

Ro 7:1–6 (ESV) 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? ⁽²⁾ 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. ⁽³⁾ 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. ⁽⁴⁾ 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. ⁽⁵⁾ 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. ⁽⁶⁾ 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.

1. Romans is structured in a very important way

- A. In 8 chapters Paul moves us from being lost in the world and on our way to hell
To being a child of God and on our way to heaven

The Outline of Romans

- A. Chapter 1:1-17 Paul introduces the book – it is about the Good News of Jesus Christ – the Gospel
- B. Chapter 1:18-3:20 Why man needs the Gospel
 - 1). Everyone from the godless atheist to the religious zealot relying on their works fall short of what God requires to get into heaven
 - a). All mankind is lost and in need of a Savior
- C. Chapter 3:21-5 Paul explains the Gospel - Jesus came to live and die as our substitute
 - 1). Jesus Christ came and lived the righteous life we were required to live to get into heaven
 - 2). And he died to pay the penalty of our sin – because we couldn't live that life
 - a). The great truths of justification and substitution
God views the believer through Christ's performance
- D. Romans 6 Paul deals with the idea of sanctification – how we are to live
 - 1). Because we've been saved by grace – we have been changed radically
 - a). That old us that loved sin and hated holiness was put to death
We are now a new us – new nature – wired to obey God
 - 2). While sin is still present – it's power has been broken – we can say No
 - a). So Paul argues – SAY NO – act like who you are
- E. Romans 7 – the struggle with sin
 - 1). Romans 6 the power of sin has been broken – Romans 7 the struggle with sin remains

Thought: We will see Paul's struggle with sin starting in v. 7

- A. But first he deals with the law – why?
 - 1). Because we have no chance of living in victory in those battles if we don't KNOW two things
 - a). That we have *died to sin* – Romans 6 - therefore our enslavement is over
Therefore when sin tugs at us in temptation we can say "No"
 - b). And we have *died to the law* – Romans 7 – see why that's necessary as we move on

Transition: Before we move on let's take a moment to talk about the law of God

- A. I think this is a subject that confuses Christians – I don't want it to confuse you
 - 1). I think many believers think the law is opposed to grace – an enemy of the NT believer

The Law of God

1. What is the law of God? It's all the commandments

- A. They were summed up in the 10 commandments
 - 1). There you have man's response to God and to their fellow man
- B. Jesus shortened it to only two commands – everything else fit under

Mat 22:37-40 (NLT) Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' (38) This is the first and greatest commandment. (39) A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' (40) *All the other commandments and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."*

2. The law is a reflection of God's holy character

- A. Want to know what God's holiness looks like – the moral aspect of the law gives us an idea
- B. When God put the standard of the law on man to be acceptable to Him
He was simply saying – I want you (my creation) to act like me (your creator)
 - 1). So when Jesus came and kept the law perfectly – He was doing exactly that!
 - a). He acted like God in our place! He lived up to that standard

3. The law works together with grace to reach the sinner

- A. It's not an enemy of grace it is a co-worker
- B. It clarifies what sin is – leaving no doubt that we have fallen short of what God requires
Ro 7:7 (ESV) ...Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin...
 - 1). Paul goes on to say – when the law revealed sin – He died!
Died to any hope of saving himself
- B. The law is not meant to comfort us – it is meant to shake us – to frighten us
 - 1). It shows us how sinful we are – Why? To drive us to grace

Summary: The law is a reflection of the holiness of God

It is a friend of grace – working hand-in-hand with grace to drive us to Christ for forgiveness

Transition: The next one may be new to you – how the law benefits the believer

3. The law is still a reliable guide to help us live a holy life

- A. Not the dietary law – or the ceremonial law – they were for Israel only
- B. The moral aspect of the law is a helpful guide – shows us what righteousness looks like
Ro 7:12 (ESV) So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

Point: The law shows us how far short we fall – convincing us of our need of grace

Then after leading us to grace – grace leads us back to the law as a guide (might be new to you)

Samuel Bolton: The law sends us to the gospel, that we may be justified, and the gospel sends us to the law again to enquire what is our duty, being justified.

John Flavel: The law sends us to Christ to be justified, and Christ sends us to the law to be regulated.

- A. Why churches still teach the 10 commandments
 - 1). Those will lead us into a godly lifestyle
 - 2). They show us how to respond to God and our fellow man
- B. The principles of the law are very practical
 - 1). You borrow an ox – are negligent – it dies – righteous thing – replace the ox
The principle today – you borrow a drill – break it – replace the drill = practical righteousness

Transition: The law is a great practical guide for holy living for the NT believer

- A. So where do we get ourselves into trouble with the law – NEXT POINT

4. Improper application: Using the law as a means of earning God's acceptance

- A. This is the aspect of the law that the believer is released from
 - 1). We are no longer under the burden of living out this standard perfectly to earn God's favor
We now *rest in the one who lived it out perfectly for us*
- B. Important to see because we will never keep the law sufficiently to be right with God – it is beyond us
AGAIN: Mat 22:37-40 (NLT) Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' (38) This is the first and greatest commandment. (39) A second is equally

important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' (40) *All the other commandments and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."*

- 1). Seen many times – earning heaven is not just trying your best to keep that
“God looks at your heart and sees you’re trying – you’re sincere – you’ve become religious”
- 2). To merit heaven in your own works – takes keeping God’s law perfectly = righteousness
Jas 2:10 (ESV) For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.
 - a). This is why we must place our faith in Christ who kept the law for us
Ro 5:19 (ESV) For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.
 - 1a). God views us through his perfect obedience
 - 2a). I repeat these scriptures again and again – I long for you to get this! For your joy

Thought: We need to keep the law perfectly to get into heaven

- A. Not only can’t we do that – it is beyond us – we break it every day
 - 1). We’ll see at the end of the study the law doesn’t produce holiness it increases sin
- B. We needed to understand all this to see what Paul means when he says “we died to the law”
 - 1). We didn’t die to the commandments of the law – they are still valid
 - a). Every moral commandment of the 10 commandments is repeated in the NT
Except for keep the Sabbath – Jesus is our sabbath rest
 - 2). The aspect of the law we died too is trying to merit heaven by our obedience to the law
 - a). So the law is not a means of salvation – but it is a guide to live a holy life

I. THE LAW HAS NO POWER OVER THE DEAD

Ro 7:1–3 (ESV) 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? ⁽²⁾ 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. ⁽³⁾ 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.

1. Paul uses the analogy of marriage = a binding relationship

- A. Whether by Roman or Jewish law a woman was bound to her husband for life
 - 1). The only way she could be free was through the death of her husband
When this happened she was free to marry again
 - 2). But if she initiates the divorce and lives with another man while her husband is still alive
Paul says she would be considered an adulteress – a very serious situation
 - a). 1 Cor 6:9 says “No adulterer will enter the kingdom of God.”

Point: For this woman to be released from the law of marriage – to marry another

- A. A death is required – if her husband dies everything changes
 - 1). Now a relationship with another man is legitimate – not adultery

The Application to Us

Ro 7:4–6 (ESV) 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. ⁽⁵⁾ 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. ⁽⁶⁾ 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.

1. The difference in the analogy – who dies so we can be free

- A. V. 1-3 the husband dies and that frees the wife to remarry
In our case it is our death (in Christ) that frees us to be united to someone else

B. It's not a perfect analogy – but let's not overthink it – the meaning is clear

Kent Hughes: “As death breaks the bond between husband and wife, so death—the believer’s death with Christ—breaks the bond which formerly yoked him to the law, and now he is free to enter into union with Christ.”

Point: Becoming a Christian brings about a complete change in our relationship to the law and to Christ

Ro 7:4a (ESV) Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ...

1. “Likewise” – points back – like the husband who dies in v. 2

A. Like the husband died so the wife was free – you have died so you are free

1). To understand this we have to dip back into chapter 6 to see our death

Ro 6:6 (ESV) We know that *our old self was crucified* with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

a). There's the death that freed us from being held under the condemning power of the law

b). That old us that loved sin and was hostile to God was put to death

1a). Why Paul argues in Romans 6 – if you're saved you'll see a change

Thought: Look at one of the benefits of dying in Christ – So THAT something might happen

Ro 7:4b (ESV) *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.

1. Now we are like that woman in v. 1-3

A. Because a death has taken place – that old us that loved sin was placed on the cross with Christ

1). That allowed us to enter into a new relationship with somebody else – who?

“We belong to him who has been raised from the dead”

a). That's the new us! The old us died – we are born again! With a new nature

2 Co 5:17 (NIV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, *he is a new creation*; the old has gone, the new has come!

Point: We were bound up under the law and its penalty for breaking it = Hell

A. The only way to be released from the penalty we owed is we had to die with Christ

1). The law has no more power over dead men and women – the relationship is severed

B. If you haven't placed your faith in Christ – you are still united to the law

1). That is still what you will be judged by when you stand before God

2). The problem is you haven't kept it – therefore you're guilty

a). The only way to escape the law's penalty is YOU MUST DIE

b). The only way to die to the law is to be united to Christ by faith

C. I admit there is much mystery in all this – again don't overthink it

1). This is saying when you believe in Christ God puts that old nature to death
And plants a new nature in you – that is wired to obey him

2). But until you are in that new relationship with Christ – fused to him
You are still fused to the law and its penalty for breaking it

Transition: Now watch what happens when that old us dies – replaced with that new us

A. This happens not only so we can be saved – forgiven – but look at the next point

Ro 7:4c (ESV) *“in order that* we may bear fruit for God.”

1. Here is a reason we are freed from the law and united to Christ

A. So that out of love for this one who has been so good to us – we would bear fruit

1). We saw this last week – salvation is much more than just being forgiven and going to heaven

- 2). We are united to Christ – given a new nature – to serve him – to bring him glory
Tt 2:13–14 (ESV) waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ⁽¹⁴⁾ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.
- a). While we are waiting for his return – or our going into glory
 We are not lounging around – spiritually lazy
- b). We have been rescued by Christ – through his sacrificial death – now belong to him
 He desires us to be *zealous for good works*
- 1a). He gave his life for us – now out of love – we return the favor

Transition: Now Paul takes another shot at the law

To free those who still clinging to it to be right with God – still clinging to their works

- A. But didn't you say we are supposed to be zealous for good works
- 1). Yes – because you're saved NOT to be saved – it is a proof – evidence
- 2). Paul shows how it is impossible to please God through the law
- B. Saw this a few weeks back – so go over it quickly

The Law Cannot Save

Ro 7:5 (ESV) 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.

1. The law doesn't produce holiness it produces sin

- A. Not because the law is sinful – it is holy, righteous, and good – but we are sinful
- 1). God's holy law hits the heart of sinners and rebels
 And produces a desire in us to disobey – “Oh yeah. Don't tell me what to do. What this.”
- B. The law not only exposes our sin – it exposes our sinfulness
 By arousing our rebellious nature into action – which proves our need for God to change our hearts

2. Swindoll - Fishing in Galveston - Texas

- A. Rooms overlooked the bay
- 1). Owners worried people would start fishing from the balconies – so put up signs
 “Absolutely no fishing from the balcony”
- 2). Guess what happened – everybody fished
 High winds would throw the lead weights against the windows and break them
- B. Finally the management seeing their error – removed the signs
- 1). Problem solved – nobody fished from the balconies again!

Transition: In v. 6 Paul contrasts the old way and the new

Ro 7:6a (ESV) 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.

1. The old way – relating to God through the law – our own works and merit

- A. The law (mere religion) – motivates out of fear – we obey because we don't want to be beat
- 1). Do this and if you don't the consequences are terrifying
- 2). We are held under this standard we can't obey – and don't really want to obey

Ro 8:7 (ESV) For the mind that is set on the flesh is *hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.*

2. The new way – the better way

Ro 7:6a (ESV) ... so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

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- A. That is not saying the Bible is not important – “I serve by the Spirit not the written code”
 - 1). Context tells us what serving by the written code is – it’s trying to please God through the law
 - a). It’s trying to merit salvation through your own performance – being nice, religious, sincere
Rather than resting in Christ’s performance for you
 - 2). NT commands us to study God’s Word – and to apply it
 - B. The new way of the Spirit
 - 1). We are given a new nature that wants to obey
We are motivated to obey out of love NOT fear – obedience as an act of worship
Saw last week: Ro 12:1 (NIV84) Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as *living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.*
 - 2). **By the Spirit** – not only do we have a new nature that desires to please God
 - a). We have this incredible power living within us to enable us – Everything has changed
 - b). We serve out of love for God – NOT because we dread him
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CONCLUSION

1. Paul says our relationship to the law must be severed

- A. As long as we’re trying to earn God’s favor through our own efforts we will constantly fail
- B. We need to be united to Christ in a new relationship so we can serve in a new way
 - 1). That new nature that desire to please God – that new power that enables that

2. What relationship are you in? There are only two possibilities

- A. You are still united to the law – and its consequences – penalty for sin
- B. Or you are united to Christ who kept the law for you and paid the penalty you owed
 - 1). In Christ the threat of the law sending us to hell is over
He promises he will get us into heaven