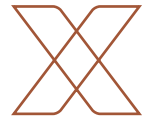




Struggle

Session 6 • Romans 7:4-6, 14-25



ENGAGE

PREPARE: Display **Pack Item 2** (Poster: *Outline of Romans*) and **Pack Item 4** (Poster: *Key Words in Romans*). Prepare copies of **Pack Item 12** (Handout: *To Do or Not to Do*). Write the following words on the board or a large sheet of paper: *inhaler, life preserver, firefighter, GPS maps, and CPR*.

ASK: What's your favorite "rescue" story? Who comes to mind when you're asked to name the first person who ever rescued you? (p. 53)

READ: Enlist a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 53. Talk about other ways people might use the term *rescue*.

DISCUSS: Direct the group's attention to the words on the board or paper. Lead a brief discussion on how each one might relate to the idea of being rescued. Share that Paul understood the importance of our spiritual rescue from sin:

- "Everyone is a servant—either to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness. Believers, freed from sin through Christ, now serve God, resulting in holiness and eternal life. Paul concluded that 'the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ

Jesus' (6:16-23). . . . However, just because believers are set free from sin's power and are dead to sin, it doesn't mean that they no longer struggle with sin. In Romans 7:14-25, Paul described the inner struggle of desiring to do good but being pulled by sin. This tension shows human weakness and dependence on Christ." (p. 53)

EXPLAIN: Direct the group to the fourth point on **Pack Item 2** (Poster: *Outline of Romans*), "New Life in Christ." Share that this study focuses on how even though sin remains a powerful force, Christ gives us the power to overcome.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

REVIEW: Direct attention to **Pack Item 4** (Poster: *Key Words in Romans*) and encourage adults to share words that the group has considered in earlier sessions of the study of Romans. Highlight terms like *faith, gospel, justification, grace, righteousness, sanctification, and sin*.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read **Romans 7:4-6** as the group listens for another word that appears on **Pack Item 4** (Poster: *Key Words in Romans*). Point out the word *law* and its definition.

ASK: What did Paul say about the law in these verses? (p. 55)

REVIEW: Point out that the law and sin are two sides of the same coin. Share that while the law is not sinful, it reveals our sin and stirs up a desire to sin—yet it can’t do anything to free us from sin. Summarize the following:

- **(7:4-6)** Paul addressed believers as his “brothers and sisters” to emphasize their shared relationship with God. Through Christ’s death, they died to the law and now belong to Him. Though the law revealed God’s righteous standards, it stirred the sinful nature and led to death because its demands could not be met. The law told us what to do but could not produce true spiritual life. What believers needed—and now have—is the ability to serve God in the newness of the Spirit.

ASK: What practical difference should it make that a believer belongs to Christ? In what ways does it change your identity and purpose? (p. 55)

READ: Lead the group to read silently Romans 7:14-23, noting how Paul described his struggle with sin.

GUIDE: Share about the spiritual tension Paul experienced between sin and righteousness:

- **(7:18-20)** Paul desired to do what was good—a desire awakened by the Holy Spirit—but he found himself unable to carry it out. Instead, he repeatedly did the very evil he opposed. In these verses, Paul exposed the intense struggle that continues even after salvation.

Though believers have died to sin’s authority, its attraction remains, creating a real and persistent conflict within the Christian life.

ILLUSTRATE: On a whiteboard draw a line representing a rope used for a tug-of-war. On one end write *Holy Spirit* and on the other end *Sin Nature*. Discuss how the tension between obeying Christ and giving in to temptation is ongoing even in the life of the believer.

ASK: How does recognizing sin’s presence in you change the way you depend on God? (p. 55)

EXPLAIN: Affirm that our struggle with sin is real. Remind adults that temptation in itself is not a sin. Point out that our response to temptation and sin is what matters. Note that while the struggle is difficult, the tension should encourage us to make the right choices and to rely on God to help us overcome sin.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Romans 7:24-25 as the group listens for Paul’s conclusion about his own condition. Encourage adults to share how Paul’s emotions resonate with their own feelings at times.

ASK: In light of the difficulty in battling sin, what keeps us from despair and hopelessness? (p. 55)

HIGHLIGHT: Highlight Paul’s solution for dealing with the tension we face as believers who are still tempted by sin:

- **(7:24-25)** Paul’s statement about himself gives us needed direction as we face

the conflict that goes on inside us. From experience, we know that some conflicts can be resolved. Yet other conflicts in life are never fully resolved. They can be managed, but the struggle itself does not end. Life continues, and the conflict remains part of it. While Paul struggled within himself, he also realized that God had not left him to fight the battle on his own. Like Paul, we place our trust in Christ to help us manage the ongoing inner struggle with sin.

PARAPHRASE: Divide the group into teams of three or four. Give each group an index card and pencil. Direct them to work together to create a paraphrase of Romans 7:24-25. After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share their work. Affirm our need to lean into Christ to experience victory in our struggles against sin.

ASK: In what ways can you live more consciously in the freedom Christ provides? (p. 55)

CHALLENGE

SUMMARIZE: Review these bullet points from this week's Bible study passage:

- Believers bear fruit for God when they live in the Spirit of God.
- Believers need to recognize that the struggle with sin is real, and they need help.
- Believers can express gratitude to God that they do not have to battle sin in their own power, but that Christ provides the victory.

EVALUATE: Distribute copies of **Pack Item 12** (*Handout: To Do or Not To Do*). Encourage the group to spend time analyzing their own struggles with sin.

DISCUSS: Direct attention to the **Apply the Text** questions on page 55. Discuss how believers can deal with the tension sin creates and how we can demonstrate gratitude for God's help.

PRAY: Remind adults that Romans 7:4 is the memory verse for this session. Encourage adults to pray it back to God as a way to memorize it. Urge them to focus on how God can help them die to sin when they experience temptation. Close in prayer, thanking God for victory in Christ as we battle sin.

AFTER THE SESSION

Send the group an email or text during the week, reminding them to pray for one another. Encourage them to read and reflect again on Paul's practical words about overcoming sin in Romans 7. Let them know that you are praying for them and encourage them to share things that you can pray with them about specifically. Close the message with the text from Romans 7:4, this session's memory verse.