

How Do You Solve the Sin Conundrum?

Ever encounter a conundrum, which is a difficult or confusing problem or mystery you can't solve? In Romans 7, Paul shares a conundrum that I identify with, and I expect, if you are honest, you do too.

Like any problem or mystery, I want to solve any conundrum I come up against in 30 minutes like a good television show. I don't want to be left hanging to find out how things are solved for a week or the next season. Good or bad, I want it brought to end right now! However, for years, I had no idea how to solve the issue that kept me stumped.

Conundrum Confessions

Paul confesses his conundrum in Romans 7:19 (NLT): "I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway." Paul is telling us that he is struggling with his sin nature, and at times it gets the best of him—and that bugs him.

I confess that my conundrum was always: *Why do I eat too many sugary desserts when I really don't want to?* I struggled for years not understanding why I couldn't do what He told me. It was sin for me to disobey Him but not doing what He asked, yet I continued to eat sugary desserts, unable to figure out why I couldn't obey Him.

Even though we are Christians, none of us are perfect, and we shouldn't purport to be. In Romans 7, Paul makes that clear. He also tells us how the law shows us our sin, why we struggle with sin and what we can do about it.

How the Law Reveals Our Sin

Romans 3:20 tells us clearly how the law reveals our sin. “No one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.” The Passion Translation uses the words “the law fully exposes and unmasks the reality of sin.”

We are a rebellious people. It’s in our nature. Remember how it all started? God gave Adam and Eve one rule to follow, and that’s the one rule they broke. They rebelled against what God told them to do.

From that moment forward, as long as there are laws, humanity will rebel. It was built into us, courtesy of Adam and Eve. It’s called our sin nature. The law was given to humanity by God to help us understand what to do; instead, we used the free will He gave us to do the opposite.

Diet Laws

When I read Romans 7, I always think of the law as a diet because a diet is basically a set of laws or rules that someone has created. It doesn’t take into account what each individual’s body needs in order to be healthy. When we try to follow a diet, we will eventually rebel because we see it as a set of rules, not as a lifestyle change plan that will help us.

God is into lifestyle change plans for each of us, whether we need to lose weight or not. He wants us to transform into His people. He wants us to know we are free to choose the better things God wants for us.

Any transformation plan God shows us will be a way to grow closer to Him. Transformation of any kind is always for our good and not our disaster. It is something we want to do, not something we have to do.

Why Do We Struggle With Sin?

Any law is there for a reason, just like any rule your parents gave you or you give to your children. It is there to help, not to hurt. Imagine what it would be like if we were a totally lawless society.

Just think what it would be like if there were no speed limits. Some people still don't observe them, but I hate to think what it would be like to get on the interstate and no one at all observes the speed limits.

When we rebel against God, we sin, and sin wants you in bondage to whatever habits you have struggled with in the past. It can be things like drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or certain foods. It can be mindsets, attitudes or emotions that lead you to do things that are harmful. It can be literally anything that makes you feel like you are carrying the world's heaviest burden on your shoulders.

Freedom in Christ

"Christ has set us free! We must always cherish this truth and firmly refuse to go back into the bondage of our past" as Galatians 5:1 (TPT) so tells us.

Sin of any type is bondage. Our greatest desire as Christians should be to get free of the bondages or strongholds to which we have bound ourselves.

In Romans 7:21-23 (NLT), Paul lays it all on the line. "I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me."

What Sin Does to Us

Sin wears us down. It exhausts us, especially when we are Christians. The difference between a Christian who is in a

continual cycle of sin and someone who is not a Christian is that the Christian will be under conviction when he or she sins.

Conviction from God makes us miserable if we do not confess what we have done, repent and ask for forgiveness. His grace covers us, but we need to push the grace button. Confession and repentance is the way to do that.

We are not better than those who are not Christians; we just know better—or we should. We are never going to be perfect, but we push toward perfection by growing in spiritual maturity. One way we do that is to own up to what we have done. Instead of continuing to do what we know God doesn't want us to do, we ask Him to help us. We cannot do that until we lay our sin at His feet.

What Can We Do About Sin?

When we make a choice to be controlled by our sin nature, it will result in a harvest of sinful deeds. However, because we are now under grace, we have a choice.

We have the freedom to be submitted to God as it says in Romans 7:25 (TPT). "I give all my thanks to God, for His mighty power has finally provided a way out through our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One! So if left to myself, the flesh is aligned with the law of sin, but now my renewed mind is fixed on and submitted to God's righteous principles."

We Have a Choice

This verse puts the choice back on us. If we just go on autopilot, our sin nature will be in control, and we will be in bondage to whatever death-giving habits we had before.

But when we accept Jesus, He renews our minds, and we can willingly choose what God wants for us. We have the power to surrender to His will and His ways.

In this life of conundrums, contradictions and confusing choices, the only way to live in victory is to follow Jesus every step of the way. We can do this because God has given us the ability to choose Him and His ways.

I choose to follow God. Conundrum solved.

For more on this subject, check out this episode of *Sweet Grace for Your Journey* on Charisma Podcast Network, *The Conundrum*. To get the action steps and challenges for this and other lessons in The Spirit-Led Transformation course, join Overcomers Academy.

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