

Romans 6... 7... 8

DEVOTIONAL STUDIES FROM THE
MEN'S MORNING FELLOWSHIP

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?

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.

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.

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.

It helps to arrive at your destination if you have some idea where you are going!

Let me show you where we're going in chapter seven. Look at verses eighteen through twenty-four:

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.

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.

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.

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

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

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.

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

We'll comment on these in a future study. For now we must decide what Paul was describing. More to the point – **When** was Paul describing - what time in his life was he referring to? Was this his current and on-going experience or was he referring back to his experience before he was saved?

In other words, is this a struggle I will have as a Christian?

Some look at this struggle with sin and believe that it must have been before Paul was born again. Others believe that he was just a Christian struggling with sin.

In a sense this is an irrelevant question, for this is the struggle of anyone who tries to obey God in their own strength. This is something that a Christian *may* do, but something that a non-Christian *can only* do.

Griffith Thomas: “The one point of the passages is that it describes a man who is trying to be good and holy by his own efforts and is beaten back every time by the power of indwelling sin; it thus refers to anyone, regenerate or unregenerate.”

The point of the passage, and of our chapter, is that we should not seek to live by keeping the Law of Moses or any other law but by yielding to the indwelling power of God the Holy Spirit. Any law emphasizes my human effort to be holy. No amount of my human effort can sustain a victorious, fruitful Christian life.

Too many Christians put themselves under some law, some rules, and then struggle unsuccessfully to grow when God wants us to abide in a personal relationship with Him that will bear spiritual fruit.

The Jews had approached life by trying to keep the Law of God. In the Book of Acts you see that many of the Jews tried to put the saved Gentiles under the Law, demanding they be circumcised and such.

No one is to try to live by keeping the Law. Not Jews. Certainly not Gentiles. This chapter describes our new relationship to the Law of Moses and to law in general.

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?

I'm told that in the Greek texts this reads, **law has dominion over a man as long as he lives**. The word **the** is not there. Paul was

referring to the Law of Moses but broadening the concept to include all law as a way of growing in grace.

In chapter six we learned (over-and-over) that we are “in Christ.” We are seen from Heaven as having been crucified with Him on the Cross. Thus we died with Him. The point stressed in chapter six was that we died to sin. Indwelling sin is no longer our master.

Now, in chapter seven, Paul stressed that we died to Law as a way of life and growing in grace.

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.

Death ends all of your obligations, debts, and contracts. He uses marriage as an illustration. Death freed a woman from her marriage and she was then free to marry another man.

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.

The law carefully spelled out the rules for marriage, divorce, and remarriage. A woman who divorced her husband to marry another man was considered to be committing adultery.

According to Old Testament law, a husband could divorce his wife, but a wife could never divorce her husband. Paul uses the analogy to say, as it were, you were married to the law, and there's no way you could get away from it.

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.

Just as death breaks the marriage relationship, so your death with Jesus Christ breaks your relationship to the Law of Moses and law in general as a way of life.

One 'marriage' was broken by death and a new 'marriage' is entered in to. The Christian is now married to another – **to Him who was raised from the dead**. It is in this living, vibrant, dynamic personal relationship to Jesus Christ that we derive power to live and grow and have victory over sin.

We are not dead to law so we can live as we please. We are free from law to live as the bride of Jesus Christ. As His bride we **should bear fruit to God**. This fruit-bearing is taken up in the next set of verses.

An unhappy marriage is awful. It becomes a hateful bondage. Divorce is not an option. In the first century culture of Judaism that was exactly the plight of women.

Then your husband dies! His death voids her status as a wife. She is free to remarry. In fact, a believer is automatically remarried – to Jesus! When you receive Him as Savior you are saying, "I do!"

Applying all this, Jon Courson wrote:

There is no reason to be preoccupied with your failings, your lack of prayer, your lack of love, your lack of anything. There is no reason to try to live up to the rules, regulations, and expectations you've put upon yourself. When you realize that you died with Christ positionally on Calvary, you're free from the demands of the law and free instead to just love the Lord.