

Walking Through Romans to Christ

Romans chapter 7 “Struggling for Victory”

Righteousness by Faith Series

Opening/REVIEW: In Chapter 6 Paul was expounding our need to be **crucified**, having death to self and to sin (Rom.6:6, 7); Letting the old life of sin die, then living a new life of obedience for Christ. In **chapter 7** Paul goes on to explain what it means to be “Dead to the Law” (Romans 7:4), and alive unto God. Also, Paul discusses the **practical struggles people have faced** in being “Dead to sin” (Rom.6:11).

1. Being “Dead to the Law” and married to another—Christ (v.1-4)

- a. **The Law is Justice** (You might think of “Criminal Justice” or “Law enforcement”) If you break the law, then you deserve to die or pay the price. “As long as he lives” (v.2) a woman is bound to the law of her husband. In the same way, the “law has dominion over a man as long as he lives” (v.1). **You are on “death row” until the price of blood is paid!** You are under the power and condemnation of the law, as long as you are alive. If a woman’s husband dies, she is at liberty to marry another. **“Therefore, YOU HAVE BECOME DEAD TO THE LAW, through the body of Jesus Christ...”** (v.4) so you can be married to another, that is, Christ! **To the law, you’re dead. Jesus’ body was offered on the Cross for you! He died there for you. The Law now considers you as dead. The price is paid through the “body of Christ” (v.4).** You are at liberty to be married unto Christ and to experience the “gift of God—eternal life” (6:23). The “wages” have been met.
- b. **This situation can remind us of the Cities of Refuge and the Avenger of Blood** from the times of Old Israel (**See Numbers 35:25, 33**). Someone who’d been guilty of blood and deserved to die at the hand of the “avenger” needed to stay in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest. If the “slayer” did not remain in that “city of refuge” then he would be put to death by the hand of the avenger [The Just Arm of the Law]. Mercy lingered for him only in the walls of that city of refuge! Full pardon came at the death of the high priest! Isn’t that so with Jesus? Isn’t Jesus our high priest who died for our sins (Hebrews 9:24-26)?!!
- c. We can have a fresh, new relationship with Jesus Christ, because, to the law, we’ve died! (Jesus has taken our punishment—death has happened, and we may be wed to another—to Christ!). We’re not still under the law’s condemnation when in Christ. We cannot have an “adulterous” relationship (Wed to the Law for death, and Wed to Christ—no, no—just to one—to Christ!) (v.4) “Body of Christ” was “broken” for us (1 Corinthians 11:24)
- d. The Law sees you as Dead (it no more hunts for your life)—To the Law, you’re dead.

2. Serve in “Newness of Spirit, not in the Oldness of the Letter” (v.4-6)

- a. “fruit unto God” vs. “fruit unto death”
- b. “Passions of sin, aroused by the Law” (v.5) Did you ever hear the story of the **Red-faced Monkey**? There was a special formula that was to be used to turn dust into gold. It was a very special formula. Someone asked if they could learn it. The person said, “Sure, I’ll share it with you.” Every detail was given. Then finally, one last word of advice, “One last thing you MUST remember! **Don’t ever think of the red faced monkey** when you do this formula, or it won’t work at all!!!!” Lo and behold, every time the person tried to make the gold, it just wouldn’t work! They couldn’t get that “red faced monkey” idea out of their mind. “If you hadn’t said anything, I wouldn’t have thought of it,” mused the man who failed to make his gold from dust. So, when living in “the flesh” (v.5), and not by the Spirit, the passions of our sinful nature are aroused, even though we know that something is wrong. The sinful nature tries to control our minds. It’s kind of like telling your

child **“don’t touch the stove.”** What is the first thing might be tempted to do? They may try to touch it and disobey, only to find regret and sadness for their bad choice.

- c. **Now “delivered from the Law” (v.6).** (Jesus delivered us from the wages of sin) **Illustration: Picture an old western town.** A person is about to be hung. It’s you! “Wait!!” says a man! “Take the noose off his neck! Take the boy instead!” The most influential man in town walks up and gives his boy in your place. What just happened to you? You were just “delivered from the hands of the Law!” Will you go and sin more? No way! You now have freedom and hope.
- d. **“Serve in newness of Spirit and not in the oldness of letter” (v.6).** Some have tried to twist these words. Attempting to say this means we don’t literally have to keep the Law—not every letter. Perhaps, it doesn’t have to be the seventh-day like Ten Commandments say. Maybe it could be the 1st day, they suggest. It’s just the “spirit” of the law.” **Is that what Paul’s saying? No.** Certainly not! (See Romans 3:31; Was God particular w/Cain and Abel’s offerings? (Gen.4) Yes. Also, see what Jesus said about the traditions of men, when men have attempted to make changes or adjustments to His law—**Mark 7:7, 9-14.** Jesus was not happy with that at all!! (Additionally, you may see Christ’s words on this in Matthew 5:17-19). **These words are all about attitude and depth of commitment!** Imagine some children are fighting in the back seat of the car. Mom says, “Stop it right now!! And say you’re sorry or else I’ll make you sorry!” Finally, after a pause one kid mutters out, “Sorry.” “Sorry” comes back. Do you think they meant it? No, they did just what mom told them to do, but only to the **“letter of the law.”** However, they didn’t really mean it from the heart! They were not sincere. What they needed is to say those words, and actually mean it in their **“spirit!”** Jesus demonstrates this truth very well. The Spirit of the law goes must deeper than just the mere outward letter of the law. We must worship with our whole spirit and soul; Not just some half hearted actions. See Matthew 5:21 (letter), v.22 (spirit), and also v.27,28.

3. Presentation of the Law to a sinner (v.7-10).

- a. Paul IS talking about the Ten Commandments here in this chapter for certain (v.7; Exodus 20:17). There is nothing wrong with the “letter”—you wouldn’t know if God didn’t spell it out. (Paul assures us of this).
- b. The law reveals to us the evil desires of the heart—our condition becomes clear! The commandment “brought death” (v.9,10), because now I realized my sinfulness and helplessness in living a fully righteous life when under the controlling power of sin!
- c. The Commandments encourage and enrich life. **“...that your days may be long” (Exodus 20:12).** Christ came to give “life...and...life more abundantly” (John 10:10). “If you love me, keep my commandments,” Jesus says (John 14:15).

4. The problem is with me (us), not with the Law (v.11-14) *The Law is a righteous, holy, and good standard. It is a transcript of God’s Holy character!!*

5. The Struggle, and the Hope (v.15-23, 24-25)

- a. Paul expresses the struggle of being taken captive by the sinful nature—against the will. **Willpower by itself to overcome sin is helpless** (will must be surrendered to Christ). You may clean up one side of dusty room to find the dust settled in another corner. It’s easy to talk about “turning the other cheek,” “loving your enemies,” “doing good to those who hate you,” but on our own, it would be serious struggle to perform. Paul speaks here from the vantage point of someone truly having desires to live a righteous life (v.16,18,22). He says, he “delights in the law of God, according to the inward man” (v.22), but is having struggles in performing it. This battle against sin must be fought, as long as life shall last. But it is not to remain hopeless. Paul concludes that we may **“Thank God—through Jesus Christ...”** (v.25) who will deliver us!
- b. **Two Laws are mentioned here. (1) The Law of God “the law of my mind”** (v.23), and **(2) “The law of sin and death”** (v.25) (an internal struggle with sin). In chapter 8 we’ll learn about a third law, “the law of the Spirit of life” (8:2). This power of God’s Spirit will set us free from the law of sin and death. Obviously, we cannot serve two masters. We cannot serve two contrary laws in some of kind of a bi-polar split! No, we must have the victory. Romans 7 presents the struggle. Romans 8 has the solution!

Today’s Appeal: Will you take all your struggles to Jesus and find that deliverance He’s offering you?