person's behavior. People may stop drinking by faithfully following the plan of Alcoholics Anonymous or stop lying or cheating by submitting to psychotherapy. But only the transforming power of the Holy Spirit can take a sinful heart and make it pure and acceptable to God. The law's part in that transformation is to make a person aware of his sin and of his need for divine forgiveness and redemption and to set the standard of acceptable morality.<sup>1</sup> In his rich allegory *Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan paints a vivid word picture of sin's arousal by the law. A large, dust-covered room in Interpreter's house symbolizes the human heart. When a man with a broom, representing God's law, begins to sweep, the dust swirls up and all but suffocates Christian. That is what the law does to sin. It so agitates sin that it becomes stifling. And just as a broom cannot clean a room of dust but only stir it up, so the law cannot cleanse the heart of sin but only make the sin more evident and unpleasant.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>12</sup>MacArthur, John: *Romans*. Chicago : Moody Press, 1996, c1991, c1994, S. 369; 372