

ROMANS

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONSTITUTION

STUDY SEVENTEEN

From Agony to Ecstasy

Romans 7:24–8:4

We feel weak and we're given to highs and lows but it makes no difference to the Spirit of God who is coequal, coeternal, and coexistent with the Father and the Son. How great is that? He is living within us, energizing us to face whatever the day may bring. There are no obstacles too high for Him. There's no person too difficult for Him. There's no situation impossible to Him. He's alive and well within us saying, "Let Me work through you."

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

IMAGINE all the days ruined by car problems! The situations are endless. You leave the house for work and run over a sharp piece of metal that cuts your tire and makes you miss your meeting. Or your battery goes dead on a biting, wintry afternoon leaving you stranded in the cold. Perhaps you forgot to check your gas gauge between stops on a day-long road trip, and you run out of fuel in the middle of nowhere. Ugh! That's why the first sight of roadside assistance brings such a deep sigh of relief!

Similar agony often creeps into our Christian journey. Joy gets deflated by life's struggles. Cold relationships have a way of deadening our love battery. Patience runs out of fuel right when we need it most.

While nobody would think to push his or her car to the destination when it breaks down, forcing the Christian life is a temptation many of us fall into due to our fallen condition. But just as grace began our relationship with God, grace sustains our fellowship with God. We aren't on our own.

In this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we discover how. What relief it brings! The Spirit appears just over the horizon bringing with Him divine assistance!



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Express your gratitude to God for His ever-present and freely accessible empowerment as you explore His precious truths in Romans.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

When we reflect on the moving words formed by Paul's fingers, the various churches founded through his preaching, and the many eyes who, through his ministry, saw Christ's light, we may wonder about Paul's secret. How did Paul find boldness to confront a sorcerer in Paphos or guidance to know which city to evangelize? The apostle's enabler was the Holy Spirit (*Acts 13:9–11; 16:6–10; 20:22–25*).

With his Roman readers and us, Paul gladly shared his secret that takes a person from the agony of sin's wretchedness to the ecstasy of eternal life with our heavenly Father.



Observation: From Agony to Ecstasy

Use your observation skills to examine closely Paul's words in *Romans 7:24–8:4*.¹ Note the transition from exasperation to exhilaration as Paul takes us from the barren, hot spiritual desert in Romans 7 to the lush, green highlands in Romans 8. Note your key observations below.

What was the cause of Paul's frustration in *7:24*? Pay attention to the question he asked. What way did he describe himself in verse 24?

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Weren't you pleased to read that Paul asked, "Who will set me free?" not "what?" He wasn't looking for a formula, a secret, some organization, or even a church gathering. None of that sets us free. It requires a person, a redeemer, a rescuer. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

We can sum up Paul's feelings in Romans 7:24 NASB this way:

- I'm tired—"Wretched man that I am!"
- I'm hopeless—"Who will . . ."
- I'm trapped—" . . . set me free . . ."
- I'm condemned—" . . . from the body of this death?"

What prompted Paul's shift to thanksgiving in [7:24–25](#)? What realization did he make? What truth about himself did he confess to experience rescue?

Paul is confessing this, "Only God can bring relief. I cannot bring it to myself or for myself. I'm like a drowning man at sea. I cannot get myself to the shore. I need help from another who will throw me a lifesaving device." —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Reading the opening line of Romans 8 is like rolling down the car window while driving in the mountains. Feel the cool air! Take in the refreshing smells!

Read [8:1–2](#) in the NET, the J. B. Phillips, and other translations. Note the word *therefore*. What good news did Paul declare to all who feel tired, hopeless, trapped, and condemned? What is the basis of this good news?

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According to [Romans 8:3–4](#), why is the Law unable to save us? How did God accomplish what the Law could not do? How is the requirement of the Law fulfilled in us?

“You feel tired,” the Holy Spirit says, “I will do this for you and through you.” The Law’s command to live in obedience to God is fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the strength of the flesh but according to the power of the Spirit. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Supernatural Assistance Now Available

When Paul exclaimed, “Wretched man that I am!” (Romans 7:24), he used a Greek word that can mean “to bear a callous from overuse.” He was weary of feeling wretched. Relieving his misery was God’s pronouncement: “So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus” (8:1).

Paul moved from agony to ecstasy! Look up the Greek term [katakrima](#), translated “condemnation,” in the Greek lexicon at [billmounce.com](#). Also explore the term [condemnation](#) in the freely accessible *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* at [biblestudytools.com](#). Explain the significance of this term.

In the Greek sentence, “no” is emphatic. “No, none at all, never!” The emphasis is there at the beginning of the sentence, “There is no condemnation.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Romans 7:24–8:4

The “law of Moses” required us to obey it perfectly, which we can’t do “because of the weakness of our sinful nature” (Romans 8:3). How did God’s Son fully satisfy “the just requirement of the law . . . for us” (8:4)? For help with the answer, read [Romans 8:3–4](#) in The Message and the Amplified Bible.

Now, set free from bondage to sin and with no condemnation hanging over our hearts, we are able to do what we couldn’t do before—live righteous lives as we “walk . . . according to the Spirit” (8:4 NASB). What does it mean to walk according to the Spirit, or, as the Amplified Bible states, live “in the ways of the Spirit”?

As we move deeper into Romans 8 in the following studies, we’ll learn more about how to live by the Spirit’s power. For now, let’s draw insight from other passages in Scripture.

Do you realize when you came to Christ there was a whole package deal made available to you—in fact, a deal that immediately went into action? Within that package is the presence of the Holy Spirit who is not an “it.” He is a member of the Trinity, and He lives within you as a result of your conversion. And He will never, ever leave. I have supernatural assistance that is available N-O-W.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: God’s Supernatural Assistance

How did Jesus emphasize the disciples’ need of divine assistance in His farewell discourse in [John 15:1–8](#)? Now read [14:16–21](#) and [16:5–15](#). Whom did Jesus promise to give them and why?

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When you came to Christ, the Spirit of God took up His residence within you, and He will never, ever leave. You cannot sin so badly that He runs away from you. Oh, He's grieved. He can be stifled, but He doesn't abandon us. He lives within us. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

How would you describe the principle of the Holy Spirit's empowerment as you compare *Romans 8:2–4; Galatians 5:16–25; and Ephesians 5:18–20*?

*The Spirit says to us, “Let Me speak this through you. Let Me face this situation through you. You lean on Me; that's why I'm here. You let Me work through you, and My power will come out through your voice when you speak and through your presence when you are there, through your hands as you touch, through your life as you lead.” That's the Spirit's empowerment.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



Application: Cooperate with the Holy Spirit!

Application helps us use the principles we've gleaned to face any secrets we're hiding, change habits that are hurting our spiritual growth, and cultivate attitudes that honor the Lord.

Think about the struggles you're facing that are beyond your ability to handle. What practical steps can you take to surrender to God's help?

A struggle without surrender is miserable to endure. Since life has its struggles, if you choose not to surrender your will, your plan, your wish, your image, your name, your reputation, all that stuff, you're going to enter into a misery that will never get resolved. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Paul shifted from agony to ecstasy when he confessed his need and realized God’s available assistance. What thoughts come to mind or what emotions stir in your heart knowing that His strength is yours to handle anything that comes your way?

He does for me what I cannot do for myself. Furthermore, He fulfills in me what God desires for me. It isn’t about me. It isn’t what my plan is in life; it’s what God’s plan is, which makes it so exciting. So when I’m surprised by decisions that are made or events that occur, God isn’t taken by surprise. He’s there living within me saying, “I’ll get you through this. That’s why I’m here.”

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your grace that sets me free from the self-help of a Law-oriented lifestyle. Yes, You are my 24/7 divine assistance. Fuel my patience. Charge my love battery with divine current. And make my joy abundant and overflowing. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, “[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)”

For the 2025 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Aaron Massey, senior vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, and Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll’s messages. Copyright © 2007, 2025 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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