

THE WAR WITHIN  
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Romans 7:7-25  
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**Romans 6:1-7:6**

**Key Question:** Why be Moral? Why try hard to be Good/Godly?

**Key Problem:** If God always forgives, where's the moral incentive?

*Does a sports coach 'always forgive?' What would happen?*

**Paul's Gospel Incentives:**

God not only forgives us, but gives us

- A New Country (by grace we are citizens the Kingdom of God)
- A New Conclusion to our lives (God promises to transform us to become like Christ)
- A New Covenant (marriage to God our lover)
  - *Do these images represent the way you think about yourself?*
  - *Do they – could they , provide a powerful challenge to live differently?*
  - *What would help you think about these good-news descriptions of your life more consistently?*

**Romans 7:7-25**

**Key Question:** If the Law of God is not our primary moral incentive as Christians (“*Live by the Rules or I will punish you!*”) -- why did God reveal his Law (*Ten Commandments, other Old Testament regulations, etc.*) in the first place?

**Paul's Response**

1. Every country has rules, an ethos.

God's Laws (*especially the Ten Commandments, see Romans 13:8-10; Matthew 5:17*) are the basic rules of God's country (our country) – the Kingdom of God.

2. God's Laws show us that we all need help, the help of a Savior

a. God's Laws show that there really is ultimate right and wrong, good and evil (Rom. 7:7, 12, 13)

“I would not have known what it is to covet if the **law** had not said, ‘You shall not covet.’”

--*Do you see our society as becoming more morally relative? Conversely, do you ever see society strongly embracing other rules than God's rules?*  
-- *Explain! How does peer pressure fit into this picture?*  
-- *What do you think of C.S. Lewis' view of 'ought'?*

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p.7 :

These, are the two points I wanted to make.  
First, that human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it. Secondly, that they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of Nature; they break it. These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in.

b. God's Laws show us (paradoxically, creating temptation within us) that **none of us** has the power to do what is right and good consistently. (7:8-23)

Romans 7 (selected)

15I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.  
18 I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. 19For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.  
21So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. 22For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, 23but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Fyodor Dostoevsky Notes from the Underground

*The man speaking is a retired civil servant living in St. Petersburg.*

Tell me this: why does it happen that at the very, yes, at the very moments when I am most capable of feeling every refinement of all that is "sublime and beautiful," as they used to say at one time, it would, as though of design, happen to me not only to feel but to do such ugly things . . . actions that all, perhaps, commit; but which, as though purposely, occurred to me at the very time when I was most conscious that they ought not to be committed.

**Our Response**

Many people ignore their need of help – e.g., a person diagnosed with heart problems, a swimmer in deep water, a family winning the lottery . .

- *Have you allowed God's law to show you your need – not just of a little help, but of a Savior?*
- *When did you first come to believe that Jesus was the Savior we all need?*
- *How do you/could you keep this sense of 'needing God's help' alive daily?*