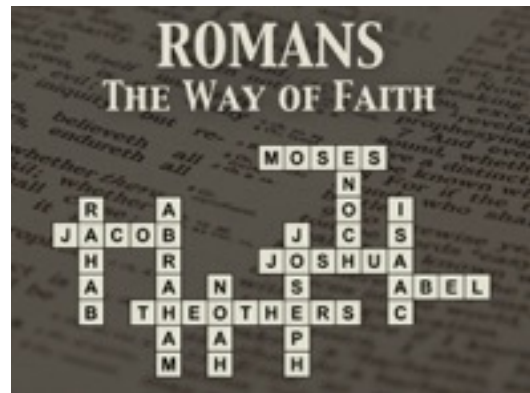


# Walking Contradictions

Paul tells his readers how to live a life of righteousness, how to follow the way of faith.

Even once we have the Holy Spirit in our lives, we are subject to sin. We can become a walking contradiction, saying one thing and doing another. So how do we handle this internal conflict?



Hempfield UMC / 7-9-17  
by Heather Hammel

## Romans 7:14-25

14-16 I can anticipate the response that is coming: “I know that all God’s commands are spiritual, but I’m not. Isn’t this also your experience?” Yes. I’m full of myself—after all, I’ve spent a long time in sin’s prison. What I don’t understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. So if I can’t be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God’s command is necessary.

17-20 But I need something more! For if I know the law but still can’t keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don’t have what it takes. I can will it, but I can’t do it. I decide to do good, but I don’t really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don’t result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time.

21-23 It happens so regularly that it’s predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God’s commands, but it’s pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge.

24 I’ve tried everything and nothing helps. I’m at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn’t that the real question?

25 The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.

## Observations

### God’s Law is good

God’s commands are for our well-being. They are from God and are therefore worthy to be followed.

### “But I need something more!”

The law is not enough. The law cannot save us. Only the Holy Spirit can lead us to righteousness.

### There is but one answer...Jesus.

Only Jesus is qualified to be our Savior. And we all need a Savior.



## Your Notes *what God is saying to you:*

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## Application *for abundant living:*



Our lives have to be more than good intentions.

Jesus came to save us from our sin, our bad choices, our rebellious nature. But He also came to show us how to live in the character of God, to walk with us and to intercede on our behalf when we struggle and fail.

Commit to talk to Jesus daily and learn His ways.

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## Further Study *for a deeper understanding:*

Read Romans 6-8 in a Bible translation that is not The Message. Listen to a recording of these chapters to hear the larger themes in this core section of Paul's letter.

What moral dilemma, internal tension, or struggle to decide between truth and deception is at war within you?

Consider this observation from C.E.B. Cranfield (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary of the Epistle to the Romans*. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975 (Reprinted 2003). Page 359)

"...first, the knowledge of the revelation of God's will for man in the divine law, and, secondly, the activity of the Holy Spirit, who, on the one hand, clarifies, interprets and applies the law, and, on the other hand, creates and sustains man's will to obey it. ... Here battle is joined in earnest in a way that is not possible before a man is sanctified by the Holy Spirit."

Name the spiritual battles being fought in your (and your family's) life.

The Enemy is real. Don't give him a foothold. Go to Jesus constantly and He will win your battles because only He has conquered death and conquered the world.