

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN

ROMANS 7:14-8:4

How did you see God working in your life this week? (Romans 1:11, 12)

BACKGROUND: For this section of Romans 7 “There are basically three views. The first is that this passage describes a *non-Christian* Pharisee under the Law... The second view is that it describes a *normal Christian* (the view of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin). The third position is that it describes a *carnal Christian*. I believe the second view is correct, mainly because Paul continues to write in the first-person singular but in the present tense. It seems most natural to understand this section as Paul talking about what he was then experiencing.” R. Kent Hughes, Romans: Righteousness from Heaven, pp.141-142.

STRUGGLES WITH FLESH (sinful nature-NIV). Even though you were a sinner, you were declared righteous by God because of your faith in Jesus Christ. But your flesh (your self-centeredness, and your desire for the “used to be” life or “what could have been”) challenges your new life in Christ. “Paul states the problem of the struggling Christian in verses 14-16...It is the cry of the believer who is trying, but is relying on himself.” Hughes, p. 142. You, like Paul here, find yourself dominated by sin. (**Romans 7:14-20, fn 7:14, fn 7:15, Romans 8:5-7, fn 8:5, 6, Colossians 3:1-10, fn 3:5, Romans 13:13, 14, fn 13:14,**) *What is your biggest problem with the flesh and how could your group help you?*

STRUGGLES WITH PLEASING GOD. “The principle Paul recognizes is that he is a man with two natures. One delights in the Law of God. The other wages war against God’s Law. The Christian is subject to two forces simultaneously and thus lives in a state of tension...A believer who tries to please God in his or her own strength will always come to disheartening, aching frustration—*always!*” Hughes, p. 143. (**Romans 7:21-23, fn 7:23-25, Galatians 5:16, 17, fn 5:17, Romans 8:8, Romans 9:30-33, fn 9:31-33, Hebrews 11:6**) *How could you please God?*

STRUGGLES LEAD TO GRACE. Your “spiritual address” must not be in Romans 7! As you, by faith, ask daily for the Holy Spirit’s control, the grace of the Lord Jesus will enable you to reign over sin, to experience Jesus’ presence, and be transformed into His likeness. (**Romans 7:24-8:4, fn 8:1, fn 8:2, Romans 6:11-14, fn 6:11, Romans 5:17, fn 5:17, Ephesians 5:18, fn 5:18, II Corinthians 3:18, fn 3:18**) *What do you need to do to start each day filled with the Holy Spirit?*

Check up—Are you praying with your spouse and your family? Group—Pray for personal requests and bond together by fellowshiping together.