

## Romans 7

Paul continues his discussion on the law. We must remember that the Jews have been under this form of religion for centuries. It is not easy to initiate change.

1. What argument would you use to convince someone who only knew adherence to the law that he was saved by grace?

2. What does Paul mean that the law only has authority over a man as long as he lives?

What is Paul's point?

3. What does the law say about a man and a woman united in marriage?

According to the law, what is the only way a woman could be released from her husband?

4. Therefore, according to Paul, only death can set us free from the law. What is Paul's point?

According to verse 4, what "death" has set us free from the law?

5. What did God command Adam and Eve upon their marriage? (See Genesis 1:28.)

What are the fruits of our relationship?

6. Read verse 5 carefully. What are some examples from the world around us that some are still controlled by the sinful nature?

Can you give an example where the law actually gives rise to sinful passions? In other words, can you think of a time when someone told you not to do something only to create in you the desire to do just that?

7. Is the law a hindrance to the Spirit? Please explain.

8. Lest we miss Paul's point, we need to understand that Paul is addressing the Jews, but he is talking about the danger of any law. What are some of the laws you see operating in the church today that could actually hinder our relationship with Jesus?

9. In verse 7 Paul emphatically states that the law is not sin. What is one of the benefits of the law?

10. What does Paul mean in verse 8 when he talks about the opportunity afforded to sin by the commandment?

How can the law that commands us not to covet or gossip actually create in us a desire to covet or gossip? What does Paul mean?

What does Paul mean when he says, "Apart from the law, sin is dead" ?

11. Imagine you are on vacation in the beautiful mountains of Colorado. You are thirsty and find yourself by a beautiful, clear, bubbling spring, so you take a drink. You travel a little farther and take another drink. Everything is great. Then you come upon a sign that warns you that, despite the apparent purity of the water, it is really polluted. The sign warns you not to drink the water. How would you react?

Is the sign to blame for "ruining" your drinking water? Do you think you might find yourself thirstier? Please explain.

Can the sign make the water pure?

12. In verse 9 Paul tells us that he once was alive apart from the law. What does he mean?

What happened when Paul heard of God's commandments?

13. In verse 10 Paul says that the law that was meant to bring life, brings death. Explain.

14. What do you think Paul meant in verse 11 when he said that sin seized the opportunity afforded by the law?

In this way, what God meant for good (the law) appears to be bad for us. Can you give an example of what Paul is talking about?

15. Remember, Paul is speaking to the Jews, to whom God gave the law. Lest anyone think Paul is denigrating the law, Paul makes his position very clear. What does Paul say about the law in verse 12?

Can you think of an example where someone blamed the law, spiritual or secular, for their situation instead of blaming themselves? In other words, if there had been no law, there would be no sin. (I remember a story about a man at a football game. He threw a snowball from the upper deck and hit someone, causing serious injury. When interviewed, he stated that if it hadn't snowed, he would not have been able to throw the snowball; therefore, it was not his fault.)

16. Read verse 13. What is the relationship between sin, death, and the law?

17. What does Paul mean when he says in verse 14 that the law is spiritual?

What does he mean when he says he is unspiritual or carnal or of the flesh?

What conflict does this cause for us?

18. Beginning with verse 15, Paul begins to explain the results of an unspiritual person trying to keep spiritual laws. He begins by stating that he does not understand what he does. Can you relate to this sentiment? In other words, can you remember doing something only to look back on it and wonder why you did it?

What is Paul's predicament in verse 15?

19. According to verse 16, how does Paul know that the law is good?

Please explain how Paul arrived at this conclusion.

20. We need to be very careful with verse 17. Who or what is responsible for Paul's doing the wrong thing?

Some people do use the excuses, "Well, I just couldn't help myself," or "That's just the way I am." How would you respond to these excuses?

21. Paul now talks about basic human nature. What does Paul say about himself in verse 18?

What is Paul saying in verses 18 & 19?

What does it mean to you that Paul, one of the Lord's greatest apostles, struggled to do what was good and often failed?

22. Paul again tells us that he is not the one doing this, but it is the sin living in him. So, what law is at work?

Paul continues to paint a very bleak picture. In his inner being he loves God's law. But, what other law is at work in Paul and in us?

What is the war that is raging in Paul?

23. If we were to stop now, we would lose all hope. As a matter of fact, what does Paul say about himself in verse 24?

24. Now we come to the climax of this section of Paul's letter. Who can rescue us from this terrible situation?

Why is it important for us to know that only Christ can rescue us from this situation?

What is Christ able to do that the law cannot do?