

**Standing in the Security of His Grace
Serving in the Power of the Spirit**

Introduction: Romans 7—one of the most popular and vigorously debated chapters.

Probing Question: Who is the wretched man of verse 24 who graphically describes his inner moral turmoil in verse 15ff, and cries out for deliverance and then immediately appears to thank God for it in verse 25?

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. Romans 7:15-20 NKJV

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. Romans 7:24-25 NKJV

- Is this person saved?
- Are they unsaved?
- Are they abnormal?
- Are they mature or immature?
- Are they a backslider?

We must come to terms with this chapter!

I. Examining the Context of Romans 7

A. Paul's concern is more historical than personal

1. This chapter is primarily about the place of God's law in the plan of God.
2. He is not at a personal holiness convention answering the questions.
3. Law (Torah) is mentioned in ALL of the first 14 verses of the chapter and 35 times overall from 7:1-8:4.

B. What had been said about the law up until this point had not been complimentary

1. Reveals sin (3:20)
2. Condemns sinner (3:19)
3. Defines sin as transgression (4:15; 5:13)
4. Brings wrath (4:15)
5. Added to increase the trespass (5:20)

C. This is why God has revealed a righteousness apart from the law: in practice, no man can keep the law.

1. The law did help bear witness to this righteousness
2. But sinners are justified by faith NOT by keeping the law

For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. Romans 4:14 NKJV

D. Paul's pejorative allusions to the law are clear

1. Law reveals sin not salvation.
2. Law brings wrath not grace.
3. Culminates in what was hard to hear for a Jew

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. Romans 6:14 NKJV

4. Reason so hard for Jews

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; 8 The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; 9 The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Psalms 19:7-10 NKJV

Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes, And I shall keep it to the end. 34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart. 35 Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I delight in it. Psalms 119:33-35 NKJV

Unless Your law had been my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction. Psalms 119:92 NKJV

I will never forget Your precepts, For by them You have given me life. Psalms 119:93 NKJV

THIS IS THE CONTEXT OF ROMANS 7

The law they love is said to be important!

II. Understanding Paul's Argument in Romans 7 (1-6)

A. The legal principle

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? Romans 7:1 NKJV

1. Release from the law is dominate theme (mentioned in verses 2, 3, and 6)
2. Assumption that they do know the law (parenthesis)
3. KEY: The law has authority over a man only as long as he lives. Once they are dead it is no longer binding
4. Word for dominion (kyrieuo)—lord it over

But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Mark 10:42 NKJV

B. The domestic illustration

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. Romans 7:2-3 NKJV

1. Marriage illustration
2. Law binds her/death frees her
3. Remarriage in one case ok/in another not so—death is different

C. The theological implications

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. Romans 7:4 NKJV

1. You have become “dead to the law”—FACT

- a. Remember “dead to sin” not loss of sensitivities
- b. Dead to its punishment, power, control, and authority
- c. Dead to the penalty of condemnation

- d. Dead to its inability to deal with sin problem

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh. Romans 8:3 NKJV

2. Through the body of Christ—MEANS

- a. His death on the cross
- b. I am united with Him

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection. Romans 6:5 NKJV

3. So I can remarry—be joined to Christ—FREEDOM

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. Romans 6:14 NKJV

NOTE: 2 Realms

Adam—Christ
Death—Life
Law—Grace
Sin—Righteousness

4. So I can bear fruit—RESULT

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. Romans 7:4 NKJV

- a. Fruit of the Spirit
- b. Fruit of Righteousness/holiness

NOTE: While I am in bondage to the law I never get on with the business of producing fruit because I am in bondage.

D. The Fundamental Antithesis

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. Romans 7:5-6 NKJV

1. Old Realm

- a. In the flesh (controlled by sinful nature)
- b. Sin aroused by law (promoted rebellion)

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. 12 Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Romans 7:8-12 NKJV

(ILL) Parameters always create rebellion (children/Adam and Eve)

- c. Continued struggle
- d. Leads to death

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. James 1:14-15 NKJV

2. New Realm

- a. Dead to law's condemnation/weakness and inability
- b. Died to it
- c. Now Spirit lives in me—law written on my heart—New Covenant

When I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. Ezekiel 11:19-20 NKJV

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Jeremiah 31:33 NKJV

- d. Serve by power of the Spirit—which is why I can bear fruit of the Spirit

Who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 2 Corinthians 3:6 NKJV

III. Applying this Truth Today

A. How does this discussion of the law speak to us today?

1. New morality! New normal.
2. Category of law is abolished
3. Only absolute commandment left is love!
 - a. You are not under the law (6:14)
 - b. Christ is the end of the law (10:4)
 - c. Stated as if Christ annulled the law altogether

B. What is meant by “not under the law”?

1. “Not under the law but under grace.” (6:14)
 - a. Referring to the WAY of justification
 - b. Not by your obedience but by God’s sheer mercy alone
 - c. Used differently in Galatians 5:18

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Galatians 5:18 NKJV

- a. Here he is referring to the way of sanctification
- b. Not by struggling to keep the law but by the power of the indwelling Spirit

C. So, in two ways we have been freed from the law—but NOT divorced from it altogether.

3 Views:

1. Legalism: Under the law and in bondage to it

- a. Seek to be justified and sanctified by it
- b. Imagine relationship depends on obedience to law
- c. Crushed by its inability to save

2. Antinomianism: (libertine)—opposite extreme

- a. Reject law altogether
- b. Have no obligation to its demand
- c. Liberty has become license

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3. Law-fulfilling free people

- a. Rejoice in freedom from the law in both justification and sanctification
- b. Delight in the law as a revelation of God's will

For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. Romans 7:22 NKJV

- c. Recognize the power to fulfill it is not in the law but in the Spirit

D. Paul's message in opening verses is for the legalists

- 1. Law is no longer our master
- 2. By dying to it with Christ we have been released from it

E. So, is the law still binding on Christians and are we expected to obey it? Yes! No!

- 1. Christian freedom is freedom to serve NOT freedom to sin!
- 2. We are still slaves—slaves of God and righteousness
- 3. But, the motives and means of our service have changed completely
- 4. Motives?

- a. Not because the law is our master and we have to but because Christ is our husband and we want to
- b. Not because obedience leads to salvation but because salvation leads to obedience!

5. Means?

- a. We serve in the new way of the Spirit
- b. Indwelling Spirit is the distinguishing characteristic of this new age

Conclusion:

- 1. For our justification—we are not under the law but under grace.
- 2. For our sanctification—we serve not in the oldness of the letter but in the newness of the Spirit.
- 3. We are still slaves, but the master we serve is the Spirit, not the law.
- 4. The Christian life is serving the risen Christ in the power of the Spirit!