
AMEN Bible Study 2025

“The Strange Work of God’s Law”

Romans 7:1-13
December 4, 2025

Introduction

A. CONTEXT: “Or...” (v.1)

1. Paul is still responding to the rhetorical question in 6:15:
Why not “sin freely” now that we are no longer “under Law but under grace”?

B. What does “Under Law” Mean???

1. First use in Romans – chapter 3
 - a. All of Fallen Humanity “Under Sin” (3:9)
 - b. All of Fallen Humanity “Under the Law” (3:19)
 - c. “All have fallen short of the glory of God” (3:23)
2. Humanity “in Adam”: Under Sin => Under Law => Under Wrath (1:17; 2:4; 4:15; 5:9)
3. “Under Law” – shorthand for this threefold state of fallen man

I. The EXPIRATION DATE of “Under Law” Drives us to Jesus (v.1-6)

A. Illustration of the expiration date of “under Law” (v.1-3)

1. Wife is bound to her husband as long as both live
2. Wife is free from her marriage bond when her husband dies
3. Wife is then free to marry another

B. Illustration Applied to Us (v.4-6)

1. “In Adam,” We were in a WRATH-Giving 1st Marriage “Under Law”
2. Our 1st marriage “Under Law” expired in the Death of Christ (v.4)
3. “In Christ,” We’re now in a LIFE-Giving 2nd Marriage (v.4)
4. Remember the Toxic 1st Marriage, to Adam (v.5)
 - a. God’s Law only aroused what was worst in us (v.5)
 - b. Marital fruit: Dead Badness
 - c. Marital fruit: “Dead Goodness”
5. “BUT NOW” ... the “New Life of the Spirit” (v.6)
 - a. New Realm has broken in – the Kingdom & Reign of the Spirit
 - b. Primary Colors of the New World – “faith, hope, and love”
 - c. Air we breathe – “Resurrecting Spirit/Breath of Jesus Himself”
 - d. Food we eat – “grace, grace, more grace”

C. “Under Law,” in its Expiration Date, leads us to JESUS

1. To a New and Different MARRIAGE (v.4)
2. To a New and Different LIFE in the SPIRIT (v.6)
3. New FRUIT – a Live Goodness (v.4)

II. The PERVERSE POWER of “Under Law” Drive Us to Jesus (v.7-13)

A. The Law REVEALS What Sin Is (v.7)

1. Illustration – Coveting
2. Coveting as Paradigm for All Sin (10th Commandment)
 - a. Root of Sin – Coveting what is rightfully only God’s (Gen. 3; Mt. 21)

B. The Law AROUSES Sin (v.8-9; cf. v.5)

1. Prohibitions actually energize something inside us to want to break them
2. God’s Word can make us Angry...Resentful ...Suspicious...etc. (cf. Gen. 3; Lk. 15)

C. The Law KILLS Us (v.9-11)

1. “Death” – referenced in each of these verses
2. Perverse Impact: **It’s promises LIFE but it produces DEATH??!!** (v.10)
3. The Law, though good, cannot deliver “the goods” to sinful humanity!

D. The Law EXPOSES the very SINFULNESS of SIN (v.12-13)

1. The Problem is NOT the LAW but SIN’s USE of the Law (v.12)
2. Sin has the Opposite Effect of God’s Redemptive Goodness (7:13//8:28)
 - a. GOD works in all things for our Good
 - b. SIN works in all things for our Evil

E. We Need SOMETHING, SOMEONE MORE

III. Back to Original Question: Why Not Sin Freely “Under Grace”?

A. “Under Grace” –

1. We are in a New Covenant MARRIAGE to Jesus
2. We are in a NEW KINGDOM/CREATION Realm
3. Old: Under SIN => Under LAW => Under WRATH
New: Under GRACE => Under SPIRIT => Under SALVATION LIFE

B. Very WIDE Implications

1. Education/Information CANNOT Save Anyone
2. Cultural-Political Wars CANNOT Save Anyone
3. Parenting – the primary goal is
 - a. NOT: educating them unto behavior modification;
BUT: leading them to Jesus, unto new affections, wisdom and life practices
4. We cannot directly obey God’s Word!
 - a. We can only obey God’s Word in and through Jesus
 - b. **The Pathway is NOT: God’s Word => Obedience**
The Pathway IS: God’s Word => Christ Himself => Obedience
 - c. Geerhardus Vos: “Legalism is a peculiar kind of submission to God’s Law, something that no longer feels the personal divine touch in the rule it submits to.” (as quoted in Sinclair Ferguson, *The Whole Christ*, 83)

Conclusion

AMEN Action Steps

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Romans 7:1-13

HEAR the Word

*“Open my eyes, that I might behold wondrous things out of your law.”
-Psalm 119:18*

1. Can you think of examples when a Command of God’s Word seems unreasonable, making you irritated (at best) and angry (at worst)? Can you identify passages or stories that make your heart doubt God’s goodness to you? Can you identify any that stir up what’s worst inside of you? Any in which you do not “feel the divine personal touch” coming through?
2. Read Matthew 11:28-30. Jesus assures us that his “yoke is easy and his burden is light.” But ask your heart the honest question: to what extent does the burden of following Jesus feel genuinely “easy” and “light”? To what extent does following Jesus feel more like you’re being rung out like a towel?

PRACTICE the Word

*“...Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on a rock”
-Matthew 7:24*

1. What evidence is there in your heart, or in the pressure you put on your kids and grandkids, to suggest that you have more hope in (and passion for) such things as education, political and cultural events, than in the “bare Gospel of Jesus,” to bring lasting change (e.g. how much easier is it to watch TV, stream and scroll your phone, than prayerfully engage with the Scriptures)? Why are such things so much easier to spend hours doing?
2. What temptation(s) are you struggling with today (e.g. too much worry/concern/anger over this or that current event; lustful urge to purchase this or that; obsessive urge to exercise control over something or someone; lustful urge for something sexual)? Instead of just trying to say “no” because you know it’s wrong, ask yourself this question: what is it about Jesus Himself, and the life He’s called me to, that is disappointing me? Coming up short right now?

RETELL the Word

*“Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you...”
-Mark 5:19*

1. To what extent is your life – and the love, joy, peace you experience – one that your unbelieving friend would genuinely desire if he knew you better? To what extent does your life manifest a “happy marriage-belonging” in Jesus rather than a toxic, lifeless legalism?