

Romans 7:1 *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?*

Who are those that know the law?

The law was given to Israel and in this chapter, Paul is going to use marriage as an example of how we are now dead to the law. In a marriage covenant the husband and wife are bound together unless there is a death. When the husband dies (old man) that woman is no longer bound to the old man and is free to marry another (Jesus and the new man). The only way out of that marriage covenant is through death and the only way out of the law is through death as well. When we received Jesus, our old man died and we also died to the law and are no longer under it (Rom 6:14).

If anyone was familiar with the law it was the apostle Paul. Paul had a zeal but it was without knowledge (Rom 10:2). Anytime a person places themselves under the law it will have rulership or lordship over them which ultimately leaves the person in bondage because they cannot keep it. The law is in control, not the person. Under grace, it is the power of God that is in control and dominates the person.

The word lives in Greek is *zaō* and metaphorically means to be strong and sufficient. A person that has placed themselves under the law or a performance-based system; is deceived into thinking they are sufficient within their own ability to produce right living. It is only through getting to the end of ourself and out of our own strength that we become dependent on God.

Romans 7:2 *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.*

When the husband or old man dies the woman is now released from the law. The King James version translates the word released into loosed. The Greek word for loosed is *katargeo* and means make void or release.

In Romans 7:1-6 Paul is going to make it very clear that we are not under the law and it is not for a person who is born again (1 Tim 1:8-9). He says four times in these verse that we are loosed (v. 2), free (v.3), dead to the law (v. 4), and have been delivered (v.6).

Romans 7:3 *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.*

In a way a woman cannot be married to two men; likewise, a believer does not have a sin nature and a righteous nature. If a woman is married and marries another man she is committing adultery. In the same way a woman cannot have two husbands, we do not have two natures or are we under the law and grace, it is one or the other but cannot be both. We must know the old man is dead and that we are not under the law (Rom 6:6, 14).

The book of Hosea is a beautiful picture of Israel's spiritual adultery. Hosea is the first of the minor prophets and is an exhortation of repentance addressed to the ten tribes during the 50-60 years preceding their captivity. This is illustrated by Hosea marrying Gomer and her forsaking him for another. Israel's sin was greater than the surrounding nations and they are like a wife who is unfaithful to her husband (God). God is portrayed as the compassionate husband who welcomes her back.

Romans 7:4 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.

A believer is dead to the law or a system that demands rules and regulations. The reason is stated in this verse and it is so that we can be married to another and that is Christ. We are no longer bound to the old man and are free to be united to Christ. Now that we have a new man and are united with Christ we are to bear fruit to God. The way we bear fruit is by abiding in the vine (Jn 15:5). When we walk in our identity in Christ which is our new spirit man, we naturally bear fruit.

Romans 7:5 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.

When we were bound by the law and had a sin nature, we bore fruit but it was unto death. The only thing our old man could produce is death. The verse before says that now that we are married to another, we bear fruit to God but before receiving our new born again nature we bore fruit to death.

Romans 7:6 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.

But now that we no longer have a sin nature and are not under the law we live by the Spirit (Gal 5:16). Paul is summing up here that a man who is born again is not under the law. Verse 1-6 are very clear that we are free from the law with all its rules and regulations and relate to God based off Jesus' obedience and not our own.

Romans 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "you shall not covet."

Paul just proved that a believer is no longer under the law so now the logical question would be is the law bad? The answer is no. The law at its heart is good but the use of the law is what the Jews misunderstood.

The law was meant to reveal God's holy standard and our inability to serve Him because of our sinful nature. It was meant to expose and reveal our sin nature not as a means for justification with God. In the law is the knowledge of sin (Rom 3:20). The law is used for a man not born again to bring him to the end of himself so he can cry out for a Savior; Jesus (Gal 3:24). Once the

law does its job and we can see that we are not worthy before God in our own righteousness, it is not necessary for someone born again (1 Tim 1:8-9).

A mirror is used to show us something but if we use it in any other way, it will cut us up. The law is used to show us the sin nature but if we use it on someone born again it will cut us up because we will be in a performance-based mentality and relying on self-effort to be right with God. Someone who is born again is already "right with God" (2 Cor 5:21, Eph 4:24).

The law did not make anyone covet, it only exposed what was already there.

Romans 7:8 But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.

The strength of sin is the law (1 Cor 15:56). The law does not make someone sin it only exposes what was already there. Before the law, there was deception of man thinking they were good enough because they were comparing themselves with their neighbor. When the law comes it removes all deception of anyone ever thinking they are good enough compared to Jesus (Rom 3:19).

Before the law came, sin existed but sin was not imputed on man where there is no law (Rom 5:13).

Romans 7:9 was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

Paul is speaking of when a person is born into this world with a sin nature but that sin nature is not imputed until an age of accountability. Once a child knows they are willingly sinning and rebelling against God that sin nature is imputed to them. The age of this varies and should give hope to anyone who has lost a child that their destination is in Heaven with God.

Romans 7:10 And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.

The law is perfect the problem is we weren't. The law is good the issue is that man is not. If man could fulfill the righteous requirements of the law then it would have brought life.

The law demands perfection but could not make anyone perfect. Receiving Jesus under the covenant of grace has now made our spirits perfect (Heb 12:23).

Romans 7:11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.

The law is not bad but it did bring out the sin nature that was already present. It is similar to taking a band aid off a wound, once it is removed that wound is exposed. Chapter seven is all about man's inability to serve God in their flesh. When fallen man is told not to do something the

flesh will want to rise up and say I will do that. This is a part of the fall and how sin impacted our flesh. The law itself does not cause man to sin.

Romans 7:12 *Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.*

After all Paul just stated, a person could think the law is bad but the law is good, just, and holy. The law is good and reveals the very heart of God, however it is not for someone born again (1 Tim 1:8-9). The law is good, the problem is we weren't.

The law is like a two-chain link. The weak link of the chain is us and specifically our flesh.

Romans 7:13 *Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.*

When the law comes, sin becomes exceedingly sinful meaning that the law was not given to adhere to and comply with for justification with God but it was given to keep us from being deceived into self-righteousness. Everywhere we turned we were reminded of how unworthy we were, this was the point of the law (2 Cor 3:7). If we had a mild tendency for something and someone tells us not to do it, the flesh will have an extreme desire arise.

Romans 7:14 *For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

The law is spiritual but man apart from Jesus is carnal. Again, the law was perfect but man was not. The law and man were like two chain links and the law was the solid chain link but we were the weak link.

Romans 7:15 *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.*

Paul is not talking about who he was before he got born again nor is he saying he has a sin nature plus a righteous one. He made it very clear in Romans 6:6 that the old man is dead and Romans 7:1-6 that we are no longer under the law. Paul is speaking of attempting to serve God in his own ability and out of his flesh. Our spirit is complete (Col 2:10) with the life of God inside but we still have a mind and a flesh. The entire Christian walk is understanding we need to renew our mind and walk in the spirit to experience victory. Our flesh desires what is contrary to the spirit (Gal 5:17) but we need to starve our flesh and not let it dominate us (Gal 5:24, Rom 8:13).

Any time someone offends us the flesh will want to get even and tell the person something but our spirit is always walking in love towards our neighbor even if they hurt us. Choosing to walk in the spirit is where we experience life and we can only choose to forgive someone by God's grace in us (Eph 4:32). Our flesh does not want or have the ability to forgive others.

Romans 7:16 *If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.*

Again, Paul is speaking about the war with the spirit and flesh (Gal 5:17). When we go to be with the Lord, we will receive a new glorified body and this mortal will put on immortal (1 Cor 15:53-55).

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. The word enmity simply means hostile. Paul was not struggling with two natures; he was born again stating the hostility or battle between the spirit and flesh and which he would allow to dominate him.

Romans 7:17 *But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.*

People can take this verse out of context and say Paul said here that sin dwells in him. We are a spirit and the moment we became born again our spirit became as perfect as Jesus (Heb 12:23) and was sealed (Eph 1:13). Anyone born of God cannot sin in their spirit (1 Jn 3:9) so Paul was not saying in his spirit dwells sin. Sin impacted our flesh at the fall and we can sin in our mind and body but never in our spirit.

Romans 7:18 *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.*

Outside of our born-again spirit connected to Jesus dwells no good thing. Paul confirms here that it is in his flesh the dwells no good thing. Man does not have the power to serve God in their own strength. Self-effort is one of Satan's greatest tactics and tools.

Romans 7:19 *For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.*

Paul was not schizophrenic. Had was speaking about the war between his spirit and his flesh. Anyone outside of Christ is operating in their own will power and cannot truly love or forgive other people. It takes the power of God in us to truly forgive someone who has hurt us.

Romans 7:20 *Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.*

It was not the sin nature that Paul was speaking of because that old man is dead, but what the old man left behind. Once we got born again our minds do not automatically change. We used to walk in hatred, jealousy, and unforgiveness so now that we have a new identity in Christ, we have to see who we are now and reprogram our mind to our new man. Ephesians 3:22-24 says to put off the old man and put on the new man. The entire Christian walk is to now be transformed by renewing our mind (Rom 12:2). Victory for a believer begins with renewing the mind and then releasing who we are in Christ.

Romans 7:21 *I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.*

Paul desired to serve God was there but the flesh was unable to do so. Paul wanted to do good, but he couldn't in his flesh. The flesh does not have the power to break the flesh.

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

The new man is always in line and for God. He always wants to do the will of God. It is the flesh that is selfish and wants to do its own thing. Once we start walking in the spirit it is easy to recognize when we get in the flesh. The only way to overcome the flesh is through the spirit (Gal 5:16).

Romans 7:23 *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

The law of the mind is the soul that was programmed to live the way the old man did. God has done His part by giving us a new spirit identical to His (Ez 36:27) but He will not renew our minds for us. God's word is now our mirror to see who we truly are and to the degree that we can renew our mind to our spirit man is the degree that we will experience victory.

Romans 7:24 *O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*

The flesh is present and a problem so what is man going to do? Paul had a desire to serve God but through his own strength and will power he was not able to. The more we try to overcome the flesh and focus on sin, the more we empower it. Certain denominations have doctrines that center around being sin conscious and confessing everything we do wrong. This actually strengthens sin because the focus is on self, versus the spirit of God in us that breaks the power of sin in our lives.

So, the question is; how do we overcome the flesh? Paul answers this in the next verse.

Most churches teach that the more you focus on trying to overcome sin that is how we get free from it. This is not New Testament teaching. In the midst of our sin, we should be confessing who we are in Christ and that will break the power of that sin. The moment we say, "I will stop, I will do better" look where the focus is. It is on self and there is no power there but when we say I am the righteousness of God, I have love, I am forgiving; we magnify the truth and get our eyes off the problem.

Notice this verse says **who** will deliver us from this body of death; it does not say what. Victory is found in a person not policies and procedures (Phil 3:20).

Romans 7:25 *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.*

Thank God Jesus died for us and gave us the power to overcome the flesh by the spirit of God in us. Here, Paul gives us the answer because people may say well, I have a flesh I cannot control myself. The next chapter explains the victory we have over the flesh, the world, and the devil.

