

Romans chapter 7:14 – 8:4

I often like to think through financial matters in terms of risk and reward due to my math and engineering background. Buying lottery ticket has very low risk if I only spend a few dollars but the reward can be very high. Thus, many years ago, I brought a couple lottery tickets due to my coworkers were talking about the large jackpot that week. Then, weeks after weeks for two months, I brought a few tickets each week. I was then sort of addicted to it, and I don't want to do that anymore. However, it was difficult to stop since I was thinking it's only a few dollars anyway and other excuses. This behavior is like what is described in Romans chapter 7 that is I keep doing what I don't want to do. Let's first review the overall content of the book of Romans before we get into the details in chapter 7.

Book of Romans is the sixth book in the New Testament. This book is a letter from Apostle Paul to the Romans written around 57AD. The theme of the book is about the gospel is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone. Jews as well as gentiles' salvation can only be through faith in Jesus Christ, and not by work. The Law can show people have sins. Our sinful bodies cannot be perfect by our own efforts. We can only depend on God to help us to be more holy day by day. Later chapters of this book cover more practical daily living in Christ.

### 1) We sin and there is consequence

Before the content of chapter 7, earlier chapters in the book of Romans stated all people are sinful. "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" Romans 3:23. Murder is sin and it is just one example, in fact, all acts that is not pleasing God is sin. There is consequence to sin. We all know that all of our actions have consequences. But what exactly is the consequence of sin? The answer is found in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in (or through) Christ Jesus our Lord".

### 2) We cannot conquer sin ourselves

From Romans 6:23, we know the penalty of our sins has been taken up by Christ. Whoever believes Jesus as savior (Christian) will have eternal life with God. However, due to our sinful nature, we still can be tempted to sin even we have accepted Jesus as our savior. In fact, Christian or non-Christian all have and will

sin, and the struggle of trying not to sin is common. That is what verses Romans 7:14 to 24 are about.

Buying a local state lottery ticket to support educational programs itself is not a problem. The risk is very low but the reward can be very high. Bible stated in I Cor. 10:23, "Everything is permissible but not everything is edifying". However, if one's strong desire for winning and/or fall into the trap that leads to addiction are sin. After 2 months of weekly buying, I became aware of possibly getting into the trap of addiction due to my little struggle of deciding not to buy anymore. It was the Holy Spirit that reminded me, and I stopped buying. In fact, many things in life can lead us to addiction such as drink alcohol, smoke cigarette, take illegal drug, disorderly eating, compulsive buying, etc. Once addicted, the addictive product becomes one's idol, and he/she is no longer places God in the first priority.

### **3) We can conquer sin through God**

Romans 7:25 states "Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:1-2). Once you have accepted Jesus as your savior, Jesus took your penalty of sin. That is your first step if you haven't done so.

If you are a Christian, the Bible assured you in II Cor. 5:17 as stated "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" The Holy Spirit can help you to resist the evil and your own ungodly desires. Therefore, we can conquer sin through God.

In summary, we all sin but Jesus already paid for the penalty of all our sins. Once you accepted Jesus as your savior and Lord, you no longer be condemned but a new creation. You can then resist sin through the power of God. As stated in Gal. 5:16 "...walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." Day by day you and me will be more like Jesus as we allow God to work in our lives.