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ROMANS 7

Romans Series: How God Changes People

Would you open your Bibles please to Romans 7. Let's go before the Lord and pray. Okay?

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, as we come into your presence on this day, we do so knowing that it's an opportunity for us to grow in our personal development because as we get to know you more and you do a work inside of our hearts, you do something to us. You make us different people. Lord, sometimes the problems that we face, the challenges that we have in our lives are discouraging. Lord, I pray that you would help us to see them as you see them – as challenges that can help us to grow, that actually can produce hope in our lives because we can see you at work.

Lord, we don't come to you just asking for things today. We come asking primarily that you would reveal your plan in life to us so that we can fit into it. Show us how on this day we might fit into what you want for us. We know that might be an interruption, something we didn't plan on, but help us to see life through your eyes, recognizing that you're at work in our world and that you want us to be able to engage others and you want to engage us through life. So right now, Father, we ask that you would show us what it means to fit into your plan today and this week. Also, Lord, now as we open your word, we ask that you would speak to us and teach us, give us some understanding more about ourselves and what you have for us in our own lives. So Lord, we give this time to you. In Jesus' name, amen.

Just talking about this is our study on Sunday mornings. What we're trying to do on Sunday mornings is look at the book of Romans through the eyes of how God changes people. We can look at it in a number of different ways. We can understand how He works in our lives and how He endorses salvation and how He creates that whole plan for us, which we're seeing. We've already seen that a little bit. We've talked about how God works through us so we can share our faith with others. But in the last few weeks we've been talking about how God changes people, how He changes us. I just find this to be a fascinating study in the book of Romans. So I want you to look with me at Romans 7:1.

If you find yourself struggling in your life, doing the right thing – I'm not just talking about big things (staying off drugs or not getting addicted to alcohol or avoiding immorality), I'm talking about keeping your mouth shut when you need to keep it shut or being able to think rightly when in the midst of a challenging situation instead of getting off in thinking of ways that would create a problem. If you have a struggle with that, with doing the right thing, I want you to see today that that's a sign that you are a healthy Christian.

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In other words, if you don't find yourself struggling with sin and life's just happening, then that's usually a sign that a problem is in the works. If you sin freely without a struggle then there's something wrong there. It's a sign that you're either a carnal person or a natural person. A spiritual person recognizes that sin is present and we're wrestling with that in our own hearts. It's a battle. Maybe I should say it's a war.

There are two things that are mentioned today that we're going to see in our passages that I think get us off track sometimes. There are two things – emotions and desires. Emotions we're going to see they're in our heart and get us off track. The desires of our hearts can sometimes be going in the wrong direction. So when we see emotions and desires getting us into the wrong way then what we need to do is we need to recognize that God wants us to do something about it. The work is going to start in our hearts, not just in our behavior. And so what God wants us to do is put a boundary or a barrier around some of those things in our hearts so they don't get off track. Because when our emotions in our heart get off track or desires get off track then behavior starts messing up.

That process of putting a boundary around the emotions and desires in the heart is described in Romans as *reckoning yourself dead to sin*. That's the idea. Desires and emotions are not wrong, but you can't let them control you or you end up spending more than you should, or eating more than your should, or hurting people more, and just getting yourself into dangerous situations or in trouble. So what we have to do is we have to put a boundary around emotions and desires.

I work with children and I counsel with children. Sometimes I'll draw this for kids and I'll say we have to put a boundary around your emotions and your desires. Why? Because if you put a boundary around them then they won't be getting out of whack.

Now I may not explain all the theology we're going to talk about today, but this is the very principle that I think we all need. We need to know how to put that boundary around those things in our lives so we don't get ourselves into trouble.

In the last chapter, chapter 6, Paul used an example of slavery, how we're not slaves to sin anymore. Now we're going to look at another example – the law and how that law in particular is represented through marriage. So we're going to talk about that in chapter 7:1.

Do you not know, brothers and sisters—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law has authority over someone only as long as that person lives?

So in verse 1 of chapter 7 we're reminded who he's writing to. *Do you not know, brothers and sisters*. So he's talking to Christians. These are Jewish Christians we see because he's *speaking to those who know the law—that the law has authority over someone only as long as that person lives*. So these are Jewish Christians he's writing to in Rome.

He's saying that the law has authority over everybody, but only as long as they live. I mean after you're dead, you're not going to break the Sabbath. After you're dead, you're not going to get a

speeding ticket or commit adultery or spend too much. The law has authority over us. That's what he's saying here.

For example... Notice in verse 2 we're going to take one part of the law, one of the rules of the government of God as He orchestrates us, he's going to talk about marriage. So we're going to learn some things about marriage as we talk about this subject of the law and the sin nature and so on. So we're taking a parenthesis here.

Verse 2— *by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive*. Marriage designed for one man, one woman for life. That's the idea there. *But if her husband dies, she is released from the law that binds her to him*. So there is an exception to that law and that exception is that if he dies, she's no longer bound to it.

That's the principle here that we're going to take and apply to our own lives. Because when we are dead to sin, we are freed up to marry someone else, Jesus, and be empowered by Him. That's the idea.

But we're not there yet. That's where we're going with this illustration. It's an interesting analogy that he makes about marriage so we can learn some things about marriage here as a parenthesis. We'll learn about the analogy and then we'll apply it to our lives as people who are wrestling with sin inside.

Verse 3 says, *So then, if she has sexual relations with another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress*. This is what the law says. This is what the law teaches. *But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress if she marries another man*.

Let's first talk about marriage, then we'll apply the analogy because today there's some rather common experiences when it comes to divorce. Many people get divorced for all kinds of different reasons and I want you to see biblically that if we go to God's word and we ask the question "when is a person free to remarry," then we have some pretty clear guidelines in God's word.

One is when their spouse dies. If we were to go to 1 Corinthians 7 we would see another one when adultery takes place, or let's say the person they get divorced and the other person gets married or whatever. In other words, they're involved with another relationship outside of this one then this person is free to remarry, not bound by that marriage that existed. So adultery is another cause for justifiable cause for remarriage in God's word. That's just a parenthesis about marriage.

Let's go back now and take the analogy and apply it here. Because what he's saying...you may say he's talking about marriage. Well he's really talking about salvation and the work that God wants to do daily in our lives and he's using this law of marriage as an example of that.

If we go back to Romans 6:19, the last chapter, he's given us an illustration here of just telling us that the slavery illustration, he says, *I'm using the example from everyday life because of your*

human limitations. So he tells about slavery (something very common to the Roman people), how our human nature is a slave to sin. Now he's going to give this illustration of being in a marriage relationship with the old nature, that when it dies then we're free to be united with Christ. Just like when a spouse dies under the law, that person is free.

So the first illustration is slavery, the second illustration is marriage. You may think they're connected, but marriage isn't necessarily slavery, it just happens to be that those two things are there. The point is there, when you get married you're bound to that person, good or bad, and now the person can move forward.

But you might say, "I feel like a slave and I'm in marriage." We're staying with the analogy here about the law. "Because I can't please her, I can't please him. He doesn't meet my needs or she doesn't meet my needs. I feel like I'm married to Mr. Perfect who doesn't care about me." That's the picture of the law here. Being a slave in that relationship with the law and it just reveals our weaknesses. Because that's all it does. Mr. Perfect, the law, is always pointing out the problems we have in our lives.

So what he's saying is when your marriage partner dies, you're free to move on. And when you're dead to the law, then you're free to do what's right. So he's going to talk about this. This boundary around emotions and desires in your heart is created in part when you realize that I'm dead to sin. I don't have to allow my emotions, my desires to get out of whack.

Verse 4: So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

So in the same way that the spouse dies, so now the person is free to remarry, we now are dead to sin and we can have this relationship with God and we can do what's right. So Paul is clarifying what happens when you get saved. That you're dead to sin and then you have this new life, and that salvation needs to work itself out into our lives on a regular basis.

The next verse contains two key words that will help us understand this. Notice verse 5. *For when we were in the realm of the flesh* (that's the first word), *the sinful passions* (that's the second word) *aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death.*

If you have the NIV Bible you likely have a footnote there (at least I do in my NIV Bible) in verse 5 after the word *flesh*. So you can look at your footnote or I'm going to read it to you because the footnote explains what that word *sarx* or *flesh* means. It says, "In context like this, the Greek word for flesh (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the spirit."

We've talked about the sin nature being this magnetic pull toward sin that we all have. It's revealed as we talked about last week in our strengths. So you might have a strength of being a leader, but the sin nature can pull you to use that and misuse that to be bossy. So we're not just talking about the big sin list, we're talking about the daily wrestling we do in our lives. You might be a very friendly person, but you may be so talkative that you don't listen to someone. So

we're wrestling with that sin nature inside so that we can do the right thing when we're tempted to do the wrong thing often revealed within our strengths.

So that first word is the word *flesh*. Our sinful nature that draws us, this magnetic pull toward sin.

But this next word, the *sinful passions* is the word emotions. So I put the word up there, emotions and desires, because they're in the passage. But here's those sinful emotions, passions that lead us to sin is the kind of emotion we're talking about here.

Verse 6: *But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.*

So whether it's the analogy of marriage or the analogy of slavery, we are now free. The key to winning in the battle against sin in our lives, the daily interaction that we have with sin is to start with the statement, the statement that says I am dead. Say that with me. I am dead.

Now if you're thinking about (and I hope you are thinking about) an area of weakness that you have, where you're tempted in an area of your life – it could be tempted to spend money or tempted to spend too much time on video games or a temptation to be entertained in ways that maybe aren't the best, not necessarily sinful, but they're not just the best for you – whatever it is, that's the wrestling we do. In order to deal with it, we have to say I am dead to that. That's the idea. Self, I'm dead to that desire of passion. So that we're freed up to do more than just live for that. We're freed up for something else.

I don't think it's good enough to just say no. And that's why it's saying here you're not just saying no, you're saying yes to something else. You're saying yes to the Spirit, not just no to the sinful passions.

Verse 7: *What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law.* See, if you read the Bible you will see sin in your life. It reveals it for us so that we understand that.

It's really interesting to watch a person who has an unbridled sin nature. In other words they're not even trying to control anything.

So I watched a guy yell at a flight attendant last Sunday when I left here. I got on the plane and this guy... I felt sorry for him. He had a problem and he felt like he was mistreated, but he's yelling at the flight attendant because he doesn't like the airline and the plane that they've given him. I mean what can she do about it?

I'm just thinking because I'm teaching this – there's an unbridled sin nature. It would only be by God's grace that I wouldn't be like that. Maybe I am like that sometimes because I'm not giving myself to the Lord. But when we see that unbridled sin nature, we're so motivated, I think, to ask the Lord to give us the strength to wrestle with those things in our own hearts.

Some people don't have a clue. They just let their desires and their passions run rampant. And the law, it says, reveals our sin. We wouldn't see it if we didn't look at the scriptures. There's this sense of awareness that we have.

Some people will say, "Well that's just my personality. I'm a real talkative person and that's why I don't listen to people." Well that's not a good excuse. Or "I just like to spend money. It makes me feel good." That's not a good excuse. You can't just look at personality and excuse ourselves, nor can we say, "I was born this way about anything. I was born angry," or "I was born with a tendency to be dishonest." None of those things are fair. It's saying that we have to look at the sin nature that's present in us and we want to serve Christ.

Have you ever seen someone get pulled over for speeding? Or maybe you've been pulled over for speeding. The tendency is to blame the law. "You know, that's not fair that that's a 25mph speed limit. I don't care if it's a school zone. You can go 50 in this and I was only going 40!" So we start blaming the law and that's what the idea is here.

You can't blame the law because all the law does as your former marriage partner, is what it's saying, is it reveals to us our sin so that we see who we really are. We can't complain about that. Sin has this natural pull and the law or the Bible, the scriptures, reveal that to us so we can see it.

You don't have to teach kids how to sin. They have a sin nature in them.

A man told me a story this week. He says, "I don't know what I was thinking. I left the house and I told my kids, just joking as I was leaving, 'Don't put beans up your nose!' I couldn't believe it. I come back and they have beans and we had to go to the emergency room because they had beans up their nose."

Kids like to do what they told you not to do. There's this natural sin tendency that we all have. You don't have to learn it. You don't have to teach kids how to sin. It comes naturally. When we talk naturally, I'm talking from the old nature inside of us.

The next verse – *For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."* It's interesting that of the Ten Commandments he chooses the last one. *But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead.*

Now there's our word desire. If you look at the Greek word there, it's the word *epithumia*, which is the word desire there. Sometimes the word *epithumia* is used in a positive sense.

Paul says, "I desire to come to you." It's the same word. I desire to come and visit you. So he uses the exact same word, the word desire, so that the desire when it's good is a desire, but when it's bad it's a temptation, it's coveting, it's a desire for doing the wrong thing. So the same word desire is being used here.

He's really referring back to the tenth commandment. You might say if you look at all the commandments, "Well I never commit adultery and I don't murder," things that are in the Ten

Commandments. But I tell you, when we get to the tenth one, it fits all of us! We all have this challenge that we face in our lives.

Let's look at this next verse. This is actually the tenth commandment from Exodus 20 in the Old Testament as was given to Moses. It says, *You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or his donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.*

I want to talk to you about the coveting, the desires that we have because those desires can get us into trouble. There are good desires and there are bad desires. We have to limit them and we have to be careful of them because they can get us into problems.

In James 4 it says this: *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight.*

I would suggest that in many of our lives it's those things that get us into trouble. I want my desires before God to be so neutral that God could take me this way without resistance. So we want our desires to be in this place that's best for moving forward in the way that God would have us do.

I was thinking this week about desires. You learn this as kids. And some of you... I'm going to date myself here, but when I was a kid around Thanksgiving we would receive in the mail the Sears and Roebuck catalogue. I don't even know if they have the catalogue anymore. It would come in the mail, but it was a big thick book like this. On the outside it said "Wish Book." Maybe it should say "The Coveting Book."

But anyway what I would do as a kid is I would take that thing and I would open it up and I would go right to the toy section because I really liked the toys in the Sears catalogue. I would dream about (because Christmas is coming and pictures of Santa Claus on the front, so I would be thinking about Christmas) what do I want for Christmas? I would go right to the army men because there were army men there and I was really into G.I. Joes. Now I see that's dolls for guys. I had the navy one and I had the army one that came with guns. I really liked the G.I. Joes. And then I would flip over to the racecars and I had a slot car sets. I really liked the slot cars and getting some new slot cars would be really fun to run in my track. So I had a lot of fun looking at the Sears catalogue.

I learned very easily those are things I want. So it often set me up, I think, at Christmas time. If I didn't get what I want I would be disappointed because my desires would be like expectations and I'd get myself in trouble.

The passage that we read in Exodus talks about coveting your neighbor's house. I'll tell you a story about coveting in my neighbor's house that happened to me just recently.

My neighbors are Ed and Joanne Miller. They just put on this beautiful door on their house. Dave and Ed hung this door so it's beautiful. It's a beautiful door and it just opens beautifully.

They couldn't have hung it better. But Joanne bought the lock and that's what I was interested in. This is one of those electronic locks so you just touch it and it opens up.

So Ed says to me, "Scott, come over here and see my lock."

So I said, "Okay, show me your lock."

So he says, "Look I'll touch it," and it turns blue and the door unlocks and you can go in it. He shuts the door and he says, "Here you try."

So I touch the lock and it unlocks and it opens. I say, "This is great. I've got to get one of these!" Well of course it's bluetooth tied to his cell phone so it only works because he's present right there and anybody could touch it and it'll open.

Well we go inside and we have fun talking about their house and locks and all these other things and then after a little while it was time for me to go. So I go out the front door, shut the door, and I see that lock again. I think, "I'm going to try that again." I reach over and touch it. It flashes, but it doesn't open. I'm thinking, "Oh man! I've got to get one of these. This is really fun for me!"

I just happen to like that kind of stuff. And so I'm thinking covet your neighbor's house. There's a good thing. I can get into that. I understand what that's like. I like those kinds of things.

For me I could go to Best Buy and you sit in there and there's a lot of things at Best Buy. The Sears catalogue, the army men, now those toys aren't as important to me. But I could really get into some of those electronics at Best Buy. And then they say no payments for six months! Yes, I can do this. And I say, "Oh I better not do this."

And then I just go across to the parking lot to the Home Depot. Oh man. I could spend a lot of money at the Home Depot. And you know, at the Home Depot, no payments for a year. Oh Lord, you're going to come back before a year! I could do this! This is great. I wouldn't have to pay for this at all! Alright.

So all I'm saying here is that all of us face this whole issue of coveting. It's the desires in our hearts that get us into trouble and so he's drawing attention to this in the passage. That's what the sin nature is. It reveals itself through all kinds of things in our hearts.

But he goes on because there's another thing the sin nature does. It deceives us. Look at this. Verse 9: *Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me. So sin deceives us. It tricks us into thinking that my anger is justified. After all, I've been offended so I could let this person have it. It deceives us. It tricks us on the inside, and through the commandment put me to death. So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.*

Sin deceives us. I would suggest that we all have an infinite ability to be deceived in our hearts. That's hard. I think that makes us a little more humble because we must realize that we always

have to be ready to rethink our position. That maybe we are the ones who are wrong in this argument. Maybe we're holding onto something we shouldn't be holding onto. Maybe our perceptions, our desires, our emotions are coloring our heart and we're being deceived in the midst of that.

You know, I get a phone and I have the iPhone 5s. Boy, when I got it, it's got the fingerprint thing there. I like it. It's a really great phone. I'm really happy with the 5s and it's meeting all of my needs. Until the 6 comes out. And I'm thinking all of sudden, "You know this is the old phone here. I'd really like to have a new phone." I'm deceived into thinking sometimes I need something more.

That's what advertising does. The next level comes out or the next version comes out and we think we have to have that. There's a deception that goes along with those things in our lives.

Well let's go on because he's saying here that the law is like a mirror or a thermometer. It doesn't create the problem; it reveals it.

I have a friend whose name is Tom Schuck. I really like his perception of the store. He says, "You need to view the store like a museum. You can go in there, you can look, you can touch, but you can't take it home." He says, "I have a lot of my stuff. I just keep it at the store and I go visit it every once in a while, But I don't bring it home." I like that. He works with married couples and he says that saves a lot of marriages. I suppose it would.

Alright. Let's go onto verse 13. *Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! Nevertheless, in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it used what is good to bring about my death, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.* I am a sinner. I need Jesus every day.

Verse 14: *We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.*

There are three words that you need to understand. There's the word carnal, which is a believer who is not walking with the Lord. There is the word natural, which is the person who's not saved yet. And there's the word spiritual, which refers to the person who's walking with the Lord. All three of those ideas are very important for us to understand.

Here now he's going to talk starting in verse 15 about his own experience in wrestling with sin. We have to ask the question is he talking about an unsaved person, is he talking about a carnal person, or is he talking about a spiritual person? I would suggest he's talking about his own experiences in first person. He's talking about it in present tense, which means he's talking about right now, not when he's being carnal but when he's being spiritual, that this is the normal wrestling of the Christian life as we deal with sin.

Read starting at verse 15. *I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.* This is the internal wrestling that we experience with sin in our lives. *And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it,*

but it is sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature.

Now you read these verses and you start saying to yourself, “Wow, this guy needs to see a shrink. He’s got things going back and forth. He doesn’t know what he’s talking about.” But I think it’s very important for us to understand this wrestling. The person who is a spiritual person is aware of sin and their tendency toward sin, and is trying to wrestle with that inside.

The next words say, *For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.* We’re great planners. We plan all kinds of things. We make New Year’s resolutions or resolutions in general. But it’s hard to keep them. Why? We get stuck. We fail. We’re schizo in that regard. I have a desire to do what’s right, but I can’t do it. It’s hard.

Verse 19: *For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.*

So some people say, “The devil made me do it.” Other people can now say, “Hey, it’s not me. It’s the sin nature inside of me.” So the policeman pulls you over and says, “Why were you speeding?” You can say, *“I do what I don’t want to do. It’s not longer I who do it, but it is sin living inside me that does it.”* So he raises his eyebrows, he says, “I’ll be right back,” goes back to his vehicle, comes back with your ticket, and says, “Here. Give this to the sin nature inside of you.”

The sin nature is at work in us and we have to realize the power of that sin. We’re wrestling with it in our lives.

So I think the summary verses are 21-23. So let me read these. This is really, I think, where we’re trying to grasp the idea that he’s teaching us.

Verse 21: *So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. (Would you flip on the slide for me? Because I tried to illustrate this in this heart thing.) I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.*

As Christians, we are fighting a battle. That’s the idea here. That’s the normal Christian life. That’s the normal Christian life that we’re sensitive to sin and recognizing that we can be in error.

Knowing this truth is so strategic for a marriage relationship. Because I could be wrong, I could be irritable, I could overreact. And sometimes we treat the people closest to us in ways that are worse than we would treat people at the office or we’d treat people in the neighborhood.

We’re fighting this battle on the inside and so when you become a Christian sometimes you overcome things like drug or alcohol addiction or pornography, those kinds of things, but we still

wrestle with things like anger or forgiveness or speech that's out of place. Those kinds of things that we're working on.

I think that if you read this passage to a person who's not a believer, they're going to say, "Take your pill. We have medication for that." But what we're understanding as Christians is that we are different than the person who is not a Christian. The person who is not a Christian sins freely. That's why in verse 24 Paul says, *What a wretched man I am!* This is so hard to look at this inside of me and to see this wrestling.

Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? What a great question. Who's going to rescue me? I feel trapped. I'm sucked in. I make mistakes all the time. I'm a wretched person. Who's going to rescue me?

He answers the question in verse 25. *Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.*

There the struggle is normal, the battle is present. (Zip through this to my Bible verse in Luke.) What are you going to put in the blank? *Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross...what? Do you know what goes there? Yeah, it's the word daily. Take up your cross daily and follow me."*

Jesus was teaching His disciples it's not just a one-time death to self. This is taking up your cross daily because He's describing the battle that's present in our lives. If you don't struggle with this, with sin, then you have one nature and you need Jesus Christ to come into your life. He saves you and then you struggle with this. Does that sound like good news? I hope so. Because as you struggle with it, you overcome some of the bad stuff that would take place.

There are three practical applications for me as I study this. When I understand this truth it does something to me inside.

One, it helps me to be more compassionate. I'm not so quick to judge the person who's fallen or the person who has a problem and I find out that they have a sin problem. I'm much more compassionate.

I'm compassionate because I have a sin nature too. I'm not divorced. I don't get involved in immorality and I don't steal things and I don't kill people. But as I talk to people who have problems, I can just identify with where they are because I have a sin nature and I wrestle with sin too. Maybe not the same sins as that other person, but I wrestle with sin and I understand that wrestling that takes place and what God wants to do in my heart.

I'm also more compassionate with myself so that when I make a mistake and when I fail I realize I'm in process. God is working in my life. That's the first thing. There's more compassion.

The second thing is that I'm more humble, not as quick to judge other people, more careful in my own position in my own things that I say. I don't want to laugh at people who might have a

problem or judge people who may be struggling in particular areas. So I'm more humble because of this truth.

And the third application for me is that I'm eager to find and rely on the secret weapon. Do you know what the secret weapon is? Next week you're going to learn about it in Romans 8. So we're going to come back to that when we come together next week and talk about where do we go with this? The wrestling is there, but God has given us a secret weapon and we're going to read about it in Romans 8.

The dialogue here is a fascinating one. As we apply this to ourselves first, we learn valuable things, but it's also we're working on relationships with our kids, our spouses, with our neighbors, with our friends, and recognizing that people, Christians, are wrestling with things inside. We want to encourage them, we want to help them to be able to move forward in their lives.

If you're here today and you've not accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I'd love to pray with you and share with you more about what that looks like and how you can have Jesus Christ living inside of your heart. Part of what this means is that Best Buy and Home Depot won't get as much of our money. But it also means that relationships will be improved in some significant ways because we are wrestling with something on the inside.

Let's stand together and pray.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we thank you that you give us power inside of our hearts to overcome the magnetic pull toward sin. That we can trust you, we can follow you and that you empower us to move forward. Thank you for rescuing us from not only the penalty of sin through salvation but the power of sin as we continue to grow in you. Teach us what that looks like, Lord, in practical ways. Allow us to rely on that same power that you demonstrated by raising Jesus Christ from the dead we have access to and we appreciate. In Jesus' name.