

Romans 7.1-12 Release from Law, Distorting Law, Proper View of Law 092-095
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[Romans 7.1-6 Release from Law 092]

In these studies I have emphasized that Paul is stressing throughout the reality of truth. In fact, he begins chapter 7 with that same word that we looked at in the beginning of chapter 6: Do you not *know*? So the major emphasis in living the Christian life is living it on what God has revealed and what we know. Now Satan is very subtle in that he distorts everything, one being the concept of experiencing the Christian life.

The Bible does not deny or teach an experience but we turn it around, and the church tends to see *experiences*, whether they be emotional or mystical or in some way generated by the flesh. But, in reality, what God wants is to have our *thinking* correct and rightly centered on what He has revealed. And *then* we have the experience: right thinking, right doctrine, right teaching comes before the proper and Biblical experience. To experience the Christian life, it has to be based on truth and what God has revealed in Romans 6-8. We start with the first 6 verses.

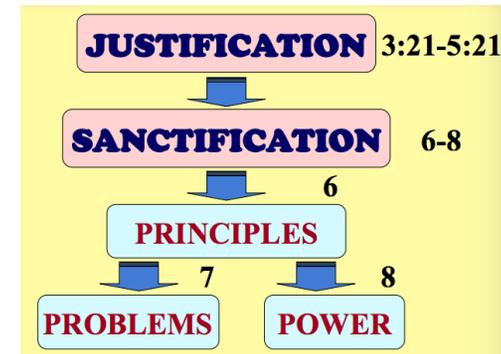
Paul is writing to Roman Christians and, since humanity is not much different over the ages with regard to our nature, these things apply to us as well.

We have already seen several images that Paul uses in order to convey spiritual, unseen truth. So he is bringing truths to our consciousness by using these images:

Images

1. King and subjects - 6.12-13 service. The image of a king: sin or grace reigning and the emphasis is our *service* in that administration.
2. Master and slaves - 6.14-22 obedience. Closely related is a master-slave relationship. The word δούλος (dú-los)/ δουλόω (du-láh-o) the noun and the verb a total of 7 times show a master-slave relationship. The emphasis is of *obedience*, the primary task of a slave.
3. Husband and wife - 7.1-6 fruit. Now he uses a different imagery in chapter 7, the husband-wife imagery. It is *imagery*. He is not teaching the doctrine of marriage, even though sometimes this passage is used in that way and sometimes abused in that way, but he is using it as an illustration or image in order to convey a spiritual truth. The emphasis here is *fruitfulness*.

So service, obedience and fruit are the main principles that are emphasized using three different images.



We have completed looking at Justification and we are in the heart of the major section on Sanctification, chapters 6 through 8. Chapter 6 emphasizes the principles that are needed, the things that we need to know, the doctrine, you might say—not that he stops there as we will see another principle at the beginning of chapter 7, but it is somewhat transitional to the problems that we have and encounter when we try to live the Christian life. The first one is with the *Law*.

Again Satan twists that relationship. Are we to be obedient? Yes. But there is a way of *attempting* obedience, based on the Law, which is a distortion of what God desires. We call that legalism. The solution is in chapter 8: we live the Christian life in the *power* of the Holy Spirit. And chapter 7 will be in contrast to that.

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| 1) Release from Law | 7.1-6 |
| a) Illustration of Marriage | 7.1-3 |

The first major idea, verses 1-14: the law cannot sanctify. We will remind ourselves of some of what we have already talked about of some of it. We have already covered a lot of these concepts of the law.

The main theme of the first 6 verses is Release from the Law. We are under grace, not under Law. The first three verses are an illustration using marriage, not teaching the doctrine; in fact there is a little ambiguity in it, or mixing of the correspondence, so you can't take it too far, but for the main point that he is making, it is true. It is a principle of hermeneutics: you don't make it walk on a horse, you look for the *main*

point of the illustration, and there may be secondary points, but don't make every little detail fit. All illustrations or analogies break down if you try to force them to walk on a horse. He begins in verse one with this illustration of marriage.

7.1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?

'Or do you not *know*'—the same word as in 6.6. He is, using the negative, trying to bring to remembrance. He is saying, 'You should know this!' He also says, 'brethren', kind of softening it, giving the relational aspect; he has said some difficult things and now he is trying to embrace the audience, referring to them as *brethren*, speaking to believers.

(In fact there are very few books of the Bible that are directed to an unbeliever. Even when Paul deals with doctrines that are for unbelievers, it is not evangelistic; it is for believers to be better equipped to be able to share the gospel with unbelievers.)

7.1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?

'for I am speaking to those who know (the) law.' The New American Standard does not capitalize 'law', and in the Greek there is no article 'the', so I think he is speaking in a more general sense and thinking more in terms of common understanding. We are in the middle of an illustration. So, when we speak of 'law' at this point in verse one, he is not talking about the Mosaic Law. He may be referring to it with the second usage of the word. In that Roman culture, also, the first thing that might come to mind as you raise an issue of legality, is Roman civil law. Remembering that context is everything, I think that he does start using the same word in a different way, verse 2.

He uses the word law, νόμος (nó-mos) 8 times in this passage, and in chapter 7 something like 23 times. We see its different uses and they all are in the book of Romans, by the same writer.

LAW νόμος (nó-mos)

1. Pentateuch - 3.21 'The Law and the Prophets', ie the rest of the Bible. Jesus and others used this phrase as well. The word 'Law' refers to the first five books.
2. Mosaic Covenant - 2.20, 23 Sometimes he refers to the Mosaic Covenant—and perhaps even in this chapter 7 passage.
3. OT Generally - 3.19-21 In chapter three he had just quoted mainly out of the psalms and then he refers to these

quotations as 'the law'. So it was not just the first five books; rather the whole OT.

4. 10 Commandments - 7.7-9 And sometimes he refers specifically to the 10 Commandments.
5. Mosaic Dispensation - 6.14-15 And sometimes it is this time frame, or dispensation, or an era of law, from Moses to the church age.
6. Civil Law - 7.1-3 And I am inclined, 7.1, to say that he is referring to Civil Law.
7. Moral Law - 2.14 He also refers to a moral or universal law that is built into all mankind; then he talks about a law that exists inside the gentiles. It's not the Mosaic Law; some were even unfamiliar with it.
8. Principle - 3.27-28 At the end of chapter 3, he uses νόμος and translates it as a *principle*.

So, you have to study the context to understand the meaning.

7.1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?

Here, probably he is speaking of civil law, in a broad sense, or more specifically as Roman law, or law in general as it regulates society.

'that the law'—he may be transitioning because now—'*the* law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives'. In a general sense: once you die you don't have to obey the civil authorities anymore. Once we are out of these bodies, nothing regulates us except God Himself. So no civil law has an impact on us; that's rather a given, self-evident truth. This is the point of the passage.

Now he is going to give us an illustration. But before we consider it we have to keep hermeneutics in mind; first, you always look for a purpose for a passage. Why does Paul talk about marriage here? He has been talking about sanctification, about being dead to sin and alive to God, about the baptism of the HS, about these spiritual issues and now he suddenly talks about marriage.

Hermeneutics

1. Purpose of passage - not on marriage
not all divorce wrong
not wrong to remarry
use Genesis 1-2, Matthew 5, 19,
1Corinthians 7
marriage as illustration

“Romans is Paul’s masterpiece on salvation, salvation from the penalty of sin (3.21-5.11), salvation from the power of sin (5.12-8.17), and salvation from the presence of sin (8.18-39)” —SL Johnson

We are in the second section, salvation from the *power* of sin, 5.12-8.17, the sanctification portion.

7.4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

‘Therefore, *my* brethren’—he gets even more personal with *my* brethren. Remember, there was a 2-part church at Rome: it was predominately gentile and there was a significant contingent of Jews as well, and I think here he is including the Jews as well because he says...

7.4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

...in verse 1, (for I am speaking to those who know the law),...and now he says ‘you were made to die to *the Law*’, probably the Mosaic Law. This is the main principle or point that he is making: Just as a wife is free when her husband dies, so also, when there is death, there is also freedom.

So, there is a change in the illustration here: we died when Christ died on the cross, we were united or joined or baptized in His death... burial...and resurrection. So the believer experienced a real death: spiritual, can’t feel it, sense it, but it is a real union with the death of Christ.... ‘through the body of Christ’.

Parallels

Romans 6

Before:

Alive to sin (1-2)

Slave of sin (17, 20)

Free from righteousness

After:

Dead to sin (2)

Freed from sin (19)

Slave to God (19, 21)

Romans 7

Dead to Law (4)

Romans on Law

1. No justification - 3.20, 27-28
2. No Righteousness - 4.13-16
3. Brings wrath - 4.15
4. Sin increased - 5.20
5. Died - 7.4

So now we have died to the Law. So we have already seen a lot on the Law in Romans. A major emphasis is that no one is justified by the Law, especially 3.20, 27-28. Then secondly, there is no righteousness through the Law. Thirdly, 4.15, law puts us in a position of wrath because we are violators of it. Then in 5.20, sin *increased* when law came in—our awareness of sin is intensified and aggravated so that if you say I can’t touch something, then I want to do it, chapter 7. And finally in 7.4: we *died* to the law, a slightly new concept.

7.4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

‘So that you might be joined to another’, just as the wife is free to remarry when the husband died, so also in the illustration, a death took place and now we are free to re-marry. And, in fact, this joining to another is a reality. Not only are we baptized into Christ, united into Christ, identified with Christ, but we are *married* to Christ. This is part of the analogy or imagery. We have a real husband that is deeper than any earthly husband. And, in a broader sense, during the church age we are in a betrothal, using the Jewish marriage.

Real Husband

1. Church age - betrothal 2Corinthians 11.2 *For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.*

Paul says that he led them to Christ, they are betrothed, ‘married’. Mary and Joseph were betrothed; and for about a year they were legally bound covenant-enforced, but they did not consummate it for a year—it was a time of preparation for both. That is why it was a difficult situation; without any experience with the HS, the conclusion was that she had been unfaithful. He had to have revelation to clarify the situation.

2. Rapture - groom comes for bride. In a traditional Jewish wedding, there was a kind of procession where the husband came to get the bride. That’s the context of Matthew 25; cinco virgins are

prepared and 5 are not. The illustration deals more with the attendants of the marriage than with the church.

3. Marriage supper - Revelation 19 also deals with a Jewish marriage supper and then a great celebration and rejoicing.
4. Millennium - marriage bliss. After that: consummation and life-long commitment in a marriage relationship. The imagery of the millennium is of the marriage bliss in a life of commitment together.

And all of this is for believers with Jesus Christ. We are preparing to spend a millennium in close intimacy with Him. We await a day when he comes for us—the rapture, and we will be with Him in a very experiential sense. And we will have a celebration, after the rapture, though it is not clear when, maybe during the Great Tribulation when things are transpiring on earth, then during the millennium we will be part not only of the Kingdom but we will also be a part of the household of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Union in Christ

1. Baptized into His death - 6.3
2. Old self crucified - 6.6
3. Justified from sin - 6.7
4. New life in Him - 6.8
5. New slavery - 6.19
6. New marriage - 7.4
7. New power from fruitfulness - 7.6

7.4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

‘joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead.’ Again he is reminding us of chapter 6, if we died with Him, we were also baptized into His burial and baptized into His resurrection. And there was a purpose for it...

7.4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

Fruit: different areas where we can bear fruit

1. Unbeliever - death 7.5
2. Character - Matthew 12.33 *“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit.*

Romans 6.21 *Therefore what benefit* [Greek word *κάρπος* (*kárpōs*). In most places translated ‘fruit’] *were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. 22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit* [fruit], *resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.*

3. Life-style - Galatians 5.22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*
4. Converts - Romans 1.13 *I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.*

Paul is talking about evangelism, bringing others to Christ.

... ‘in order that we might bear fruit for God.’ He is changing the imagery a little bit, but it is still related to marriage because we do bear fruit. We have this joining to a new husband that should bear fruit. We will come back to this.

So sanctification in this context: I think we are set apart in God’s plan in eternity past. One verse in Romans, but more specifically in Ephesians 1.4 he speaks of the doctrine of election, we were set apart before the foundation of the world...

Sanctification

1. Set apart in God’s plan - 8.29 *For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;*
2. Set apart for salvation - 3.24 *being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;*
3. Set apart from old life - 6 ...4 *Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, ...*
4. Set apart from Law - 7.1-6 ...6 *But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, ...*
5. Set apart for fruitfulness - 7.4 *Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.*

7.5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

The 'flesh' is our old nature, what we were without Christ. We can't release ourselves.

7.5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

The sinful desires, these passions...

7.5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

...aroused by the Mosaic Law or maybe the Covenant...

7.5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

...were at work in the members of our body, again from chapter 6,...

7.5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

...bore negative fruit, or past fruit, 'fruit for death.' It's that deadness of life here and now, that comprehensive death. Spiritually it breaks fellowship, ie, those sinful passions break fellowship with God so we are separated from Him even though we are believers.

7.6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

'But now...' Here is the transition and contrast:

7.6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

...that past fruit of death that didn't produce anything of value...

7.6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

...but now, having been released from the Law, we serve in newness of the Spirit. We have a new power.

Fruit: different areas where we can bear fruit

1. Unbeliever - death 7.5
2. Character - Matthew 12.33, Romans 6.21
3. Life-style - Galatians 5.22, 23
4. Converts - Romans 1.13
5. Ministry - Philippians 1.22 *But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose.*

Romans 7.4 *Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.*

6 *But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.*

Parallels

Romans 6

Before:

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Dead to Law (4)
Free from Law (6)
Newness of Spirit (6)

Romans on Law

1. No justification - 3.20, 27-28
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3. Brings wrath - 4.15
4. Sin increased - 5.20
5. Died - 7.4
6. Believers freed- 7.6, 6.14-15

Sanctification

1. Set apart in God's plan - 8.29
2. Set apart for salvation - 3.24

3. Set apart from old life - 6
4. Set apart from Law - 7.1-6
5. Set apart for fruitfulness - 7.4
6. Set apart for newness - 7.6

The purpose of Sanctification is to bear fruit.

Romans 7.7-8 Distorting of the Law 093

In Rome in the 1st Century they did not have all the Scriptures we have today. And all they knew was the OT Law. Paul is trying to clarify things because he had said a lot of negative things about the Law.

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| 1) Release from Law | 7.1-6 |
| 2) Proper view of Law | 7.7-12 |
| a) Issue on Law Raised | 7.7a |

Now we will focus on other things that he said which give more of a balance and a better picture of the Law. The main principle in 7.1-14 is that the Law cannot Sanctify.

The main problem is a distorted use of the Law. We are released from the Law. It is hard to imagine what it was like living in the OT: all you had were the *standards*, what God said, what pleased Him, but you did not have the Holy Spirit. I don't think we appreciate it because we kind of take it for granted. So we are living in a different time frame, a different dispensation and we are *released* from the Law because we have the power of the HS. But he is not yet at that point in his explanation, because first he has to lay out the perspective on the Law.

7.7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."

Again, Paul is asking a question and giving an emphatic 'No!' Is the Law sin? No! We will see that the Law does have a purpose in our lives as well.

7.7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law;

for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."

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The problem is when we misuse the Law. This is the whole idea of chapter 7.

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7.7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."

The Law is not sin; as a matter of fact it is not even negative. It is just that we use it in the wrong way—like a mechanic or carpenter who has a variety of tools and, if he doesn't have a hammer and uses another tool to hammer something instead, he is abusing it because it is not designed to be a hammer and he could damage the tool itself or the item that he is hammering.

Similarly, with the Law; it has a function that God has designed and there are areas that it is not designed for. So when we use it and distort it in that way, then you can expect negative effects, but in itself, verse 12: *So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.* He is talking about the 10th Commandment: it is holy, not tainted by sin in any way. *...and righteous and good.* The problem is not with the Law; it is with how we are trying to use the Law.

So here is a background of the Law. The Law was significant; it was the *center* of Jewish life. It was a gift, given from Sinai. Here are the main passages in the OT that show the value, the goodness and the holiness and righteousness of the Law.

Value of Law in OT

1. Inerrant - Psalm 19.7 *The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts 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; they are righteous altogether.*
This is probably the best statement in the Bible on the inerrancy of Scripture and of the Law.
2. Elevated - Isaiah 42.21 *The LORD was pleased for His righteousness' sake To make the law great and glorious.*
Ecclesiastes 12.13 *The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.*
Solomon had tried everything, owned everything, experienced everything. But he concludes that the only thing to do is obey the Law.
3. Priceless - Psalm 19.10 *They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.*
119.72 *The law of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of gold and silver pieces.*
4. Purifying - 119.9 *How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word.*
In Psalm 119 he uses at least 10 synonyms for the word 'Law'.
11 *Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.*
5. Comprehensive - Deuteronomy 6.1 ...3 *"O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. 4 "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! 5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might....*
Comprehensive in all of your activities, in living your life and passing them on to your descendants, for well-being, in your complete devotion to God, in your thinking and meditating, 'in your heart'.
Every Jewish boy was expected to memorize this passage, Deuteronomy 6.1-9. They were preparing to enter into the land and this is what was going to govern their land, everything.
6. Blessing - Psalm 119.14 *I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches. 15 I will meditate on Your precepts And regard Your ways. 16 I shall delight in Your statutes; I shall not forget Your word.*

17 *Gimel. Deal bountifully with Your servant, That I may live and keep Your word.*

18 *Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law.*
23 *Even though princes sit and talk against me, Your servant meditates on Your statutes.*

It brings happiness, contentment...and other blessings.

7. Remembered - Malachi 4.4 *"Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel.*

This is at the end of the OT, the end of the canon. The Law given hundreds of years earlier is to be remembered. This is the value of the Law; you shouldn't mistreat it or disregard it.

By NT Time

- > Law made an idol
- > Law Externalized
- > Legalism

But by the time of the NT, the Law had been distorted in many ways. It had become an idol. It was worshipped, not necessarily obeyed. It was put on a pedestal, but not part of their experience. The scrolls themselves were almost worshipped.

Also the Law was externalized. That was the main problem that Jesus dealt with in the 1st Century. It was reduced down to Legalism. To the extent that a person could observe it or obey it in that external way, that was what they had reduced the Law to. This is what Jesus corrects to some extent on the sermon on the mount. Se había dicho, 'You shall not murder.' But Jesus said anger at your brother is like murder.

What He is saying is that the Law is not just external, the end product, but it goes all the way to where murder begins—in the *heart*. And that was the intent from the beginning. In Deuteronomy there are lots of passages referring to 'circumcision of the *heart*' and a heart response and not just an external response. So the Pharisees and people that Jesus dealt with, the scribes also, they had distorted the Law. It is our same struggle—part of chapter 7 also. So the Law was externalized and reduced to legalistic standards and the standards themselves were lowered to a human level such that 'Ok, if I just do this checklist on a superficial level, I am pleasing God.' This is not true obedience.

Fulfilled in Christ

1. Confronted Jewish distortions Matthew 5.17-18 is the key passage: *"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 "For truly I say to you, until*

heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

So many of the stipulations of the Law anticipated fulfillment by Messiah, particularly the sacrificial system. And when He came He fulfilled those aspects of the Mosaic Law so that they are completed, fulfilled. There are aspects of the Law that are universal and transcend time; those continue, but the feasts, the sacrificial system are fulfilled in Christ: that's why we are no longer under the law. That's why we are released from the Law.

2. Became yoke - Deuteronomy 27.26 *'Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.'* And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

You were cursed if you did not obey these laws and the Jerusalem council had to decide what to require of the gentile believers. The church council settled this issue once for all. They said that the gentiles were not to be circumcised; they were not under the Law anymore. And there is a little statement in there that says *'We are not even able to obey the Law, we, the Jewish people. It is like a yoke that we cannot obey.'*

Acts 15.10 *"Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?"*

Another problem of the Jews of the 1st Century was that they were using it for things for which it was not designed and it became a yoke. Then came a new dispensation.

3. New dispensation - Romans 6-7

Romans 6 and 7 are emphasizing that we are in a different dispensation, a different time frame. We are no longer under a Mosaic economy, the Mosaic Covenant. Jesus Christ fulfilled the aspects of it that pertained to Israel and looking forward to those that were to be believers in Christ.

7.7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."

There is a purpose for the Law that God intends, and a purpose for the here and now. We are not under the Mosaic Covenant, we are released from it: we can eat pork, skip the sabbath—even work on it—we are free from that Covenant in terms of its civil specific requirements, its ceremonial aspects as well, but the Law still has a function: we don't kill one another, we still want to respond to God with a *heart* response, and there are other universal things.

Paul said, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law. That was the main purpose of the Law in the OT and it continues to be one of the main purposes of the Law. It was to show that we can't keep it. It was to show Jewish people: 'You can't please God by trying to keep the Law.' And it was to point to the One who would make the ultimate sacrifice and the One through Whom they now can have a relationship that would satisfy the Law. So it anticipates Messiah.

Purpose of Law

- > Revelation of God's Nature
- > Revelation of God's Standards
- > Revelation of Sin
- > Relationship with God
- > Rule of God

The LAW serves a purpose for us today!!!

[Romans 7.7-8, 7.12 The Proper View of the Law (1) 094]

We have just done an overview and will now return to a sentence by sentence study. The book is written to the believers in Rome, who probably met in house churches.

The problem of the relationship between the believer, Jewish and non-Jewish, and the Mosaic Law was dealt with already in the Jerusalem Council, Acts 15, but Paul continues to treat it. And we still have a problem with the issue of Law.

So, we look at this with regard to the church—inside and out of the church—today. Of course we know that the Law cannot *sanctify*. There is no power or anything built into the Law that is capable of sanctifying us, even though our nature and inclination is to go back to the Law. In the 1st Century it was a matter of imposing the Mosaic Law on the gentiles—and the Jerusalem Council said, 'No', and Romans 6 explains why.

We have to remember that we have been released. Paul uses an analogy of marriage to show this. When we accepted Christ, being baptized in His death, we died to our old self—and to the Law.

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- a) Issue of Law Raised 7.7a
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When we were aware of the Law, that made us aware of sin. Justification is apart from the Law, by faith. Until now we have more of a negative impression of the Law. Christ had the most conflict with the most avid observers of the Law. Here Paul gives a proper perspective or understanding of the Law.

Here is an explanation of the confusion today:

Law Confusion

1. Antinomianism - against law
Some have accused Paul of antinomianism. When he was arrested he was accused of doing away with the Law. In the church there is a misunderstanding of what Paul has said. Ellos dicen, 'We are no longer under the Law, so is it tainted with sin? Maybe we have to get rid of the Law'. This is unbiblical.
2. Legalism - pleasing God by law
The other extreme is *legalism*. This is prevalent in the church today as well. True legalism is not putting the Law in a high position as such, but using the Law in order, in some way, to please God, ie, doing all these things in order to gain favor before God. There are no righteous acts that we can do that will sanctify us. It is by faith—and grace. Legalism leads to frustration and the point Paul reached, saying, 'O wretched man that I am.'
3. Theonomianism - imposing law on society
In some ways the unbelieving culture uses this against Christianity because of some who have promoted this movement. Dominion theology is kind of an offshoot, but Theonomy is isolated to a few very few conservative believers that believe that Mosaic Law, that obviously is inspired and inerrant, universal and applicable today should be imposed on society by governments.
So believers should be working with legislatures and lawmakers to include Mosaic stipulations in the laws of our culture. God + Law. Some accused the Moral Majority of being theonomistic, but I think this is a misperception and a false accusation.
4. Christian Distortions
Antinomianism - there are antinomians and legalists outside of the church, religious people who support this idea. There are Christian distortions of all of the above ideas. Andy Stanley has advocated essentially tearing out the OT from your Bible because we are under grace, etc. He is missing the conclusion of this passage of Paul's that we are reading: 7.12 *So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.* The problem is not

with the Law. It was not designed to sanctify—not even Israel. That is the mistake of the Pharisees as well.

Misuse - Sabbath, tithing

This is sometimes legalism. A lot of believers observe the Sabbath on Sunday—bending the Law. There are some, like the 7th Day Adventists that observe the Sabbath on Saturday, including many of the OT rules.

Also, many churches expect and teach tithing and advocate it. But there is nothing in the NT that supports the idea of tithing. The NT standard 'tithe' is to give *everything*.

Sanctification by law

This results in great frustration or pride or hypocrisy.

That's the issue Paul is dealing with here.

What does Paul mean? - 'not under law'

What does he mean? I think what he is talking about here and elsewhere where he uses the phrase 'not under law', is about our dying to the law, eg, 6.14 *For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.* And 7.5 *For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.*

He is saying that we died to the Law. So what do we do? There is nothing wrong with the Law; even today there is value in the Law—not for sanctification, not for salvation, not for gaining any merit before God but because it is inspired, inerrant, has guidelines—it is for instruction and useful today. This includes the commandments of the NT. We could say there is NT law; in fact we have the phrase 'the law of liberty' in the NT.

The law is not designed to sanctify; it is the revelation of the standard and therefore what Paul says is that the *use* of the law is to *condemn us*, to show us how far short we fall in terms of God's standards. And, it does give us some guidance in terms of what is correct living, ie, what *is* pleasing to God. But we don't use it to *earn* anything from Him; we use it as a light or path that God can give.

7.7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."

So this is Paul's answer: On the contrary, there is *nothing* wrong with the Law. Then he goes on to the *purpose* of the Law. We have noted a proper view of the Law—and not just the OT—when we listed its Value: inerrant, elevated, priceless, purifying, comprehensive, a blessing, remembered all the way to the end of the OT, Malachi 4.4, the third verse from the end of the OT.

But, as we have seen, by the 1st Century, there was Pharisaism and legalism, distortions of the Law, which Christ addressed. Yet the Law has great value, from a godly and Biblical perspective. It was fulfilled in Christ. Matthew 5.17 *“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 “For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”*

Now we have a New Covenant, implying that there was an *Old* Covenant as well. This is the whole point of the book of Hebrews as well as Romans 6 and 7. We mean that we are living in a different era or dispensation. We are in a time frame where God is dealing more by grace, without our being under the Mosaic Covenant which was a legal document, binding to *Israel*.

Nine of the 10 Commandments are re-issued in the NT. We just don't *use* those commandments to earn merit before God—that's legalism. We use them because it's not good to murder or steal or commit adultery—they are guidelines, revelation of God's standard which is still good today. And, in the power of the HS, we will obey the Law, in particular those aspects that are part of moral law. We live and regulate the Christian life by the power of the HS.

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Paul is going to use himself as an example of the Law's revealing sin to us. It is also the means that God used it to maintain a relationship with Himself in the OT sacrificial system. But the rule today is grace, not Law.

In the rest of the passage he is going to distinguish between sin and the Law. The Law is not sin and he is developing the sinfulness of sin, beginning in verse 5:

Sin's Sinfulness

7.5 - sinful passions working

7.7 - awareness of sin

Sin is the problem, not the Law. It is singular, 'sin', probably referring to 'the sin nature'. He is going to show us the value the Law. The Law is good in that it brings us an awareness of sin. Our tendency is to suppress the truth and not accept that we sin.

7.7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."

Paul alludes to the 10th Commandment. It went to the heart, dealt with the inner man. The others you could externalize and look at them superficially but this one you couldn't. He said he would not have realized that coveting was wrong if the Law had not said 'You shall not covet.' We have already seen this word ἐπιθυμία (epee-thu-mée-a) with its various senses, including the one here of coveting:

ἐπιθυμία (eh-pee-thu-mée-a)

1. As neutral term - Mark 4.19

2. In good sense - Luke 22.15, Philippians 1.23

3. In bad sense -

* lusts not always sexual - Romans 1.24, James 1.14
1John 2.16

* evil, sinful, or harmful desires - 1Timothy 6.9,
2Timothy 4.3

* coveting - Romans 7.7-8

* desires of sinful nature - Galatians 5.16

Desires, in and of themselves, are not wrong, even anger Paul commands in Ephesians 4.26, 'Be angry', and then he adds, 'but do not sin', so it can become sin. Similarly, epithumía can be a good desire. The Law can distinguish when we are crossing the line and reveal to us the sinful aspect of a desire.

[Romans 7.7b-12 Proper View of the Law (2) 095]

We developed Principles of Sanctification in chapter 6:

Principles for living the Christian life

1. Grace Available

2. Death to Sin in new Reality

3. Knowledge of Truth Crucial

4. Unity with Christ is Essence of new life
5. Old nature is obstacle to Sanctification
6. Victory over sin is possible IN CHRIST
7. Involves Faith in New Identity
8. Involves our Obedience to New Master
9. Produces Christlikeness
10. Church Age believers are not under law
11. Law was never intended to & cannot sanctify believers

We can summarize two new Principles from the beginning of chapter 7. Number 10: Church Age believers are not under law—this comes from as far back as chapter 5: we are not under the law. We also saw that Law was never intended to and cannot sanctify, Number 11.

Paul continues, then, noting that *sin* is operating:

7.8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.

It is sin that is taking advantage of a good thing, taking opportunity through the commandment. He is separating, distinguishing the goodness of the commandment, or all commandments, from sin. The value of the Law, in this verse, is that it not only revealed sin but it is an instrument of God, and it is abused in this case. Something that God has provided and is good and has a purpose and a use, His instrument to produce certain things, in this case is abused. We have the repetition of the same idea in verse 11 and 1 Timothy 1.8 which states that the Law is good if it is used in a right way.

Law's Value

1. Inerrant - Psalm 19.7-9
2. Reveals sin - Romans 7.7, 2.18 *and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,*
3. Instrument of God - Romans 7.8, 11 *for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.*
1 Timothy 1.8 *But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,*

Like any tool, there is value in it, if it is used in the right way. You can use a tool in a wrong way and do more damage than any correction you are trying to accomplish. So, to use the Law for sanctification is a misuse and in this case we have as use of the Law by *sin*, ie, our own sin nature can use the Law to accomplish negative things.

7.8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.

It *intensified* the coveting. What do children do when you say they can't do something? They want to *do it*.

Sin's Sinfulness

- 7.5 - Sinful passions working
- 7.7 - awareness of sin
- 7.8 - sin produced coveting

So sinfulness not only brings awareness, but it produces or intensifies coveting in that it arouses it within us.

7.8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.

Remember that we said that 'deadness' is not ceasing of breathing. Now he is using it in a more non-personal way. Basically it has no power, no effect if there is no prohibition. That is what he means saying it is 'dead'.

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b) Purpose of Law	7.7b-8
c) Results of Death	7.9-11

Sin results in death, not the Law.

7.9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; 10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; 11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

We have one long sentence, 9-11. One clause after another, each followed by a semi-colon, one statement after another, and contrasting in 9 and 10. Then in 11: 'for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment—he repeats—*deceived* me. But it is the sin within me that 'latches on' and takes the deception, and through it killed me. He

‘died’...it ‘killed me’. The Law seems to be something bad here, but no, it is the *sin* that uses the Law.

7.9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;

Then verse 9: ‘I was once alive apart from the Law’. Remember we have been saying, he uses life and death, not talking about physically breathing and living, and dying—not just ceasing to breathe, but living in this broader sense. ‘I was very active; I could do whatever I felt like I wanted to do. I was the captain of my own life and what I decided, I would do’.

7.9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;

But all of a sudden the law came;

7.9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;

When the commandment came in, sin became alive and ‘I died—it killed me.’ ‘Not the Law, but *sin became alive* and I died.’ It brought death, awareness of my lack of ability to please God, that I stood condemned before a Holy God. Or, it brings reality, as a believer, that I can’t do these things that God expects to be sanctified.

Sin’s Sinfulness

- 7.5 - Sinful passions working
- 7.7 - awareness of sin
- 7.8 - sin produced coveting
- 7.9 - sin became alive, I died

So we can add under Sin’s Sinfulness: sin became alive and I died. It is *sin* that killed him.

7.9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; 10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;

Then this commandment, which was to result in life...This is another purpose of the Law. It *promoted life*. It couldn’t *give* life, but it encouraged and promoted...and God intended it to be a *light*, like it says in the OT: ‘Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.’ (Psalm 119.105) It was intended to say: This is what is going to

be beneficial for you; this is what will profit you, what will enhance your life. It’s intended to be those things. And this commandment which was intended to bring life, brought death.

Law’s Value

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2. Reveals sin - Romans 7.7, 2.18 *and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,*
3. Instrument of God - Romans 7.8, 11 *for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.*
1 Timothy 1.8 *But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,*
4. Promotes life - Romans 7.10
Psalms 119.50 *This is my comfort in my affliction, That Your word has revived me.*

You can say that the Law *promotes* life. It’s intended even now to give us insight into what is good and what is evil. We use the analogy: there is the law of gravity. Are we under the law of gravity? We can try, but it will catch up to us. I am free to jump off this 10-story building. I can’t overcome it; it will drop me down and kill me. That is like sin. And the death part is the result of the violation, but also, like law, it can tell me what I can do, but I don’t have the ability to do it. But it is intended to promote life.

7.9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; 10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;

The use of the Law or the commandment by sin resulted in death.

7.9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; 10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; 11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

‘For *sin*, taking opportunity...deceived me.’ He is developing the sinfulness of sin...

7.9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; 10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; 11 for sin, taking

an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

...and through it killed me. He contrasts being alive and dying—*sin* being the destructive force.

Sin's Sinfulness

- 7.5 - Sinful passions working
- 7.7 - awareness of sin
- 7.8 - sin produced coveting
- 7.9 - sin became alive, I died
- 7.11 - sin deceived me, killed me

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 - 3) Integrity of Law/Commandments 7.12

7.12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

The great conclusion: the problem is with *sin*, not with the Law. That is the value of the Law:

Law's Value

1. Inerrant - Psalm 19.7-9
2. Reveals sin - Romans 7.7, 2.18 *and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,*
3. Instrument of God - Romans 7.8, 11 *for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.*
1 Timothy 1.8 *But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,*
4. Promotes life - Romans 7.10
Psalms 119.50 *This is my comfort in my affliction, That Your word has revived me.*
5. Holy and Righteous - Romans 7.12 *So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.*
Holy and Righteous: That is the proper view of the Law. We have already seen that it is not only inerrant...it reveals sin and God can use it if it is used properly.

7.12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

Law's Value

1. Inerrant - Psalm 19.7-9
2. Reveals sin - Romans 7.7, 2.18 *and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,*
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1 Timothy 1.8 *But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,*
4. Promotes life - Romans 7.10
Psalms 119.50 *This is my comfort in my affliction, That Your word has revived me.*
5. Holy and Righteous - Romans 7.12 *So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.*
6. Good - 7.12, 13, 16
And not only that, but it is *good*. He will use the word 'good' three more times: verse 13 and verse 16 where he uses a different word for 'good': not only inherently good, but beautiful.

Principles for living the Christian life

1. Grace Available
2. Death to Sin in new Reality
3. Knowledge of Truth Crucial
4. Unity with Christ is Essence of new life
5. Old nature is obstacle to Sanctification
6. Victory over sin is possible IN CHRIST
7. Involves Faith in New Identity
8. Involves our Obedience to New Master
9. Produces Christlikeness
10. Church Age believers are not under law
11. Law was never intended to & cannot sanctify believers
12. Law is useful for exposing sin
Like an MRI machine, the Law is good and has a function. What is bad? Not the machine, but the *cancer* that it reveals. It doesn't work to go through the machine again in order to remove the cancer; that is not the design of the machine. It can't remove the cancer, can't deal with it. All the machine can do is what it is designed to do—to reveal, expose the cancer. But through other means the cancer may be removed. The machine is a guide for the doctor to know where to make the incision.
So we have a 12th Principle: The Law is useful for exposing sin. The LAW has value today but SIN is the problem.