

## Romans 7

Romans 5. The Justified Believer free from fear. Assurance.

Romans 6. The Believer free from sin. New Self.

Romans 7. The Believer free from law. Under grace.

The term 'law' is used in two different ways.

1. A legal code requiring absolute obedience to obtain salvation.

2. An expression of God's good and perfect will giving direction to those who wish to please God from gratitude for salvation received. See verse 22.

1-3. Paul's illustration showing that death interrupts and changes relationships.

According to the law marriage is for whole of life, but if one partner dies the marriage is dissolved, the remaining partner is free to remarry without stigma of adultery.

4. The illustration applied. Old self died to the law that demands perfection, through our being united to Christ. New self raised with Christ to new life, now we are as it were 'married' or belong to Him and this new relationship will produce good fruit pleasing to God.

5. The contrast with our former relationship is stated. When we were Old self governed by sinful selfish passions which were stirred up by the law which forbade them, the resultant 'fruit' led to death.

6. But now, we died in the death of Christ who paid our debt to the law, so we are no longer under the law's dominion and curse.

We are no longer in bondage to the law, burdened with guilt and living in hope that our 'good works' might atone.

We now serve the Lord from willing thankful loving hearts grateful for the full and free salvation He has given us.

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7. We have a problem with the law; does this mean that the law is the problem? No way.

The problem is our sin; the law simply reveals the problem like a mirror. We have a dim awareness that all is not well, the law reveals the serious, soul destroying, life disrupting nature of sin. The tenth Commandment in particular reveals the inward corruption of sin in the heart, sinful desire – covetousness.

8. Paul uses his own experience showing how the law reveals our sin and stirs it to reaction, it enflamed his covetous desires. Until the law came to Paul, he was unaware of how sinful he was. Sin in him was, as it were, dead or dormant, lying doggo.

9. There was a time when he felt secure, alive and well, but when the law came and convicted his conscience and his sin sprang to life, he died, that is, that was the end of his self righteous satisfaction with himself.

10-12. The law, which if you kept it perfectly resulted in life, had actually resulted in death. Sin had deceived and slain him. The law bears no blame; indeed it is holy, right and good: God's law promotes our highest good and happiness. Law breaking can only lead to misery and death.

13. It is not the law that results in death but sin, the breaking of the law. The lesson the law teaches us is that we are utterly sinful, that sin has adversely affected our whole being.

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There is a change here. We pass from Paul's previous experience when he came to know himself and his need of salvation, to his and our present experience in striving to fulfill the law. Not even the justified believer, dead to sin's mastery, alive to God, serving now in newness of spirit, with the best intention can fulfill the requirements of God's holy law. This emphasizes the fact that we can never be saved by our own law keeping because we still fall short.

14. It is a matter of comparisons.

Compared to an unsaved person every Christian is spiritual, but because we are only partially renewed, compared to God's spiritual perfection required by the law, we are still sinners.

15-20. Why do I fail to do all I had hoped and intended? Why do I do some things that I actually loathe? The law is good, indeed perfect; I just cannot achieve that standard. This is surely not The New Man because he desires to live by it. Who or What is the culprit? It is sin living in me. He is not blame shifting. He is answering the question, why am I like this? Sin is still present in the Christian, though no longer president. Not the dominant power but a negative hindrance.

21-23. We are involved in a truce less warfare.

The new spiritual life with its desires and hopes delighting in God's holy law.

That is one principle but there is another, sin at work in me.

The greatest foe to be guarded against is the one within us.

24. Paul's cry of distress and hope. Looking forward to a time when the struggle will be over, when sin will be eradicated and this mortal body still under sin's influence will be renewed in the resurrection.

25. Thanksgiving in anticipation. Our God and Father will do it through our Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord.

26. In the meantime the conflict continues. The fact that we experience the conflict adds to the evidence that we are truly under grace.