

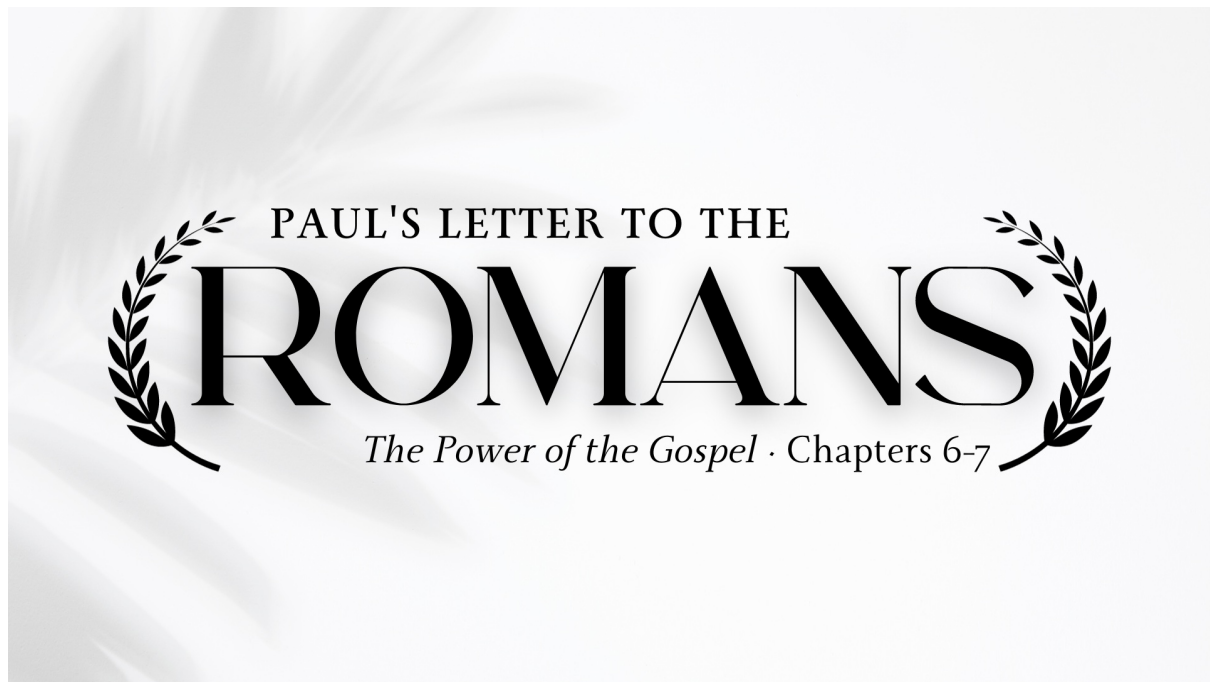
Freedom from Law

Romans 7:1-6

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Part of Paul's Letter to the Romans Romans 6-7

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Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

—Romans 12:2 (NLT)

The Apostle Paul wants us to move beyond feelings to grasp facts about this faith that many of us profess.

Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives?

—Romans 7:1 (ESV)

Paul is trying to help his readers understand that he is not dismissing the Law, even as he's going to show it creates problems for the Christian's journey of faith.

Paul, who was raised in the Jewish faith and had the best teachers and education, seems to almost dismiss the Law at times, and this has to create problems for the Jewish Christians reading his letter.

Paul said that when a person puts their faith in Jesus Christ, they are justified or made right with God by faith and not by upholding the Law.

While the Law could be interpreted very narrowly as the Ten Commandments to broadly as the first five books of the Old Testament, by the time of Jesus the Jews has created 613 laws that they had to keep in order to be righteous.

All these laws imposed a strict code of legalistic behavior if one was going to take them seriously, and the Jews called it a yoke.

***Peter:** [God] made no distinction between us [Jews] and them [Gentiles], for he cleansed their hearts through faith. So why are you now challenging God by burdening the Gentile believers with a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear? We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus.*

—Acts 15:9-11 (NLT)

Everyone has broken or fallen short of their own standards and felt guilt.

Paul tells us the answer to escaping the law and the hold it has on us is death - only death can free us from law.

The Law only has authority over a person as long as they're alive.

For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an

adulteress.

—Romans 7:2-3 (ESV)

Paul's illustration doesn't say the old law of her marriage to the first man was wrong or bad - just that its authority has ended with the man's death.

This illustration shows that the law of the first marriage wasn't denied or diminished or discredited - it was honored and satisfied.

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.

—Romans 7:4 (ESV)

The purpose of God freeing us from the law, to which we were bound until death, by identifying and committing to Christ and his death, was to free us to be joined to Jesus Christ so that we'd produce fruit that honored God.

We often talk about God saving us because He loves us, but Paul wants us to see that it goes beyond that - that God saved us so we could live holy lives.

The Good News is that even when I fall short of being holy, as I do as a human being who isn't completely transformed yet, God's love is *still* greater than my sin.

If we are not faithful, he remains faithful, because he cannot be false to himself.

—2 Timothy 2:13 (TEV)

God doesn't give up on us when we fail, as long as our focus continues to be on Him.

For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way

of the written code.

—Romans 7:5-6 (ESV)

The term “flesh” has several meanings in the New Testament, but here Paul is pointing to our sinful nature before we were saved; he’s meaning that our lives and decisions are controlled by our self-centered sinfulness.

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God’s laws, and it never will. That’s why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

—Romans 8:5-8 (NLT)

Paul is making the point that through Christ we are not what we were before Christ entered our lives, for we’ve been freed from sin and the law, and this is a fact that we can claim in our lives and, therefore, we must live differently to show this, bearing fruit for the Kingdom, fruit that blesses others versus focusing on ourselves.

Next Week: *Romans 7:7-13*