

Romans 7 1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? 2 For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to [her] husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of [her] husband. 3 So then if, while [her] husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. 4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be **married** to another--to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God

Paul is using the illustration of marriage to explain the spiritual. *He says that when a woman is married to a man, as long as the man remains alive she's not free to marry another. But if the man dies, then she is free to marry another.* **So death terminates the relationship and the woman is free from the contract <covenant of marriage.**

- The way he applies this analogy is through the covenant Israel had with the law, what we would consider the old covenant. **The law required Israel to do things that relied on the fleshly nature, on one's own ability, not looking to the grace of God.**
- **On the cross, when Jesus died, that fleshly nature was put to death in Him. Because of that death we are now free to marry another.** *The other whom we marry is the one who rose from the dead, the Lord Jesus. So, we can enter into a new marriage relationship with Jesus Christ. Moving from a righteousness that comes from keeping the law, to a fellowship in marriage to the resurrected, glorified Lord Jesus.* **Through that marriage union with him we are now able to bring forth the fruit of the Holy Spirit.**
- key word in verse 4. We died to the law **so that** we can be married to Christ.
- The illustration indicates that **death terminates the relationship with the law. We no longer relate to God on the basis of law as we did under the old covenant.** **Law oriented living is part of the old era.**

Romans 3:20 (NKJV) Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law [is] the knowledge of sin.

- **No one will ever achieve righteousness with God by the keeping of a law.**
- **The law does not enable people to become righteous.** *It brings sin into the open and it makes us fully conscious of the nature, power, and evil of sin.*

5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. 6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and

not [in] the oldness of the letter. 7 What shall we say then? [Is] the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.” 8 But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all [manner of evil] desire. For apart from the law sin [was] dead. 9 I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. 10 And the commandment, which [was] to [bring] life, I found to [bring] death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed [me.]

I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; I would not have known about coveting/lust if the Law had not said, YOU SHALL NOT COVET”

- **The commandments of God (10 commandments) bring the nature and power of coveting out into the open.** Without it Paul says, “I would never have realized the full and true nature of coveting.” The law awakens the passions that are in a person to further perpetuate sin. This strengthens sins power in the person’s life...
- Paul, **prior to revealing the power and victory of Christ** in us, is **bringing understanding of the power of sin and the war within that we are only promised freedom from in Jesus Christ.**

The law itself is good. The problem is not the law, but the flesh.

Galatians 5:17 tells us the flesh is contrary to the spirit of God those who are in the flesh cannot please God

8“**But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting [or lust] of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.**”

- **The commandment does not help me overcome coveting, it worked in me an increase of coveting.** If you are having a problem with lust, fear, hatred, or resentment, you will not overcome it by rules that forbid you to do it. **In fact, the more you focus on the negative rules, the more power that thing will have over you.** *If you keep saying,*

“I must not lust, I must not lust,” your whole mind becomes full of the concept of lust. So far from delivering you from lust it enslaves you to it.

9 I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. 10 And the commandment, which [was] to [bring] life, I found to [bring] death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed [me.] 12 Therefore the law [is] holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. 13 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Paul uses descriptive language stating that sin killed him. The law has a way of judging everyone guilty. Through the law, God brings the revelation of both His holiness, and our sinfulness which leaves a giant chasm and our absolute need for Him to save us.

The origins of the law are in God himself in whom there is no evil thing. We can never blame God for evil, sin dwells in us and uses even good things for its own evil schemes, but the law of God is perfect. Praise God, Jesus fulfilled the law. And it makes the significance of what He accomplished even greater knowing He was the only one ever to fulfill the law of God. So, the law is not the problem. The law reveals the problem within every human.

- Paul as a practicing Pharisee would have taken pride in keeping the law and attaining righteousness through his works. When Paul had the revelation of Jesus Christ, he also had the realization of his own sinful dilemma.
- The dilemma is we have to be freed from the law, the only way to be free is to die.
- The law forced sin out into the open. Before that it lurked there but very often we weren't conscious of it. So, the law serves a God given purpose but it's not the purpose of making people righteous.
- We're required to recognize our total dependence upon His grace and supernatural power. You cannot be a Christian by your own strength or efforts.

15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. 16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that [it is] good. 17 But now, [it is] no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but [how] to perform

what is good I do not find. 19 For the good that I will [to do,] I do not do; but the evil I will not [to do,] that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not [to do,] it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 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.

I know this question often comes up: Was Paul writing as a believer, or was he describing his former life as a Pharisee trying to attain righteousness through the Law?

But a straightforward reading of the passage seems less focused on identifying Paul's spiritual state and more focused on exposing the weakness of a law-centered approach to righteousness. The deeper issue is the condition of all humanity and the question of where we place our trust — in our own righteousness or in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

- ❖ On our own, we are powerless to fully keep the Law of God. We may long to be righteous and even hate the sin we commit, yet we continually discover our inability to achieve righteousness through our own effort. The passage ultimately points us away from self-reliance and toward our need for Christ.
- ❖ Many have tried to use this text to try argue that sin can never be overcome, but that's not the point nor is that in the context of the flow of the scriptural argument of Paul.
- ❖ We are not supposed to take phrases or thoughts out of the context or flow of the full scriptural thought. Paul is not completing his position in this section. You have to read chapters 6-8 to understand both the dilemma of sin and the victory that is found in Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

This nature that always fights against the things of God, that resists even my best intentions to do good and to keep God's laws. Who will deliver me? It's a cry of anguish.

- The way of the flesh simply cannot bring forth good fruit for God, such fruit is in a totally different dimension.

- No matter how hard we try we fight the power of sin, even after we are saved by His grace and positioned in righteousness through Christ Jesus. **We still will never please God with the works of the flesh.**
- No amount of willpower will give us the power to walk in holiness. It is only through the resurrected Christ and the grace He supplies as we are growing in fellowship and dependence on Him will we find freedom from sin..
- Law oriented, living brings forth death. Christ centered living gives life. Paul expresses his wretchedness in the hopelessness found in the flesh, but then turns to look at Christ, rather than his failed attempts righteousness that comes through the law. Jesus alone frees the sinner from condemnation and brings us into His glorious triumph. 2 operating systems the flesh and the Spirit.

“Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

But what he’s really saying is “Thanks be to God, there is a way out through Jesus Christ our Lord!” The way out is through the cross. It’s through the substitutionary sacrifice and death of Jesus.

We go back to **Romans 6:6** which says: “Our old man [our fleshly nature] was crucified with him...”

It was put to death. And because of that we can be delivered from the fleshly nature and come into the fullness of the freedom and the life in the Spirit. But it’s only through the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. It’s only when we do two things.

We are confronted with the fact that we only have two possibilities. They are these: We’re either under the law dominated by sin or we’re under grace and led by the Holy Spirit and free from the law and from sin. They are mutually exclusive alternatives. You cannot be in both. Christianity is not a set of rules, but a marriage to Jesus.

Romans 6:14, just this one statement. “For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace.”

Romans 8:1-2 (NKJV) 1 [There is] therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Home groups

1. Discuss what you learned, how Holy Spirit brought understanding etc.
2. Describe the primary purpose of God's law.
3. Discuss the battle of the flesh and how to enter into the victory of Jesus. Share your testimony of overcoming.
4. Describe in your own words a work of the flesh vs a work of the Holy Spirit.
5. Why do believers often slip back into the lie that they can please God in the flesh rather than a full reliance on His grace?