

# **The Battle All Christians Have To Fight**

## **August 27, 2006**

### **Romans 7:18-25 (NLT)**

I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right. I want to, but I can't. [19] When I want to do good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. [20] But if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing it; the sin within me is doing it.

[21] It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. [22] I love God's law with all my heart. [23] But there is another law at work within me that is at war with my mind. This law wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. [24] Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin? [25] Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

### **Romans 8:1-4 (NLT)**

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. [2] **For the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you through Christ Jesus from the power of sin that leads to death.** [3] The law of Moses could not save us, because of our sinful nature. But God put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent his own Son in a human body like ours, except that ours are sinful. God destroyed sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. [4] He did this so that the requirement of the law would be fully accomplished for us who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

### **I want to talk to you today about some of the struggles that we as Christians have to deal with.**

When you listen to some preachers you get the idea that if you are a Christian you won't have any problems. Christians are supposed to be blessed! Christians are supposed to be healthy and wealthy. They're supposed to have perfect children. They're not supposed to have any emotional problems, etc.

### **But you know as well as I do the Christians do have problems.**

We all have problems.

Christians still have to work. They have to deal with people. they have to get things fixed when they break. they have to pay the bills. they have to deal with sickness and disappointments and all of the things that are part of life.

**The Bible says that it rains on the just and the unjust alike.**

**John 16:33 (NLT) Jesus said.....**

.....Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

**So what is the difference between Christians and non-Christians?**

**The main difference is,** Christians are going to heaven when they die and non-Christians are not!

**Another difference is,** Christians have the Holy Spirit living within them to help them and guide them through their problems. But they must listen to His voice. There are great advantages and blessings to being a Christian, but being a Christian does not exempt you from problems.

**Christians also have a struggle that non-Christians don't have. We all fight a battle between our old nature and our new nature.**

**When you are born again, you receive a new nature.** We call it a new birth

**Jesus said to Nicodemus.....**

**John 3:3-7 (NKJV)**

..."Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." [4] Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" [5] Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. [6] That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. [7] Do not marvel that I said to you, **'You must be born again.'**

**The difference between a Christian and a person who is not a Christian is the new birth.** A Christian has experienced a rebirth of the spirit. He has been given new life on the inside.

- **Romans 8:11 (NKJV)**

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who **dwells in you.**

**It's a wonderful thing to have the Spirit of God living within you.** It means that you have eternal life. You have become a child of God. You have a new nature. That's something that unbelievers don't have.

- **Romans 8:16 (NKJV)**

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

It is wonderful to know that you have been born again and that your spirit has been made alive by the Holy Spirit because unless that has happened you will not go to heaven.

**However, it causes some problems.** Now you have two natures. The **old nature** that you were born with and the **new nature** you received when you were born again. And those two natures struggle against each other.

- **Galatians 5:17 (NKJV)**

For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

**Christians are like Rebecca in the Old Testament when she was carrying twin boys in her womb.**

- **Genesis 25:22 (NKJV)**

But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If all is well, **why am I like this?**" So she went to inquire of the Lord.

Can you relate to that? Have you ever asked the Lord, “Why am I like this?” “Why do I have such a hard time doing the things that I know I need to do? What is going on inside of me?”

I’ll tell you what’s going on. It’s a struggle between your old nature and your new nature.

**Actually, Christians struggle with three basis things:**

1. **We struggle with the devil.** He’s a real enemy and he can cause us a lot of problems. Make no mistake about it.
2. **We struggle against the world.** When I say world, I’m not talking about trees and land and houses and cars, etc. I’m talking about the world’s philosophies and devices and schemes and values that are contrary to the word of God.  
I’m talking about man’s efforts to rule and govern himself without God. I’m talking about the humanistic philosophy that is so pervasive in our world today. As Christians, we are in a constant struggle with it.
3. **But most of all, the greatest struggle we have is within ourselves.** It is the struggle between our old sinful natures and or new godly natures.

**Paul had the same struggle. He said.....**

**Romans 7:21-24 (NLT)**

“It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. [22] I love God's law with all my heart. [23] But there is another law at work within me that is at war with my mind. This law wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. [24] Oh, what a miserable person I am!

**Have you ever felt like that?** Maybe that’s a good description of your life. You love the Lord. You want to do what is right. But you still do things that you know you shouldn’t do.

I’ve got good news for you today. You don’t have to live your life that way.

**Paul said.....**

“Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin?”

**And he answered his own question. He said.....**

“ Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.”

**If your old carnal, sinful nature is still controlling your life you need to stop making excuses and deal with it.** The fact that you have a sinful nature is no excuse for being controlled by it. God expects you and me to keep our flesh under the control of the spirit. His power within us is greater than the power of our old sinful nature.

• **1 Cor. 6:19-20 (NKJV)**

.....do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? [20] For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

**Did you get that? The Holy Spirit lives within you. You have the power of God living within you! It is your responsibility to glorify God in your body and in your spirit.**

**1 John 4:4 (NKJV)**

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because **He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.**

Yes. There is a struggle going on in the life of every Christian and I'm glad there is because it means that we've been born again. It means that we have a new nature that is in opposition to the old one.

**But God never intended that the old nature remain in control of us.** He has given us power over our old sinful nature. He has given us power to walk in victory. He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

**We need to understand that God is for us.** He lives within us by His Spirit and He has given us His authority.

**Luke 10:19 (NKJV)**

Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

The only way we can be defeated is if we allow our old nature to control us. **Therefore, we must keep our old sinful nature in subjection to the Spirit of God. How do we do that?**

**Jesus said.....**

**Luke 9:23 (NKJV)**

Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

Notice, Jesus said that to everybody. What is the cross for? It's to crucify your old sinful nature on.

If you are going to live in victory over your flesh, you are going to have to carry your cross with you and every time your flesh starts controlling you, crucify it.

**God's not going to do it for you. He has given you the power to do it yourself. And He expects you to use the power He has given you. Listen to the words of the Apostle Paul to the Colossians.....**

**Col. 3:4-10 (NKJV)**

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. [5] Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. [6] Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, [7] in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. [8] **But now you yourselves are to put off all these:** anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. [9] Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, [10] and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

**It's time for you to decide whether you are going to live for God or not.** You must make up your mind that you are going to be controlled by the spirit and not by the flesh.

## **Elijah asked the people this question.....**

### **1 Kings 18:21 (NKJV)**

And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "**How long will you falter between two opinions?** If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.

Christians need to answer this question today, "**How long are you going to let the flesh control you?**" God has given you power over the flesh, why are you still being controlled by it?

### **Romans 8:5-14 (NKJV)**

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. [6] For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. [7] Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. [8] So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. [9] But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. [10] And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. [11] But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

[12] Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. [13] For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [14] For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

- **Galatians 5:16-17 (NKJV)**

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. [17] For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another.....

**It's time to stop playing games.** It's time to get serious about serving God!

Yes, there's a struggle going on between your flesh and your spirit but God expects you to use the power he has given you to crucify the flesh and walk in the spirit.

God didn't save you just to rescue you from hell. He saved you to serve Him here on this earth. To let your light so shine before men that they will see your good works and want what you've got. He saved you so that he could use you to do His work! He wants you to be an overcomer! He wants you to live in victory, not in defeat. He wants you to be an example to others, not a stumbling block!

**Make up your mind right now that you are going to win the battle over the flesh!**

**God promises great things to those who are overcomers.**

**Listen to what He said to the seven churches in Revelation.**

**1. To the church at Ephesus He said....**

**Rev. 2:7 (NKJV)**

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." '

**2. To the church at Smyrna He said.....**

**Rev. 2:11 (NKJV)**

...He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." '

**3. To the church at Pergamos He said.....**

**Rev. 2:17 (NKJV)**

.....To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it." '

**4. To the church at Thyatira He said.....**

**Rev. 2:26 (NKJV)**

And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations--

### **5. To the church at Sardis He said.....**

#### **Rev. 3:5 (NKJV)**

He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

### **6. To the church at Philadelphia He said....**

#### **Rev. 3:12 (NKJV)**

He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.

### **7. To the church at Laodicea He said.....**

#### **Rev. 3:21 (NKJV)**

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

The promise is to those who are overcomers! I want to be an overcomer don't you? We can be if we will walk according to the spirit and not allow the flesh to control us!

#### **Romans 12:2 (NKJV)**

...do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

#### **2 Cor. 10:3-5 (NKJV)**

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. [4] For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, [5] casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

The battleground for the control of your life is right there in your mind. You must win that battle and bring all those negative and sinful thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within you!

This is a very serious matter.

**Rev. 21:7-8 (NKJV)**

He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. [8] But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

I want to be an overcomer! How about you?

Give invitation!