

Study Series: Absolute Surrender

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Lesson Title: “ ‘O Wrteched Man That I Am’ ” (pp. 144-155)

Session 12

May 22, 2022

The main point of this lesson is: Absolute surrender means moving from wretchedness to obedience, victory, and real holiness.

Focus on this goal:To help adults seek the power of Jesus through the person of the Holy Spirit to work in them

Key Bible Passage:Romans 7:24-25

To the Leader:If you choose the OPTION in Step 1, locate appropriate Before and After photos to display.

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Ask if participants have ever seen Before and After photos of organized garages (OPTION: Show some of those photos). Brainstorm steps needed to transform a messy garage into an organized, efficient one. (Sample responses: acknowledge it’s a mess, have a strong desire for it to be cleaned, perhaps make a bigger mess before things get better, get help from others gifted in organization.) State that, in an imperfect way, these illustrate the steps of absolute surrender.

Step 2. The Regenerate Man

Declare Romans 8 is the “After” photo we all aspire to. Invite volunteers to read or recite some of their favorite verses from Romans 8. Explain this kind of life is made possible by the Holy Spirit who is mentioned no less than twenty times in Romans 8, more than in any other single chapter in the New Testament.

Discuss Day One, activity 1 (pp. 144-145). State that Romans 7 is the “Before” photo. Invite a volunteer to read Romans 7:15-23.

Declare Romans 7:24-25 is the gateway through which we step from the “Before” to the “After” photo. Invite a volunteer to read those verses.

In this lesson, the author outlines a path to step out of bondage and defeat and into liberty and victory. Identify from Day One (p. 145) the four kinds of people who walk that path.

Ask if participants think Paul’s description of his struggle with sin in Romans 7 was before or after he became a follower of Jesus. Explain this has been a hotly contested passage; some say they have to be the struggles of an unregenerate person while others, including the author, say they are the words of a person who has been born again. Explore the phrases in 7:14-23 that support this position.

Draw attention to Day One, activity 2 (p. 145) and urge participants who want to know more about being born again in Christ to speak with you further after the session.

Step 3. The Impotent Man

Ask participants if they agree with the first sentence of Day Two (p. 146) and why.

Invite responses to Day Two, activity 1 (p. 146). Ask: How might we see a contradiction between Paul’s struggle and the promise of Philippians 2:13?Read that verse. Explain the contradiction can be reconciled by examining the repetition of words in these chapters.

Request participants scan Romans 7:7-25 and identify words that appear several times (law, I, me, my). Point out the word Spirit is conspicuously absent from these verses. Declare: We will fail if we have the will but do not have the power of the Spirit to do. Ask: Why does God allow us to fail? (Draw attention to Day Two pull quote, p. 147.) Why must we be taught our own impotence?

Discuss Day Two, activity 2 (p. 148).

Step 4. The Wretched Man

State: Regenerate people live in that hope when they recognize not just that they are impotent, but that they are wretched.

Request a volunteer read Romans 7:20-24. Ask: Why was Paul so miserable? Can an unregenerate person be that miserable? Why?

Declare we have a choice when we read these words of Paul. Consider why some choose to use them as an excuse to keep sinning. Determine what Paul would think about that choice. Read Romans 6:1-2.

State that our other option is to take Romans 7:24 to heart. Discuss Day Three, activity 1 (pp. 148-149). Add to the discussion with remarks from Day Three (pp. 149-150).

Ask the author’s question (p. 149): “Why should you say this whenever you commit sin?”

Read the last paragraph of Day Three (pp. 149-150).

Step 5. The Almost-Delivered Man, Part 1

Declare the person who makes the cry of Romans 7:24-25 is on the brink of deliverance.

Discuss Day Four, activity 1 (pp. 150-151). Evaluate how Paul could move from the glorious truths in Romans 6 to his great dilemma in Romans 7. Use the second paragraph of Day Four (p. 151) to add to the discussion.

Invite a volunteer to read the Day Four paragraph (p. 151) beginning with “God works to will.” Urge participants to silently consider Day Four, activity 2 (p. 151).

Step 6. The Almost-Delivered Man, Part 2

Invite responses to Day Five, activity 1 (p. 152). Declare: Absolute surrender means acknowledging and accepting the absolute necessity of being filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit. We must not make a hard stop at Romans 7:24, but move on and cry out Romans 7:25. That’s what ushers us into the glorious liberty of Romans 8.

Discuss Day Five, activity 2 (p. 153).

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Encourage participants to summarize what makes the Before and After transformation from Romans 7 to Romans 8 possible. Ask: How can we daily seek the power of Jesus through the Holy Spirit? State: This lesson once again challenges us to pray, “God I can’t, but You can. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

Close in prayer, thanking God for the possibility of the glories of Romans 8.

