

## The Impossible Life

### Lesson 20 – Teacher's Guide

1. Paul acknowledged his born-again spirit, but declared, “There is no good thing in my flesh—my unrenewed mind and physical body, all the external parts of me functioning independent from Christ” (Rom. 7:15-24). Sounds a lot like what he wrote in Galatians 5:17.
2. Paul was simply describing the inability of the flesh—our physical ability, natural mind, emotions, and actions all independent from Christ—to please God. In our flesh, we can't do what the Lord has told us to do. It's natural to be self-serving, self-seeking, and self-promoting. Without supernatural assistance, it's impossible to do what Jesus commands.
3. There's a tremendous amount of liberty that comes with recognizing and releasing Christ in us. The Lord wants us to forgive totally—as much and as many times as it takes. When we humble ourselves, turning away from our own natural ability and to God and His divine ability, we'll discover a supernatural strength flowing through us.
4. We have an unlimited supply of God's kind of love in our spirits (1 Cor. 13:4-7). His love never fails (1 Cor. 13:8). In our spirits, we have an unlimited ability to forgive, endure, believe, and hope. Let's let our spirits take over.

1. A. What part of himself was Paul lamenting in Romans 7:15-24? (His flesh)  
B. What does Galatians 5:17 reveal about the flesh and the Spirit? (They are contrary the one to the other, lusting against each other, so that we can't do the things that we would)
2. A. What was Paul describing? (The inability of the flesh—physical ability, natural mind, emotions, and actions all independent from Christ—to please God)  
B. It's natural to be \_\_\_\_\_. (Self-serving, self-seeking, and self-promoting)
3. A. What comes with recognizing and releasing Christ in us? (A tremendous amount of liberty)  
B. How much does the Lord want us to forgive? (Totally as much and as many times as it takes)
4. A. According to 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, what do we have in our born-again spirits? (An unlimited supply of God's kind of love)  
B. In light of this truth, what should we do? (Let our spirits take over)

## **The Impossible Life**

*Lesson 20*

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**“For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing”**  
(Rom. 7:15-18, emphasis mine).

Paul knew that the Spirit of Christ indwelt his born-again spirit. Therefore, he couldn't be technically correct and say **“In me...dwelleth no good thing”** without the clarifying statement, **“(That is, in my flesh,)”**

Paul acknowledged his born-again spirit, but declared, “There is no good thing in my flesh—my unrenewed mind and physical body, all the external parts of me functioning independent from Christ. There's nothing good about that! I'm going to have to lay this flesh down and receive a new body and a new soul, which are completely renewed and think exactly like God.”

**“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members”** (Rom. 7:18-23).

Sounds a lot like what he wrote in Galatians:

**“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would”** (Gal. 5:17).

Romans 7:24 summarizes Paul's dismal dilemma:

**“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”**

### *Without Supernatural Assistance*

Romans 7 doesn't teach that Paul was constantly trying and failing to do the right thing. He wasn't describing his present Christian life and saying that this is the way that it is. Paul wasn't confessing that after all those years, he was still struggling with lust, sexual sin, anger, and bitterness. Neither was he saying, “You have this flesh, and try as you might, you can never beat it.”

Paul was simply describing the inability of the flesh—your physical ability, natural mind, emotions, and actions all independent from Christ—to please God. You cannot overcome your flesh on your own; you have to start living from who you are in Christ. Your spirit man is completely changed and infused with the life of God. You can only please Him through living by your spirit!

The Christian life isn't just difficult to live—it's impossible! In your flesh, you can't do what the Lord has told you to do. He's commanded you to just bear it when someone insults you. If they slap you on the face, you're to turn the other cheek. If they sue you and take away your coat, you're to give them your cloak as well. If someone forces you to carry their burden one mile against your will, go two miles (Matt. 5:39-41). Your natural self, independent of God, just won't do things like that!

It's natural to be self-serving, self-seeking, and self-promoting! If somebody slaps you on the cheek, you want to hit both of theirs. If someone takes something from you through a lawsuit, you want to hire the best lawyer to sue them back. But the Lord's told you, "Do the opposite." Without supernatural assistance, it's impossible to do what Jesus commands! That's why Paul declared, "It's no longer me that lives but Christ who lives through me" (Gal. 2:20).

#### 490

There's a tremendous amount of liberty that comes with recognizing and releasing Christ in you. You don't have to say in the flesh "Well, I will to love you" and turn the other cheek through gritted teeth. It's much better to pray, "Father, in myself, I'd like to knock their block off. My flesh cannot do this" (Paul described this in Romans 7) "but in my spirit, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I have the same spirit that Jesus had when He hung on the cross and forgave the very people who crucified Him." (You've read that in God's Word and believed it.) "Father, I don't feel like it right now, but I know my spirit is the same one that enabled Jesus to extend mercy to those who mocked Him. In the natural, I can't do this. Father, please live through me now. Give me a supernatural compassion for this person so I can love them!"

Peter thought he was being very generous when he asked, "How many times should I forgive my brother—up to seven times a day?" Jesus answered, "Not seven times but seventy times seven!" That's 490 times in one day! This was His way of communicating that there shouldn't be a limit on your forgiveness (Matt. 18:21-22).

The Lord wants you to forgive totally—as much and as many times as it takes! In your flesh, you might be able to forgive a person for some minor things once, twice, or even seven times in a day (Peter thought he might be able to do that). But what Jesus asked goes far beyond your human ability. The only way you can forgive like that is by saying, "Father, I can't do it, but You can. Lord, please love them through me." When you humble yourself, turning away from your own natural ability and to God and His divine ability, you'll discover a supernatural strength flowing through you!

You have an unlimited supply of God's kind of love in your spirit.

**“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things” (1 Cor. 13:4-7).**

His love never fails (1 Cor. 13:8)!

In your spirit, you have an unlimited ability to forgive, endure, believe, and hope! If you catch yourself remarking “I can’t put up with this person anymore. I just can’t take it. I’m at the end of my rope!” what you’re really saying is, “I’ve come to the end of my flesh!” That’s good! Now let your spirit take over!

### *You Can Too!*

Pray, “God, I’m sorry! I’ve been trying this in myself, which is why I’m burned out, frustrated, and angry. Forgive me and live Your life through me. I believe Your Word. In the spirit, I am a brand-new person. If I would walk in the spirit, I won’t fulfill the lust of the flesh.” (Then, start meditating on who you are and what you have in Christ.) “By faith, this is who I choose to believe I am.”

That’s renewing your mind and releasing the supernatural life of God out of your spirit into your soul and body. When your physical mind comes into agreement with your spiritual mind, you can literally begin to hope, endure, and believe in things that you couldn’t have done by your natural self!

I’ve been able to love the many different people who have come out against me. A guy I was witnessing to spat in my face. People have tried to physically assault me. Some other well-known ministers publicly called me a “cult leader” and “of the devil.” A guy stole \$20,000 from our ministry. I’ve even been kidnapped and had threats on my life! But in all of this (and more), I can truthfully tell you that I have nothing against any of these people. I harbor no evil thoughts and never spend any time even thinking about them. I’ve completely forgiven each and every one. How? I renewed my mind to God’s Word and released the love and forgiveness that’s in my spirit. You can do it too!

# The Impossible Life

## Lesson 20 – Outline

1. Paul acknowledged his born-again spirit, but declared, “There is no good thing in my flesh—my unrenewed mind and physical body, all the external parts of me functioning independent from Christ.”

**“For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members” (Rom. 7:15-23, emphasis mine).**

- A. Sounds a lot like what he wrote in Galatians:

**“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal. 5:17).**

- B. Then Paul summarized his dismal dilemma in Romans 7:24:

**“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”**

2. Paul was simply describing the inability of the flesh—your physical ability, natural mind, emotions, and actions all independent from Christ—to please God.
  - A. In your flesh, you can’t do what the Lord has told you to do.
  - B. It’s natural to be self-serving, self-seeking, and self-promoting.
  - C. Without supernatural assistance, it’s impossible to do what Jesus commands.
3. There’s a tremendous amount of liberty that comes with recognizing and releasing Christ in you.
  - A. The Lord wants you to forgive totally—as much and as many times as it takes.
  - B. When you humble yourself, turning away from your own natural ability and to God and His divine ability, you’ll discover a supernatural strength flowing through you.
4. You have an unlimited supply of God’s kind of love in your spirit.

**“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things” (1 Cor. 13:4-7).**

- A. His love never fails (1 Cor. 13:8).
- B. In your spirit, you have an unlimited ability to forgive, endure, believe, and hope.
- C. Now, let your spirit take over.

# The Impossible Life

## Lesson 20 – Discipleship Questions

1. Read Romans 7:15-18. What's the main idea?
2. Where did Paul say dwells in him no good thing?
3. Read Romans 7:18-23. What did Paul delight in after the inward man (spirit)?
4. What did he see working in his members, warring against his mind?
5. According to Galatians 5:17, what does the flesh lust against?
6. What does the Spirit lust against?
7. Since the Spirit and the flesh are contrary to one another, this means \_\_\_\_\_.
8. How did Paul describe himself in Romans 7:24?
9. What did he need deliverance from?
10. Read Matthew 5:39-41. What did Jesus command us to do when someone strikes us on the right cheek?
  - A. Immediately apply oil to the wound.
  - B. Turn and run.
  - C. Respond with a left jab.
  - D. Turn to them the other cheek also.
11. If someone brings a lawsuit against us and takes away our coat, what should we do?
  - A. Go to their house at night and steal it back.
  - B. Give them our cloak as well.
  - C. Hire a hit man.
  - D. Sue someone else for their coat.
12. What should we do if someone compels us to go a mile?
  - A. Go with them two.
  - B. Go half a mile and sneak off.
  - C. Flag a taxi.
  - D. Tell them, "No way!"

13. According to Galatians 2:20, who is crucified with Christ?
14. Who lives, then?
15. What do we live by now?
16. Who loved us and gave Himself for us?
17. What question did Peter ask Jesus in Matthew 18:21-22?
18. How did Jesus answer?
19. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Since God is love (1 John 4:8), read this passage again substituting the word "God" for "love."
20. Since God lives in and through you, read the following personal confession aloud.

***I suffer long and am kind. I don't envy others or boast of myself. I am not puffed up, nor do I behave unseemly, nor do I seek my own. I am not easily provoked, and I think no evil. I don't rejoice in iniquity, but I do rejoice in the truth. I bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things. God's love in and through me never fails!***



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## *Lesson 20 – Answer Key*

1. I don't do what I want to do, but instead, I do what I hate.
2. In his flesh.
3. The law of God.
4. The law of sin.
5. The Spirit.
6. The flesh.
7. We can't do the things that we would.
8. A wretched man.
9. The body of this death.
10. D. Turn to them the other cheek also.
11. B. Give them our cloak as well.
12. A. Go with them two.
13. I am.
14. I do, but it's Christ living in and through me.
15. The faith of the Son of God.
16. Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
17. Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him—even up to seven times?

18. Not seven times, but seventy times seven!
19. Since God is love (1 John 4:8), read this passage again substituting the word “God” for “love.”
20. Since God lives in and through you, read the following personal confession aloud.

*I suffer long and am kind. I don't envy others or boast of myself. I am not puffed up, nor do I behave unseemly, nor do I seek my own. I am not easily provoked, and I think no evil. I don't rejoice in iniquity, but I do rejoice in the truth. I bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things. God's love in and through me never fails!*

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## *Lesson 20 – Scriptures*

**“For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:15-24).**

**“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal. 5:17).**

**“But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain” (Matt. 5:39-41).**

**“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).**

**“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven” (Matt. 18:21-22).**

**“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth” (1 Cor. 13:4-8).**

### *Struggling with Sin*

<sup>14</sup> So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin.<sup>15</sup> I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate.<sup>16</sup> But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good.<sup>17</sup> So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.<sup>18</sup> And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.<sup>21</sup> I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong.<sup>22</sup> I love God's law with all my heart.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?<sup>25</sup> Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

Romans 7:14-25 (NLT)

<sup>17</sup> The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.

Gal 5:17 (NLT)

<sup>39</sup> But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also.<sup>40</sup> If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too.<sup>41</sup> If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles. Matt 5:39-41 (NLT)

<sup>20</sup> My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Gal 2:20 (NLT)

<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?"<sup>22</sup> "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!"

Matt 18:21-22 (NLT)

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud<sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.<sup>6</sup> It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.<sup>7</sup> Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.<sup>8</sup> Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever!

1 Cor 13:4-8 (NLT)