

ROMANS 7:14–25 | Romans Series  
**What's Wrong with Me?**  
*Understanding the War Within*

Student Inductive Bible Study Guide

### What is Inductive Bible Study?

Inductive Bible study is a method of examining a text and seeking to determine its teaching, meaning, and application through observation and questions designed to help us understand and apply what the text teaches. It involves four simple steps you can take on your own or in a group discussion.

#### 1. READ

Read Romans 7:14–25 four or five times slowly. In a group, have different members read the passage aloud. Also read Galatians 5:16–25 alongside it as the sermon's key companion text.

#### 2. OBSERVE

What does the text say? Notice Paul's repeated phrases, the progression of his argument, the two competing laws he identifies in verse 23, and the emotional arc that runs from confusion (v. 15) to wretchedness (v. 24) to thanksgiving (v. 25).

#### 3. INTERPRET

What does the text mean? Identify who Paul is describing, what he diagnoses as the problem, and how his conclusion in verse 25 reframes everything that came before it.

#### 4. APPLY

How should this text change me? Where am I experiencing the war Paul describes? Am I diagnosing it correctly? And what is the cure — and am I applying it?



*Pastor Sam's sermon on Romans 7:14–25 walks through Paul's honest, gut-level diagnosis of the war between the flesh and the renewed mind — and points to the only One who can deliver us. Scan the QR code or use the link to access the message before or during your study.*

### Reading the Text Together — Romans 7:14–25

- ▶ *Section I: Our Disturbing Condition — the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh (7:14–17)*
- ▶ *Section II: Our Persistent Symptoms — desire without ability; the will outmatched by the flesh (7:18–20)*
- ▶ *Section III: The Internal Diagnosis — two laws at war; evil present when I want to do right (7:21–23)*
- ▶ *Section IV: Our Powerful Deliverance — the cry, the question, and the astonishing answer (7:24–25a)*
- ▶ *Conclusion: Our Spiritual Response — holy tension, renewed determination, realistic expectation (7:25b)*

## OBSERVING THE TEXT CAREFULLY

*Keep Romans 7:14–25 open before you as you work through questions 1–4.*

1

Paul uses a phrase twice in this passage — once in verse 17 and again in verse 20 — as a repeated conclusion to two separate lines of argument. What is that phrase? What two-step reasoning process leads Paul to this conclusion each time, and what does the repetition tell you about the importance of this conclusion to Paul's overall diagnosis?

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2

In verse 23, Paul identifies two laws engaged in a war and describes the outcome of that war. Name both laws and where each one resides. What is the result of the war — what does the winning law do to Paul? And what term does Paul use for the instrument of attack (hint: a military image)?

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3

Paul's emotional and spiritual condition shifts across the passage. Trace that movement by identifying the key word or phrase at each stage: verse 15 (frustration), verse 18b (inability), verse 24 (despair), and verse 25a (thanksgiving). What do these four stages together tell you about the arc of Paul's experience in this passage?

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4

Read verses 14 and 25b side by side. In verse 14, Paul describes himself as 'of the flesh, sold under sin.' In verse 25b, he says 'I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.' How has Paul's understanding of his condition become more precise between the beginning and the end of the passage? What two realities does he now hold together rather than collapsing into only one?

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## INTERPRETING THE TEXT THOUGHTFULLY

*Pastor Sam's sermon on this passage will provide helpful context for questions 5–8.*

5

The sermon says Paul's cry in verse 15 — 'I do not understand my own actions' — is not an expression of confusion but of frustrated disbelief. What is the difference? Why does the sermon say this is important for diagnosing our own condition? And what does the fact that Paul hates his sinful actions (rather than being indifferent to them) reveal about his spiritual identity?

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6

The sermon identifies four things the New Testament teaches about the flesh (from Romans 7–8): there is no good in it; it is enslaved to sin; it cannot submit to God's Law; and it is implacably hostile to God, His Spirit, and His righteous demands. Why is it critical that Paul qualifies his statement in verse 18 — 'nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh' — rather than saying 'nothing good dwells in me' without qualification? What four good things does the sermon say now dwell in a believer that Paul is explicitly not referring to?

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7

The sermon describes the flesh using a medical metaphor: some conditions are seasonal, some are curable, but some are permanent, serious, and require correct diagnosis, regular monitoring, and the proper cure faithfully applied. How does this metaphor help explain Paul's experience in Romans 7:14–25? What does the sermon say happens if the condition is misdiagnosed, ignored, or treated with the wrong remedy — specifically, if a believer turns to the Law rather than to the Spirit?

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8

Paul's cry in verse 24 — 'Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me?' — is answered in verse 25a with a shout of thanksgiving rather than a strategy or a method. Why is this answer — a Person rather than a program — so important? According to the sermon, in what two ways does Christ deliver us, and what does the distinction between them mean for how we live now versus what we wait for in the future?

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## APPLYING THE TEXT PERSONALLY

Ask yourself the tough questions from this text — questions 9–12.

9

Paul says he is 'worn out, emotionally discouraged, and spiritually depleted with nothing left in the tank' (the sermon's description of 'wretched' in v. 24). Have you experienced a period like this — repeatedly falling into the same sin despite genuine desire to do otherwise, until you felt utterly depleted? What did you conclude about yourself during that time? How does Paul's diagnosis in this passage challenge or confirm what you concluded?

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10

The sermon warns against two dangerous responses to the ongoing reality of indwelling sin: unmet expectations (hoping it will be fully resolved in this life) and turning to the wrong solution (the Law rather than the Spirit). Which of these two errors do you find yourself more prone to? What does it look like practically when you fall into that error — and what does it cost you spiritually?

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11

Paul's conclusion in verse 25b is called 'holy tension' in the sermon: 'With my mind I serve God, but with my flesh I serve sin.' This is not resignation — it is honest, realistic faithfulness. What would it look like in your life this week to hold both sides of that tension faithfully: to serve God with your renewed mind without pretending the flesh has been eliminated, and to acknowledge the flesh without excusing it or surrendering to it?

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12

The sermon ends pointing to chapter 8 and the Holy Spirit as the proper cure for indwelling sin. Paul says in Galatians 5:16, 'Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.' Looking at the works of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:19–21 and the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23, which list more accurately describes the current pattern of your life? What is one specific area where you need to stop applying the wrong remedy and start walking in the Spirit's power?

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## A PRAYER TO CLOSE YOUR STUDY

### Based on Romans 7:14–25 and Galatians 5:16–25

*Lord, we come before You today identifying with Paul's cry: "Wretched man that I am." We have felt the weight of that word — the exhaustion of wanting to do right and finding ourselves doing the opposite, the discouragement of broken promises to You and to ourselves, the confusion of wondering what is wrong with us when we seem to fail at the very things we care most about.*

*Thank You that Paul did not stop at the cry. Thank You that there is an answer — not a method or a program or a renewed resolve, but a Person. "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The same Christ who delivered us from the penalty of sin is the One who is now, progressively and faithfully, delivering us from its power — and who will one day deliver us from its very presence.*

*Help us, Lord, to diagnose our condition correctly. Keep us from the error of expecting complete victory over the flesh before glorification — that unmet expectation leads only to despair. Keep us equally from the error of turning back to the Law for what only Your Spirit can provide — that is the path Moses cannot walk with us.*

*Teach us to live in the holy tension Paul describes in verse 25: serving You with our renewed minds and wills, honestly acknowledging the flesh that still wages war against us, and refusing to let the war become an excuse for surrender. May we walk today by the Spirit — not striving in our own strength, but depending on the power of the One who raised Jesus from the dead and who now lives in us.*

*Where the flesh has won recent battles in our lives — where the works of the flesh have been more evident than the fruit of the Spirit — we confess that now, and we ask You to restore us. Produce in us love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Not by our effort, but by Your grace.*

*We look forward, Lord, to the day when this war will be over — when You sanctify us completely, spirit and soul and body, blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Until that day, keep us fighting, keep us hoping, and keep us trusting in the only Deliverer there is. In the name of Jesus, our Savior and our Lord. Amen.*