



## World Christian Fellowship

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### Romans 67 Why law? To reveal sin! Romans 7:7-13

**Romans 7:7-13**, *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."<sup>8</sup> But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.<sup>9</sup> I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.<sup>10</sup> And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.<sup>11</sup> For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.<sup>12</sup> Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.<sup>13</sup> 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.*

The greatest good news ever known to the humans is that “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.”

The whole human race because of sin is bound for hell.

### **Why?**

Every person in this world lives in rebellion against God and against God’s divine law. Every person is a violator of the divine commandment. God being a God of justice, must require punishment for such violation.

Men are born into the world bound for hell because they have sinned against God. God is a God of holiness whose justice demands such a punishment.

Even though man is heading towards hell, it is not the desire of God’s heart.

**2 Peter 3:9**, *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

God has sent Jesus Christ into the world to pay the debt that all men and women owe, to die the death that all should die, to bear the sin that all should bear.

God has ordained that when a man believes in Jesus Christ and accepts Him and His work on their behalf, his sin is forgiven forever.

God has ordained that not only is their sin forgiven but they are granted the very holy nature of Jesus Christ. They become partakers of the divine nature itself. It is granted to that believing sinner and he is thus equipped to spend eternity in heaven with God.

- ✓ They can escape judgment.
- ✓ They can receive the impartation of divine righteousness.
- ✓ They will be equipped for heaven in a way they could never be on their own.

The doctrine of justification by faith is the main theme of this great book of Romans. Men are made right with God through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is the central doctrine of the Christian faith.  
Equally the central doctrine of the Epistle to the Romans.

**Romans 1:16-17**, *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.* <sup>17</sup> *For in it the*

*righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

The gospel is a message that comes to sinners and tells them of a salvation by grace through faith available in Jesus Christ.

**Romans chapters 1 and 2** Paul showed the need to be made right with God.

**Romans chapters 3 and 4**, the method of salvation, how a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ.

**Romans chapters 5 to 8** showing us the results of salvation by faith, the results of justification by grace.

**Romans chapter 5**, when a person comes to the Lord Jesus Christ there is eternal security. He has made peace with God.

**Romans chapter 6**, union with Christ grants us holiness.

The believer receives the impartation of divine holiness.

The questioners would say to Paul, "if you preach justification by grace through faith without works, then people can do what they want, and grace will cover everything."

Paul points out that rather than justification by grace through faith leading to holiness not lawless.

**Romans 7:1-6** we saw that we are free from the bondage of law that fruitfulness is a result, and service to Christ.

**V 4** says we bring forth fruit unto God.

**V 6** says we serve the Lord, no longer in the oldness of the letter, but in newness of spirit.

So, justification by faith is his theme.

He announces the theme in chapter 1:16-17.

He unfolds the need for it in the rest of chapter 1 and 2.

He describes how it occurs in chapters 3 and 4.

In chapters 5 to 8 he shows its results.

The first eight chapters of Romans are the words “grace and faith.” He is presenting a salvation that is a gift of God received by faith.

**Romans 3:22**, *even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;*

**Romans 3:24**, *being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*

**Romans 3:25**, *whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,*

Faith and grace.

**Romans 3:26**, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

**Romans 3:28**, Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

**Romans 3:30**, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

**Romans 4:3-5**, For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”<sup>4</sup> Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.<sup>5</sup> But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

**Romans 4:11**, And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,

**Romans 4:13**, For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Again, the emphasis is faith.

**Romans 4:16**, *Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.*

**Romans 4:20**, *He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,*

Grace and faith.

**Romans 5:1-2**, *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

**Romans 5:20-21**, *Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, <sup>21</sup>so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

**Romans 6:23**, *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

A unique message Paul is giving in a Jewish context.

They had been raised as all men assume that you appeal to God, satisfy God, and you please God by obeying His rules, or His laws, or conforming to His standards. Jews certainly were committed to that as a way of life.

Paul came along and preached a salvation that was a free gift, and you couldn't earn it, and that it was received not by works, but by faith. Faith itself was a gift of God. It was very for the Jews to accept.

**Romans 5:20**, says that the more sin, the more grace abounds, that became almost impossible for them to handle.

The Jews had a profound commitment to the law of God and to a works righteousness system that you do your thing and please God.

So, in **Romans 6:1-2**, they would accuse Paul of freeing everybody by his grace principle to run lawlessness, to just do whatever they want.

The more sin, the more grace, so you are just turning them loose to lawlessness. After all they believed that the law procured holiness. If you take away the law, and the standards, then you have eliminated the safeguard to holiness.

All they can see is the whole society running amuck under this kind of grace teaching.

They highly esteemed the law of God.

You can divide the law of God into three parts, as far as a Jew was concerned.

1. The ceremonial law,
2. The social law, and
3. The moral law.

They believed that you had to keep all those laws, that that was the standard of holiness. The only way you could get holy, and the only way you could stay holy was to keep the laws.

Rabbis, by the time of our Lord and the time of the ministry of Paul, had summed up all the Old Testament law into 613 commandments. In order to be perfectly holy and to maintain that holiness, you really had to work hard to keep up with 613 commandments.

The rabbis divided 613 commandments them into two parts.

1. Mandatory things to be done.
2. Prohibitory things not to be done.

There were 248 things you had to do.

They said it corresponds to the number of limbs on the body.  
We don't know what kind of body they had in mind!

These 248 mandatory things you had to do related to God, to the temple, sacrifices, vows, rituals, donations, sabbaths, animals for consumption, festivals, community, idolatry, war, social issues, family, judicial matters, legal rights, and slavery.

They had 365 prohibitory laws. Things you couldn't do. There was one of those for every solar day of the year.

They related to idolatry, lessons from history, blasphemy, temple worship, sacrifices, priests, diet, vows, agriculture, loans, business, slaves, justice, and relationships.

**Acts 15:10**, *Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?*

But they knew that the law in its original giving was divine that God had given these laws. God had given them for a reason, and so they were restricted to these laws as the laws of God and they believed that since God gave them, they needed to follow their leading.

In fact, there was even more than that to drive them to obey the law.

**Deuteronomy 27:26**, *Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law by observing them.’ “And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’ ”*

If you don't do all this law that's been given, you will be cursed.

**Deuteronomy 28:15**, *“But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:*

A very strong statement. If you don't do all of this, you are going to be cursed.

Come to the New Testament.

In the book of Romans, we have a little bit of an understanding about why the Jew felt so bound to the law of God. It was, after all, the law of God.

Paul alludes to this burden, and he must have borne it because he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees and totally zealous of the law.

**Galatians 3:10**, *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”*

Paul as a Jew understood what Deuteronomy was saying, that if you don't always do all this prescribed in the law then you are cursed. That is what God said.

The Jews were zealous of the law.

When the apostle Paul said, "Works are no issue. By the deeds of the law shall not flesh be justified."

Paul was literally stamping on the toes of every Jew who had zeal for the law of God. They found that very, very difficult to handle.

**Galatians 3:11-12**, *But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." <sup>12</sup> Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them.*

Paul even goes a step further and says and that's evident also from the Old Testament where it says the just shall live by faith. From Habakkuk.

So, the Old Testament on the one hand said if you don't keep all the law all the time with all your life and you break it in one place, you are cursed.

James knew that.

**James 2:10**, *For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.*

**Why did God give them a law they couldn't keep?**

To show them how sinful they were, and to drive them to the place where they would realize that to be just you must come to God by faith.

But they didn't want to come by faith, they thought in their self-righteousness they could earn their way.

They hung on to the system of works righteousness and ignored the faith principle. They were all under a curse.

To break one law of God is not like breaking one spoke in a bicycle wheel. You can break one spoke and keep riding.

Breaking a pane of glass. You shatter it in one spot and the whole thing comes down.

So, they were all cursed that is the bondage of the law.

Paul is very careful in explaining to them all the things needful for them to see the truth about the law.

**Romans 6:14**, *“Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace.”*

We are no longer under law in the curse of it.

**Galatians 3:13**, *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”),*

Paul says that we are not under the law anymore. We are under grace. We are out from under that curse.

At this point any thinking Jew would say, if the law can't save us, and the law can't sanctify us, and we want to get out from under the law, which can only curse us, then what good is the law?

If we can't be saved by the law - in **chapters 3 and 4**

If we can't be sanctified by the law - in **chapters 5 and 6**

If we are saved by our union with Christ,

If we are made holy by our union with Christ,

then why did God go to such tremendous extreme to give such a complex law?

When you say that we are supposed to get out from under the law and be free from the law, aren't you avoiding the place of the law?

Paul wants to explain all this in chapter 7.

Paul gives us in chapter 7 a very good explanation of the place of the law.

When we take chapter 3 through 8, we get a comprehensive view of the law and its role.

**What the law can't do for us?**

It can't save us chapters 3, 4 and 5.

**What the law can't do with us?**

It can't make us holy Chapter 6.

**What the law can't do to us?**

It can't condemn us Romans 7:1-6.

**What the law can do for us?**

It can convict us of sin Romans 7:7-13.

**What the law can't do in us?**

It can't deliver us from sin Romans 7:14-25.

**What the law can do by us?**

It can be fulfilled by us Romans 8:1-4.

**Romans chapters 3 to 8**, an absolutely comprehensive picture of the law.

Romans is a masterpiece of both human genius and the genius of God.

You can trace from chapter 3 the theme of faith.

You can trace the theme of grace.

You can trace the theme of justification.

You can trace the theme of sin.

You can trace the theme of righteousness.

You can trace the theme of law.

It is so rich that it staggers the mind. But among all the grandiose themes that are here, none is more gripping than the comprehensive treatment of the law and its role.

**Romans chapters 3 to 5** that it can't save us.

**Romans chapter 6** that it can't sanctify us.

**Romans 7:1-6** that it can't condemn us.

Now we are going to learn that the law can convict us in verses **7-13**.

This is the reason why God gave the law in the first place.

Secondly, God gave it in order to be fulfilled. It can be fulfilled by us. We will study that when we get to chapter 8 by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We are still under the law only it's the new covenant law and the New Testament law.

It's the moral law taken into the New Testament.

- We are not under the ceremonial law of Israel because we are not Israel.
- We are not under the social laws of Israel because we are not Israel.

But God's character hasn't changed, and we are still under His moral mandates that are given us in the New Testament, only we don't in our own strength try to carry them out. We carry them out of a new living relationship with Jesus Christ in the newness of spirit from the heart rather than the oldness of letter on the outside.

We still serve.

**Matthew 28:19-20**, *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

We must teach them the commandments.

We must teach them to obey!

For the first time we are free to obey, and to do so from the heart, because we have a new heart which can obey from the inside, whereas the old obedience was superficial and external alone.

So, yes, we are under God's law, but we serve from the heart.

**If the law can't save us and the law can't sanctify us, what good is the law?**

It's good because it can convict us.

**The law reveals sin.**

The first element of its convicting power.

*V 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 imagines this Jewish antagonist who's going to say,  
You have just said,

- we are dead to the law,
- the law is set aside,
- law can't save us,
- law can't sanctify us,
- Law was trying to condemn us,
- We just need to get rid of the law,
- We are free from its authority.

**Are you saying that the law is evil?**

Are you saying the holy law of God, which God gave to His people, which was a manifestation of His heart, and His mind, and His will, and His nature, and His purpose, are you saying that is evil?

If you say we are not under the law, and the law can't save us, and the law can't make us holy then the law must be evil?

Paul's answer is the strongest negative in the language. "God forbid"

No, no, no. No way.

Under no circumstances, outrageous thought, utter absurdity. No, the law of God is not sin.

On the contrary, it is not sin. It reveals sin.

- If there wasn't any law, there couldn't be any sin.
- If the sign doesn't say "Keep off the grass" and you are on the grass, you haven't broken any law.
- If there is no law about going a certain speed and you don't go a certain speed, you haven't broken any law because there isn't any law.

So, Paul says the law reveals sin.

You put the standard up and you know what sin is.

Now this makes it very clear that Paul is not talking about ceremonial issues or social issues.

He is talking about the moral law of God.

When you see law here, Paul is using it in the sense of God's moral standards.

We are called to the law not to be saved by it, but to be judged by it.

**Romans 3:20**, *Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

The law simply shows us what sin is by God's definition.

**Romans 4:15**, *because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.*

**Romans 5:13**, *(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.*

Without a law you haven't got any sin.

So, when God reveals the law, immediately men are measured by the standard, and they are found to be sinners.

**V 7**, *I would not have known sin except through the law.*

I don't think that he has in mind here in terms of knowing some sort of theoretical, theological, factual, dictionary definition of the nature and fact and existence of sin.

The law when I really understood it convicted me.  
Notice that the word "I" appears here!

Suddenly Paul is giving a personal testimony.  
He is sharing what is going on in his own heart.

Paul is giving a testimony of his conviction. This was part of the convicting work of the Spirit of God that culminated in the Damascus Road, and the days that followed in his blindness, when he came to grips with his own life, and the need of a Saviour, and embraced Jesus Christ, and was transformed from Saul the persecutor into Paul the preacher.

It is so important that you have this part of his spiritual journey because if you just have the Damascus Road, you might think that he was saved by God apart from his own will.

Because there is such a sovereign act of God on the Damascus Road that you wonder whether he had anything going on in his own heart at all.

Paul was going down the road killing Christians, the next thing you know he was buried in the dirt and ordained to the ministry.

God was bringing upon the Paul's heart a mounting kind of conviction about his sin as he began to see the law of God for what it really was.

Paul was a Pharisee.

He was a Jew.

He could read the law as well as anybody could read the law.

He could interpret the law in terms of the rabbinic traditions.

He had spent his life trying to keep the law.

He was very religious.

He would have one of those zealous for God.

**Romans 10:2-3**, *For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.<sup>3</sup> For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.*

Paul was very busy being like the Pharisee in Luke 18.

**Luke 18:11-12**, *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men— extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.<sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'*

He was self-righteous. He felt that he was earning his way in.

**Galatians 1:13-14**, *For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. <sup>14</sup>And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.*

His reputation as a zealous Jew was far and wide. Everybody knew about this zealous Jew by the name of Saul. He was the most zealous law keeper there was.

He gives a similar testimony with even more detail in Philippians chapter 3.

**Philippians 3:5-8**, *circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup>concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. <sup>7</sup>But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. <sup>8</sup>Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ*

The righteousness, which is in the law, blameless.”

By whose definition?

### **How could he say that?**

The same way the rich young man could come and said to Jesus.

**Matthew 19:20**, *The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?"*

### **How could a person ever say that?**

Because they had pushed the law of God totally to the external dimension, and it was only a question of what you did or didn't do.

They had reinterpreted it to accommodate their sinfulness. It was only a matter of the outside, and they never really dealt with inside.

They had circumscribed the outside of their life to look good, and as long as the law of God was only related to the outside, they thought they were fine.

Once Paul got a view of where the real problem was on the inside and where the law really wanted to apply itself on the inside, he saw what he was.

**Romans 7**, what you see here is Paul's pre-salvation conviction experience. Somehow along the way as the Lord was bringing him to the transformation of salvation.

There was not only the sovereign act of God on the Damascus Road, but there was an internal working by the same sovereign

God, bringing Paul to a tremendous awareness of the truth of the law itself.

The law was not just external, but the law was internal.

### **How do we know that?**

**V 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 picks out the tenth of the Ten Commandments, the commandment to covet.

Covet isn't something you do on the outside.

Covet is something you do inside.

Of all the Ten Commandments, this is the one that is internal. Of all the Ten Commandments, this is the one that speaks of the inside, about lust and desire.

Paul is saying that when I saw that what the law of God was saying had to do not just with my acts, but with my attitudes. It had to do with my lusting, desiring, and wanting what wasn't mine.

The conviction of the real thing.

When you might have somebody come along and say to you,  
“I have got to get my life right because I have noticed that I lie.”  
Or “I have noticed that I drink too much.”  
Or, “I have a temper and it’s bothering me.”  
That is fine but you don’t still understand the real issue of sin.

The issue of sin is not external.  
You might be able to control that on the outside through means  
other than the means of grace.

You might be able to stop your drinking on the outside just by  
going to de addiction centre.

You might be able to stop lying just by going to psychological  
counselling.

You might control your behaviour because you want to be  
accepted by a bunch of religious people who don’t lie, or  
whatever.

There are other ways to do it. But the only way you will ever  
clean up the evil desire of your heart is by a transformation by  
God.

That is what the law is intended to do.

There aren’t just external commands, but there are internal  
ones.

This is Paul’s experience, but not only his experience.

I think he speaks for all who come to true conviction.

I believe that when you come to Jesus Christ, you come to the conviction that not only do you have trouble controlling the outside, but you have got worse trouble controlling the inside.

All the unsaved who come to Christ come this way. They see the reality of the depth of their sin. Not only that they do wrong things, but that there is an inner corruption in their nature.