

Romans 7:16-17: But if I do the very thing that I do not wish to do, I agree with the law, confessing that it is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin that dwells in me. This is a verse I will refer to in a minute and say to you that the word *indwells* here is the same word used in the Scripture when it speaks about an indwelling Holy Spirit and the Lord indwelling you—something or someone who has literally taken up home inside you.

Verse 18-20: For I know that nothing good dwells in me. Then that's true. Nothing good dwells in me—that is, if I am speaking of me being the flesh. For the wishing, the wanting, the desire to do good is present with me, but the doing of good—I just can't find it. For the good that I want to do, I don't do. I practice the very evil that I'm against. But if I am doing the very thing I don't wish to do, I'm no longer the one doing it, but sin that is living in me—that is, in my flesh.

Verse 21-22: I find then that principle, this law—alright, here's the law, an irrefutable law. The only thing that can outdo this law are two things: a greater law or death. Death ends all laws. I find then a principle, a law, that evil is present in me—that is, in my flesh—the one who wishes to do good. For I myself joyfully concur with the law of God - my inner man - now that's not my flesh, my inner man. Are you with me here in verse 22? My inner - not my inmost, but my inner man - agrees with the law of God, whereas that which is in my flesh does not agree with the law of God.

Verse 23: But I see a different law—there's the law of God; there's this law of evil. I see a law. It is working in the members of my body. He's referring again to his flesh, to his body. And it is at war with the law of my inner man. With the law of my what? Say it. Mine. Making me a prisoner, a slave of the law of sin which is in my body. So, I've got a law of sin in my body. I've got a principle of evil present in me, keeping me from doing what I want to do. And I have sin dwelling in me—all over here in the area of my flesh.

I have an inner man, and my inner man has a law that is in my mind. Are you following that? Okay, try to keep those together, but then I see this law of sin in my body. It is greater than the law that is in my mind, which agrees with the law of God, which is outside of me. Inner man, law of mind, agreeing with law of God—but I have the sin dwelling in me. I have the law of sin in my members, and it is making me a slave, pulling me off.

Verse 24: Wretched man that I am, who is going to free me now that I am a slave to the flesh? Who is going to free me from this flesh, this body that is literally incarnated death, that is pulling me around with it—not I'm pulling it around with me, but it's pulling me around with it? He throws up his hands. Actually, this is where Romans 7 ends.

Verse 25: Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. I think this should be read: Thanks be to God; it is through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, on the one hand, I myself with my mind (inner man) am serving the law of God, but on the other hand, with my flesh, I am serving the law of sin.

Verse 8:1-3: There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Say, Amen. For another law has set me free from the law of sin in this—the law of the Spirit. For what the law of Moses, the law of God, could not do because of my flesh, God did. And I think I will just stop right there. God did.

Last time, we learned that God was for us. Say Amen. Now then, we are going to find, finally, the engine of the Christian life. We're not going to call this message *How to Live the Christian Life*, but this is definitely the engine for living the Christian life. And this is going to get a little touchy, and I am really concerned that everybody gets a clear understanding of what's going to be said here this evening, because it will actually set the course for the rest of our lives. Those of you who are listening on the tape and there in that little camera—you're sitting inside that camera right now—you're going to someday, you're going to come here, or you're going to have this in your home, and you're going to sit down. You're going to watch this message; this is where everything begins. Everything we do works from this point onward. In fact, many of the messages I brought to you on the beginning of all things—so we talked about the origin of spiritual things and where so many of our terms came from—they originated not in this realm, but in another realm. All of that works toward tonight, and tonight goes on to be worked out in all of our lives forever.

Romans 1, 2, and 3, we were in big trouble. Big trouble. The Jews were trying to fulfill the law of God. Let's just—we're going to put the law of God right over here, okay? Jim, just stand here a minute, would you? Come over here. No, bring the book with you. Definitely, Jim. Alright, good. Jim, just stand here with the law of God. Alright, good. Now, this brother has got the law of God. When I point over here from now, I want you to imagine this is the law of God over here; that's where it is. Alright, thank you, brother, very much. And I point over there—remember, Jim, you can sit down now. Oh well, I'll have you back up here in a minute, I'm sure. That's the law of God.

The Jews were trying to fulfill this law of God over here—all of that. The Gentiles, in turn, were all trying to do good deeds in hopes that they'd have committed more good deeds than bad deeds when they stood before God. Basically, it is the same thing. It is man's innate need, desire—consuming desire—to do good. It's what it is.

Now, in this room tonight, regardless of all that I have said up until this evening, there is still at least one of you around here who is still trying to please God, and you want to do good, and you want to be good. This is actually an evidence of your fall. This is an evidence of the fall in you. Goodness, I don't want to get off on this, but someday I'm going to show you where goodness and evil—oh, this is going to really blow your brains here. Goodness and evil—no, that's not exactly true—but the concept of doing good and the concept of doing evil—that tree—have got nothing to do with Christian life. They have to do with the fall because they both come from the tree of knowledge. It doesn't say the knowledge of evil. It's the knowledge of good. And you've got good in you. And you want to be good. You'll be good. And you want to do good, but you can't be good, and you can't do good. We're going to

learn that in a minute, but I want you to think from now on: if you could think of evil as a life form, then you would realize it is what is doing it. Right?

Now, in a positive way, could you think of good as a life form? Therefore, you can't possibly do it, because good is a life form. Now, evil is a life form that is in your members, in your body, indwelling you. And you don't want to do it. But Mr. Good does not indwell you. The inner man—and you want to do good—you're trying to do a life form. You remember what Jesus said to Nicodemus? "Why do you call Me Good Master? There is only one who is good." There is only one who is good: God is goodness. God is goodness. Therefore, you can't do good any more than you can do puppy or do tree. You are a human; you can only do human. That is correct. You can't do good. And evil is present in you, but it is no longer you; it is sin and evil that dwells in you. Now, boy, if we could turn that around and say, it is no longer you, but Christ. We need a positive side to this. It is no longer you that is doing it, but it is Christ who is indwelling—who is indwelling—who is indwelling—is indwelling what?

Alright, we're going to find out what here in a minute, but right now, from what we're looking at in this passage, here is somebody who's just really consumed with doing good. This brother right here wants to do good. It just really is his nature to do good. He's going to be so miserable trying to do that. He will absolutely fail.

Now then, that's what was happening in Romans 1, 2, and 3. These people were trying to do good; they were doing evil. The Gentiles said to the Jews, "You hypocrites. We know good and well, you've lived just like we have, and yet you've been trying to get us to do the law, and you don't obey it." The Jews stand up and say, "We have been obeying the law, and you have not." And then some of the Jews get up and say, "No, we have not been obeying the law. We've been bluffing it." And so, the verdict is wrath, condemnation, and judgment. And then it is discovered that an ancient, ancient, ancient way preceded good. In some of the old scrolls, they found that there was a way of being justified *without* being good. Or doing good—excuse me—without doing good. And it was Abraham's way. It was the way of death turned to life. It was the way of utter human hopelessness in which God raised the dead. God raised Abraham's seed out of death at the age of a hundred because Abraham believed God.

You've got to believe that God is going to put your flesh to death and raise you immortally out of the grave and give you a new man, a new spirit, a new person. And you believe God, and it is counted to you as righteousness. Whose righteousness? God's righteousness. How righteous are you? How righteous are you? How righteous am I? How righteous are you? What part are you talking about? That's so wise, brother. You are so wise. I'm going to try again. Eric, right now at this very moment, how righteous are you? What part are you talking about? You should be able to know that right now, brother. Amen. Amen. Because it is God's righteousness. Alright. Now, we've got to go on here. In Romans 4, Abraham preached the gospel to us, and we all believed. We gave up our good deeds, right? And then in Romans 5, we found out we had been made one with Christ. Then, in Romans 6, we

reckoned all of these things to be true, which did us no good whatsoever, and so we were plunged deep into Romans 7.

How often are you going to be in Romans 7? Oh, I'll tell you how often you will be in Romans 7. You will be in Romans 7 as often as you proceed through true spiritual maturing, true spiritual growth. Romans 7 is such a wonderful state, saints. Always bless God for it; it is proof that you are alive. If you have not and are not experiencing Romans 7, you cannot possibly grow in Christ. Joe, let me ask you a question. When you, last year, gave yourself over to those people who picked on you mercilessly and would not give up and let you hide in any way, shape, or form, did you happen in any way to touch Romans 7?

I sure did. I would say, brother, from all I've heard, you lived right in the middle of it. Well, for a while I didn't realize. Didn't realize what? I didn't realize it. The more I realized what I was doing, the more I realized that I was in it. Okay, somebody was showing you what you were doing, and you were becoming more aware. Oh, that's wonderful. That's wonderful. That is true growth—when you realize that you were in Romans 7 and didn't know you were in Romans 7. You were cheating, that's what you were doing. Somebody caught you and said, "You're not all that spiritual."

Brothers and sisters, when you discover you are not living the Christian life, when you begin to have all these exposures and mirrors and light shined upon you, you're just almost going to die. It's going to be awfully hard for you to remember that *God is for me*. Say it: *God is for me*. He wouldn't even be for you if it were not for Romans 7. It's proof that He's for you, but you don't know that. Don't even bother to try to remember, because you're not going to.

Romans 7 is a horrible place to be. There's nothing there but despair and despondency. Anyway, Romans 7 is this horrible battle between you and your flesh. There is no way for me to stress upon you—I don't know how to get serious enough to stress upon you—the inevitability of Romans 7 and the need of Romans 7. There are brothers that I have known for 10, 12, and 15 years, who are just as familiar with the Christian walk as they can be, but only right now are having some of the real elements of Romans 7 come home to them. Spend your whole Christian life living a certain way; wake up one day and find out that that was not Christian at all. That everything on earth you had done and committed your life to, and all the things you felt were... well, you know, you gave your testimony on the basis of this. This is where you hung your salvation, friend—and the insights you had in it—and then one day the Lord shows you: *That wasn't Him. That was you*. That can be a might discouraging. That can be a might discouraging.

And I'm going to tell you something else. In that day, you're not going to remember this night, and you're not going to remember the other night when we looked at Romans 7; you're not going to remember that. You're just going to be so down, and you're going to be utterly hopeless, helpless, weak, and sinful. But God is for you. Praise His name. He is for you. There will come a day when you will feel that there is absolutely no hope for your marriage. Or even worse, that the worst thing that's going to happen to you is when you're

going to come to the thought that you can't get out of your marriage. And you talk about dragging around a body of death—or a body of death dragging you around, you're going to look at this, and you're going to realize that your marriage is dragging you around, and you're never going to be happy again as long as you live. That this person, doggone his hide, is never going to change. Will never change. And that this person, be he male or female, is absolutely, totally intolerable. And that you cannot live with this human being. And yet as a good Christian, you're not going to divorce her. Or him. Kill him, maybe. Or shoot yourself to get out of her. And you're going to find yourself right in the middle of the inevitable Romans 7. And then God's grace is going to come to you. Oh, don't praise God yet.

And you're going to get up, and you're going to have hope, and you're going to say, "Oh, thank God for the grace of God." And you're going to have six weeks to two months of peace. You're going to get up in a meeting and say, "My husband...my wife and I, we just almost came into the middle end, and the grace of God came and saved us. And we're just... everything is all wonderful." "That's right, the Lord really..." About two weeks later, it's going to start all over again. And then, it's going to get black. And it's going to get dark. And it's going to get hopeless. And you're never going to remember what I said to you tonight. And the Spirit of the Lord, it seems, will not remind you either. And you're going to even forget the Christian part of life, I mean, this is down where it really is. And none of this religion, superstition, and all of that. You're just... here you are, a human being, struggling for life itself. And my heart always breaks when I see a saint give up at that point. Don't ever bail out of Romans 7, saints. Let your God do His work in your life. Say, *Amen!* Don't just sit there and nod at me like that. Let Him go ahead and murder you. Let Him go ahead and do this thing to you, and something in you one day will break that never broke before. It won't go away, but under pressure, it will yield. And that's what brokenness is.

So, anything that I say to you tonight beyond this point is really dependent upon Romans 7. The reason I'm telling you this is because of what I'm about to say. What I'm about to say is very important. Two points you must never forget.

Number one: You cannot live the Christian life. You clear on this? Are you clear on this? Oh, wait a minute, I heard Penny say something. This is my second point. What did Penny say? Okay, we'll come back to that in a minute. Penny said, *I thought you said Christ in you.* Did you? Is that what you, Christ in you? Alright, in just a minute, I'm going to throw doubts on that one, too.

Now, saints, I can't emphasize enough this point: You cannot live the Christian life, and you cannot do good; it's basically the same thing. Our concept of the Christian life, you can't do good, you can't fulfill this desire within you. And we get those two things mixed up - the Christian life and the desire to do good become one, and they are virtually inseparable within our inner man, not *inmost man*. In our understanding, we can't separate them. You can't live the Christian life. Let me just show you something. I hope the rest of the sisters who are married will not be offended. But this is Vicki. You see Vicki here? Little bitty thing. She weighs about 70 pounds. Soaking wet, she weighs 70 pounds (laughter).

Vicki, every time I've ever seen her, she's been smiling. She smiles at times when I would die if I were going through what she's going through. She's always talking about the Lord. She's so sweet. I want to tell you something, Vicki: You, in the long haul, will never be a submissive wife. Now, can you believe that? Look at that little old bitty sweet thing sitting over there. She just does everything her husband tells her to do. I don't doubt that one of these days she's going to bite him in the knee. She's going to get full up with this stuff, and she's going to start shouting, screaming, and throwing things. 'I've taken enough of all of this; I'm going to take off,' and after that day, she's going to fight him tooth and nail all the way. If you try to be the wonderful submissive Christian wife that is presented to us in Proverbs... Proverbs... There's the... There's the... There's the... There was... There is a... There's a book that just recently came out: The Woman of Proverbs 31. And the whole book was about how to be this kind of woman.

Well, you might as well tie a guy's legs together and then teach him to be a ballerina. There's not a woman living who can do Proverbs 31; the guy who wrote that was a male chauvinist. I'm sure I don't mean that, but anyway, I would rather believe that that is the bride of Christ. That woman never existed; if she did, she was miserable. That woman was being taken advantage of. You remember, Andy, when you looked the whole world over and you found this girl and you really believed she was going to go along? You know why Andy did that? It's because Andy's a coward and he's afraid of girls. He was looking for a girl whom he figured he could really cow easily. And she looked so sweet. She's never going to submit to you, Andy. She isn't. This woman is not a Christian; She's not going to be a Christian, and she can't be a Christian. Oh, we got something going here. And yet marriage is built on the supposition and expectations of these things.

I was just going to say, now, Joanie, I know when you married this dear brother, and I know when you courted him and he courted you, and he just looked great, didn't he? Now think about it. Go back and think about it. Sister, he hid so much from you. She's not putting it on here; is that or is that not true? Didn't he hide so much from you? How much? You were probably willingly blind. You were at least naively blind, but how much that brother hid from you is from sea to shining sea. And you're still discovering stuff that he hid from you, and later he told you. And you tried to...that's fine, that's right, sweet, aren't you? And you wallpaper over all that stuff. And yeah, it hurt. And it's right. One day, it all ended. And Joni cannot live a Christian life with this guy who hid so much from her. She just can't handle this. You, in turn, are a two-faced hypocrite for treating this poor little girl this way.

You not only did not live the Christian life, but you left us the impression that you could and would and were living the Christian life. And sailing this fraudulent ship, you got one of the sweetest, most innocent, naive, precious little gals in the church and stole her away. Amen. And then Joni discovered that Joe was utterly incapable of doing any of the things that she had expected a Christian husband to do. Say amen, Joni. Huh? That's true? Most of it's true. It's the part that's not most of it that bothers me. You see, there are some good things about Joe. There are some really good, commendable things about Joe. Those are the ones the Lord is after. Joni's after the others. The Lord is after those in which... in which... yeah, but he has

all the instrumentation he needs. I realize he is, but Joni will take care of those things as a handmaiden of the Lord will take care of those things that are known to be improper. God will take care of those things in which you are really a good Christian.

I mean, your greatest strengths as a Christian and a saint, just take this as truth: your greatest strengths have another side to them, like a coin; they have weaknesses. Your submissiveness, young lady, and your willingness to be such a gentle, nice, and loving person is covering up your inability to deal with reality. You, brother, with your strong leadership ability—which we thank God for in the church and wouldn't operate without you—nonetheless have a dark side. You also want your way. And there's the strength, which is blessed of God, but comes with it the double-edged problem of the weakness. And one day, when God comes after you, the most Christian part of you, it will be the darkest day you have ever lived. And some of you are going to forget this.

You cannot live the Christian life. I want to recommend that you be very careful about all the Christian books you read, because virtually every one of them is written on the supposition—simple supposition—that you can. You can. They don't tell you how to, they just assume you can, and then show you all the things you have to do now. And I come back to thinking: if we had a list of all the things in the world that books have taught us to do—good Christians wrote them, and they're all good Christian things—how incredibly many demands there are.

For instance, just think about all the books that have been written by Christians on how to lose weight, assuming that you can lose weight. It's built on the supposition that you can lose weight; that you, as a Christian, can lose weight. I don't know of anything in the world that can convince us so quickly that we cannot live the Christian life as going on a diet. A diet of...yeah, of anything, of any kind. Yeah, something like that.

I had apple juice for breakfast this morning; it almost killed me. I never drink apple juice for breakfast. How did you know that? My grandson told you? Did he? Alright. I cannot take sweets. This morning, I had apple juice for breakfast. So, I drank that stuff. No one is going to believe me, but for two minutes, it tasted so good. When I put it down, I said it. I said it out loud. I said, "I'm going to suffer from this the rest of the day, but for two minutes, I'm going to enjoy this." I know I can't live a Christian life. What I don't know is what to do about it.

Well, that's point number one, and that is: please, please be impressed again and again and again and again—your personal efforts are of no value. Brothers and sisters, I don't mean to leave you now in some vegetable place where, "Well, I can't do anything, so hand me a beer and give me a cigar. I'm going to just sit here until God does it." You know this is pure unadulterated licentiousness. This is again the flesh; even the Gentile heathens do not approve of this. Then what do you do?

And this is my second point. That point is: you are waiting for me right now to tell you how to live the Christian life in the Spirit. I know you are. I cannot. That's exactly it. And it's exactly what it's like. It is not me, but Christ in me. "Tell me how to do that, Gene, so I can get up and go do it." That is the instinct of you. Don't just sit there; say amen. It is the instinct of you; even now, you're waiting to find out the engine of the Christian life so you can go do it. How? "Christ in me must do it." How's that? How do you do that? How do you do that? Are you going to hand out some material I can read on how Christ can live in me? Because that's what I want. I want that. And I want to do that. How many steps are there in having Christ live the Christian life instead of me? So, in a way, we're really...we're locked in here, saints, in some inevitable struggle. That's exactly what it is; it's a half-Nelson; it's a catch-22.

What are you going to do? You can't live the Christian life. And even as I approach this business of Christ in you, I have that feeling that that little guy in there who wants to do good is just waiting. And I have to confess, there are some things you can do. But saints, the first thing you've got to learn is that you can't. And until you do that, you're going to just run up into this deeper Christian life and just, "What do I do?" Single brothers write me letters. "What do I do?" "Gene, write us a book on how." And those books are so very difficult to find, and they are usually preceded by ten books on "you can't," because people who have learned even the slightest things about the reality of Christ are so aware of their inabilities, they're actually afraid to share almost anything, knowing that you are going to take it and turn it into something to do. Then you will discover you can't do it, and you'll get really frustrated: it didn't work. And you're going to forget that the night I said to you, it won't work.

Then, what, Gene, is the handle? The answer is: there really isn't a handle. You just grow into certain things; slowly, slowly grow. And all we can do is encourage our personal growth in the spirituals. That's what we're going to do from now on, but I'm going to show you how. I'm going to show you how it's going to happen, not how you're going to do it, but how it's going to happen. Okay?

I'd like to illustrate this. Let me go over this really quickly to set the stage. And would someone please hand me a watch? Is that watch correct? Oh, boy. I don't want to put that on. Okay, I'm going to play like it is.

It all comes back to some things that I know you're all familiar with, but let me go over them really quickly. Before we ever came into existence, there were things - elements, not things, but elements - that later were given words. But they were reality. One of them was life. And there was only one. And spirit. And that's what that life was made out of.

Alright, so we have life and spirit. We later came along, and, like reflections, we picked up words like "life," but when we talked about life, it wasn't "other realm" life; it had nothing to do with that life. It was, in fact, a picture of that life. And spirit became a common word that had nothing to do with God. But there is life, and there is a spirit, and all that He is existed before anything else existed. Now then, before anything we can see, feel, touch, or

understand existed, God created another form of life. It was the first form of life created; it was the second-highest form of life. The difference between it and the highest form of life was - it started. You got that? It started. That's the biggest thing. The other one never started; it was eternal, eternal in both directions. This life started. And the other outstanding thing about it was that this life was created. It started, and it was created. It also belonged to that realm.

Well then, you know, when the Lord began creating this earth, He started at the bottom and worked up. He started at the top and worked down to a point, then He started at the bottom and worked up. And it's right here where the two jobs met. God, then the creation of angelic life, then creating material physical life, He came to His crowning achievement: the highest life in the physical universe. You. Third-highest form of life. Second-highest created life.

Did you know that, according to my understanding, there is no creature—no land animal in the world—that will, under normal conditions, attack a human being? Do you know that? They'll attack almost anything else. They won't attack a human being. Isn't that incredible? We really were made to rule the physical domain. But do you remember the little song, "Never smile at a crocodile? Never smile..." Well, let me give you a tip: as great as man is, and as feared as he is, fella, never wrestle an angel. Never wrestle an angel. Why, Joe, should you never wrestle an angel? "I get hurt?" Worse than that." You're going to lose because you're outclassed. He has a higher form of life. That's why. And I'll tell you, and I'll tell an angel: never wrestle with the form of life higher than you are. That's right. You're going to lose. Right. And this is the problem with life forms.

Now then, saints, let's get down to it. Would you please come here again? This is the law of God. I want you to look at this and I want you to see every rule and regulation that's on the law books in Portland—all of them—and all the laws in all the cities and all the states in America, and over the communist countries in South America and in Africa, and all of the Bible and all the rules and regulations of the Bible and all of universal laws—and here they stand. But most of all, here's the law of God. You got it? Are you with me? Okay, now I need somebody—No, I don't need a Gentile. I need a human being. I need a human being. Who do I need here, huh? What? I'm a human being. You are a human being.

Hmm, alright, sister, I've got you. Come up here, I need you. Alright. This is my human being. Are you with me? My human being loves to do the law of God. Alright. This is the man. Boy, there are no chauvinists here, folks. This is the man. This is you. This is me. This is the human soul. This is human life. Now, Joni is drawn this way. Are you with me? Drawn to the law of God out there, but, alright, Karen, come here. You're about Joni's size. Now, you're a villain. You're a villain. I want you. Okay? Okay. No, no, no, no. Alright. No, no, no. Alright. Now then, you go that way. No letter. Alright. Okay. Alright. Okay.

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Okay, alright. Okay. What do we have here? What do we have here? We've got a struggle going on! This is human life, and this is, we'll come to in a moment, to what this is, but this is something pulling Joni away from something she wants to do good.