

How to Move Out of the Romans 7 Experience

I have been asked, so you never sin? Never trip up and fall into sin? Of course I do. But I am in no way living the life depicted by the man of Romans 7.

The man of Romans 7 is powerless to keep from sinning. He says, "but how to perform that which is good I find not." Then he says, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The man of Romans 7 has no idea how to have victory. He is clueless. So why do we equate the experience of the born-again converted walk with the man of Romans 7 since it is not the experience of the truly born-again? They know how to have victory and are not helplessly wallowing in sin as depicted in Romans 7. The born-again have been taught that they cannot keep the law in their own strength. They've been taught it is only as they surrender to the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives that they have any hope of keeping the law. They've been taught that as long as they allow the Holy Spirit to have His will in their lives that they will have victory every time. They've been taught that the only way they can fall is to take back control of their lives to do their own will instead of God's will. They've been taught that they'll never be victorious over sin in their own strength and that victory is given them by the Holy Spirit indwelling them. The victory that they have is not their own but is given to them so they have nothing to boast about. They've been taught that they can make no excuse for sin, that when they fall it is their fault because they have taken their eyes off of Christ and that they must repent if they want to be restored to the born-again victorious life. They've been taught that they are nothing without Christ living in them through the power of the Holy Spirit, and that they have nothing except it is given them. They've been taught that they are powerless, hopeless, and helpless with out Christ living in them through the Holy Spirit. They've been taught that all His biddings are enablings. That they can do all things through His strength. They have been taught that as the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. They've been taught that all true wisdom and knowledge comes from God and without Him they have none and that their very existence is totally dependent on God.

But sadly, most are not taught this and when they find themselves falling, they are referred to the man of Romans 7 as the answer, and led to believe that this is the experience of the born-again. Romans 7 is in no way the experience of the born-again. The born-again know that there is unlimited power available to keep them from sin. They know that if they fall they must make it right and get back up and be restored so they can continue to walk in the victory that is given them. If those who think and hear that they are born-again but have no clue how to have victory, like the man of Romans 7, they are not born-again.

Yes, we have an advocate, Jesus, who will plead our case when we repent. But He does not plead the case of the unrepentant. They must first repent. Here lies another error. Jesus is not pleading for us when we are in sin. He is pleading with us to repent and re-surrender so He can restore us and continue the work He has begun. I can never say that Christ's robe of righteousness is covering me when I am in known sin. I have no salvation without His robe covering me. DA 555 par 6. Matthew 22:11, 14 "All sin unrepented of and unconfessed, will remain upon the books of record. It will not be blotted out, it will not go beforehand to Judgment, to be canceled by the atoning blood of Jesus." RH, March 27, 1888 par. 12

We need to stop referencing Romans 7 as the normal experience of the born-again and find a better illustration, one where the individual when he sees his mistake, immediately repents and is restored to a victorious life. Like David when he was confronted by Nathan about his sin with Bathsheba. Or better yet Peter when he took his eyes off of Jesus and began to sink into the water and cried out to be saved. These are good illustrations of individuals who have fallen into sin or who find themselves falling into sin. Then we should encourage them to do like Joseph did who became so in-tune with the voice of the Holy Spirit that when a temptation came he saw it and didn't fall at all, but fled from it. Also, men like David, when

he was in the position to take Saul's life and was strongly tempted to do so, simply refused. These are illustrations of how the born-again respond to temptation. There are so many powerful illustrations, why do we fall for the lie of the Romans 7 experience being the born again? I can tell you why. "The new birth is a rare experience in this age of the world. This is the reason why there are so many perplexities in the churches. Many, so many, who assume the name of Christ are unsanctified and unholy. They have been baptized, but they were buried alive. Self did not die, and therefore they did not rise to newness of life in Christ" (MS 148, 1897). 6BC 1075.7. "Praying and sinning, sinning and praying, their lives are full of malice, deceit, envy, jealousy, and self-love. The prayers of this class are an abomination to God." 4T 534. What we don't know or aren't experiencing we can't teach.

I grew up living the Romans 7 experience, not knowing or being told that there was anything else available, until my mother found the truth about how to live the born-again life and shared it with me when I was in my 20s. I later studied it for myself and found it to be true. There is ample power to keep from sinning but we must avail ourselves of it. It doesn't come from within ourselves but it comes from without. It is all about surrender. Our battle is not with sin but to remain surrendered. Jesus has already won the battle over sin. If we are surrendered to Him He then deals with the sin.

After 22 years as a pastor/editor with a degree in theology and in a respected position of leadership in the church, my father discovered that he was not born-again, but living the experience of the man of Romans 7. Thankfully, even though it was a big struggle for him, he surrendered his pride and acknowledged his error. He went on to write many books on the subject of living a victorious christian life in the mid 70s and 80s. At that time they were published by the Review & Herald, but some are still available today from other publishing companies. If it wasn't that my mother and, later my dad, had discovered how to be victorious Christians and I saw the change it made, I probably would not be in the church today because I had come to the conclusion that, for me anyway, victory was impossible.

The Cave

If I found myself in a cave and desperately wanted out but was unable to find my way out, and then, providentially, someone came with a map and showed me the way out, could it ever be said that even if I found myself in the cave again, that I'd be in the same predicament as I was previously? No, never!! The first time I found myself in the situation I didn't know the way out. Now I know. From now on I can never be in that position again. From now on I can only refuse to leave, which puts me in a totally different situation.

So, I hope you see that once someone finds (or is told) the way out of the condition that this Man of Romans 7 finds himself in, he can't go back to that state again. He will be there willingly. Now he can never go back to the state where he desperately wants out but has no idea how to get out. Can you see my point? The man of Romans 7 can never be used to illustrate the experience of the born-again and converted because they now know the way out.

I've spent so much time on this topic because there are some who can't or refuse to see that the man of Romans 7 is not the converted, born-again individual and cannot be. I am very concerned for them. For me, it defies logic that anyone could come to this conclusion unless they are not born-again and haven't found the way out the first time.