

Romans 7

Paul, the gifted debater, anticipates the logical questions that will follow his explanation of justification by faith. After answering these and other questions, Paul moves on to discuss the constant struggle between the two natures: the flesh and the spirit. Do you have a former employer? What would you do if you ran into him again after several years and he began giving you orders? Would you be under any obligation to follow his orders? As you study this chapter ask yourself this question, am I still following orders from an old boss?

Observation

1. Read Romans 7 at least twice and, using the printed chapter of Romans 7 at the back of this notebook, highlight the words and phrases listed below using a different color for each word. You might even jot some notes in the margin by the verses.

•the law

•the commandment

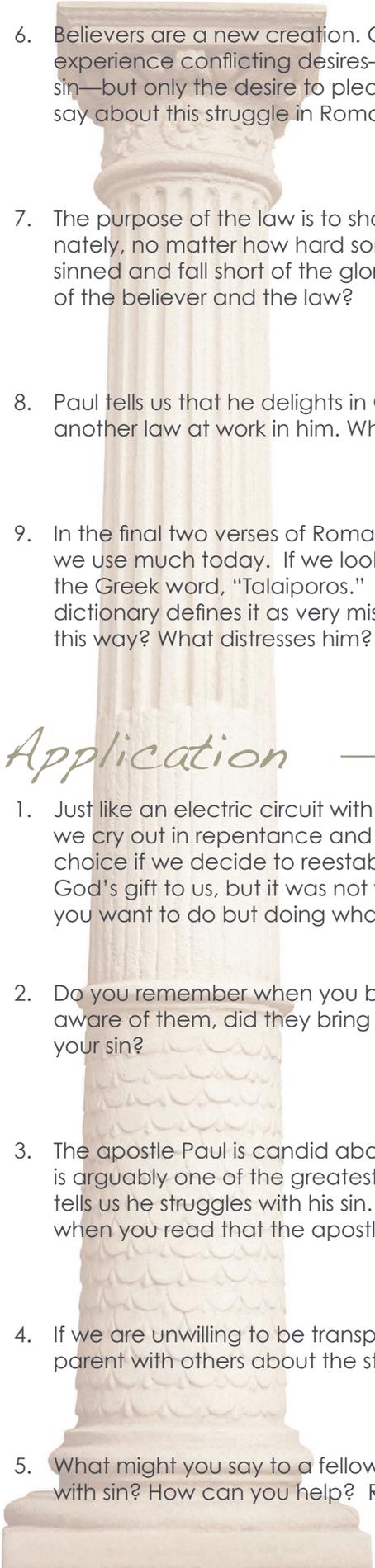
•the law of sin

•sin

2. Fill in the chart below using Romans 7:5-6

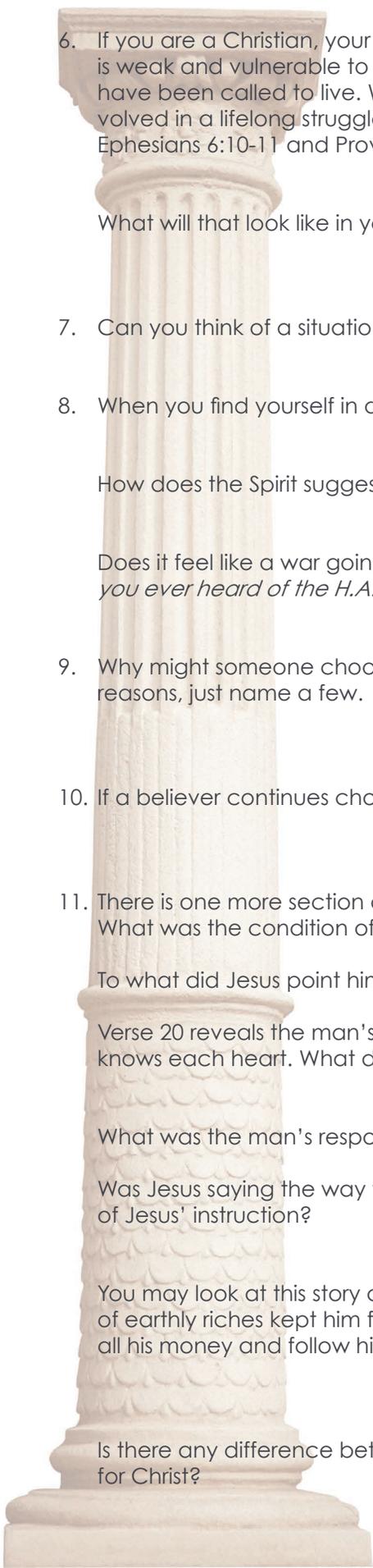
	The condition	The effect	Purpose/Fruit
Romans 7:5			
Romans 7:6			

3. In Matthew 5:17, Jesus made it very clear that the law serves a divine purpose and was not to be simply cast out. Jesus is the fulfillment of God's law. In Romans 7:7 Paul clarifies what the law did for him. In your own words describe what the law did for Paul?
4. It is so easy to excuse our activities and justify our actions until the law of God shines a light on them, revealing the truth. We are all born with a selfish sin nature. We must be aware that just like Adam and Eve, we have an enemy that longs to destroy us and separate us from God. According to Romans 7:8-11, what was God's purpose for giving the law?
5. Romans 7:12 begins with the word "therefore." This marks the authors desire for us to look back at the truth which has just been shared. The law gave us the opportunity to see God's holy requirements. Now we know and are responsible for our actions without excuse. What three words does Paul use to describe the law in verse 12?

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6. Believers are a new creation. God's Spirit has transformed us on the inside. There will be times when we experience conflicting desires—the desire to please God and the fleshly desire to please ourselves and sin—but only the desire to please Him represents who we truly are in Christ. What does the apostle Paul say about this struggle in Romans 7:15-23?
 7. The purpose of the law is to show God's righteous standard to every man, woman and child. Unfortunately, no matter how hard someone might try to keep it, they will fail. Romans 3:23 tells us, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Read Romans 6:14, what did you learn about the relationship of the believer and the law?
 8. Paul tells us that he delights in God's law. It is his heart's desire to live pleasing to God. But he mentions another law at work in him. What is this other law mentioned in Romans 7:20-23? What is the conflict?
 9. In the final two verses of Romans 7 Paul uses the word "wretched" to describe himself. This is not a word we use much today. If we look this word up in the Strong's Concordance, we see it translated from the Greek word, "Talaiporos." The definition is "enduring trials and troubles, afflicted." Noah Webster's dictionary defines it as very miserable, sunk deep in affliction or distress. Why does Paul describe himself this way? What distresses him?

Application

1. Just like an electric circuit with the breaker open, the power of sin has been broken by Christ. When we cry out in repentance and are forgiven, sin no longer has power over us. From this point on it is our choice if we decide to reestablish this connection. We must never take sin lightly. Freedom from sin is God's gift to us, but it was not without a great cost. Can you relate to the struggle of not doing what you want to do but doing what you don't want to do that Paul describes in Romans 7?
2. Do you remember when you became aware of God's law and commands? When you became aware of them, did they bring you pleasure or did you, like Paul, become grieved over the sinfulness of your sin?
3. The apostle Paul is candid about his struggle with sin. He wants to live a life that is pleasing to God. Paul is arguably one of the greatest and most faithful followers of Jesus Christ that ever lived, and yet, he tells us he struggles with his sin. He describes this struggle as a war going on inside. How did you feel when you read that the apostle Paul felt this way?
4. If we are unwilling to be transparent, what impression are we giving those around us? Are you transparent with others about the struggles you experience?
5. What might you say to a fellow believer who has been transparent about a struggle they are having with sin? How can you help? Read Ephesians 6:18.

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6. If you are a Christian, your sin is forgiven, but sin has not been expelled. We still live in this flesh which is weak and vulnerable to the temptations of sin. We live in a world that is contrary to the holy life we have been called to live. When we give our heart to Jesus and choose to follow him, we are now involved in a lifelong struggle. But with the help of the Spirit of God, we can be victorious over sin. Read Ephesians 6:10-11 and Proverbs 3:5-6. What are our instructions for success?

What will that look like in your life?

7. Can you think of a situation where your flesh and your spirit are at war sometimes or repeatedly?
8. When you find yourself in a tense or difficult situation, how does your flesh suggest you respond?

How does the Spirit suggest you respond?

Does it feel like a war going on, and what are possible situations that might bring on this war? *(Have you ever heard of the H.A.L.T. Principle? You might want to Google it)*

9. Why might someone choose to continue to be a slave of sin over righteousness? There are various reasons, just name a few.
10. If a believer continues choosing a pattern of sin, what effect do you believe it will have on them?
11. There is one more section of Scripture I would like you to read and think about, Matthew 19:16-26. What was the condition of this man's heart when he came to Jesus?

To what did Jesus point him?

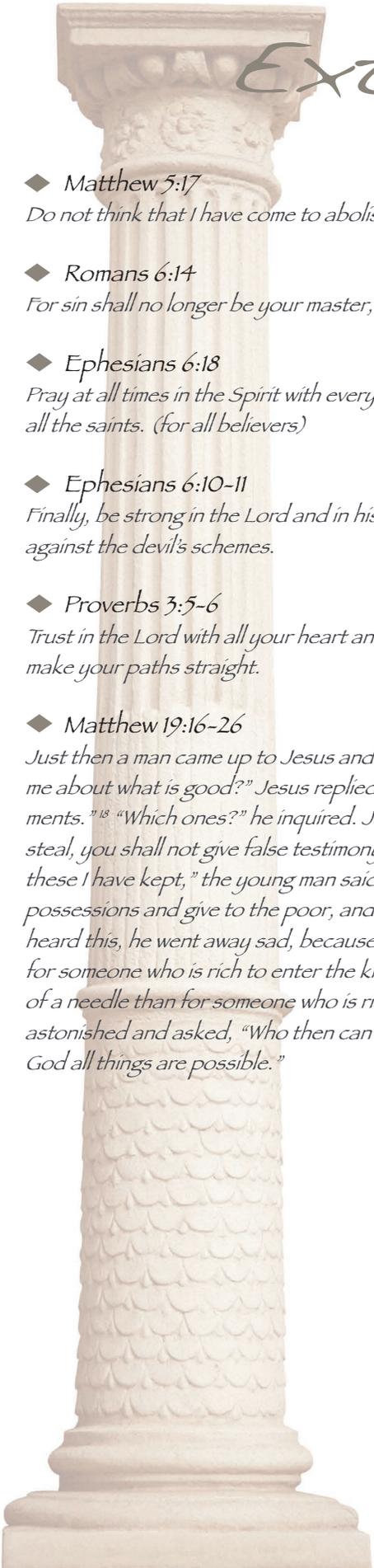
Verse 20 reveals the man's heart again. Jesus did not get all up in his face and say "REALLY???" Jesus knows each heart. What did Jesus tell the man he needed to do?

What was the man's response as he walked away?

Was Jesus saying the way to heaven is by giving away all your money? _____ What was the point of Jesus' instruction?

You may look at this story and think the rich young ruler got what he deserved—his pride and his love of earthly riches kept him from eternal riches. Why do you believe Jesus asked this man to give away all his money and follow him?

Is there any difference between this man's love for his money and any other thing we will not lay aside for Christ?



Extra Verses

◆ **Matthew 5:17**

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

◆ **Romans 6:14**

For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

◆ **Ephesians 6:18**

Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. (for all believers)

◆ **Ephesians 6:10-11**

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

◆ **Proverbs 3:5-6**

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

◆ **Matthew 19:16-26**

Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"¹⁷ "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments."¹⁸ "Which ones?" he inquired. Jesus replied, "'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony,¹⁹ honor your father and mother; and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'²⁰ "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"²¹ Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."²² When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.²³ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven.²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?"²⁶ Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."