



World Christian Fellowship

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Romans 66 Free from the law to obey! Romans 7:1-6

Romans 7:1-6, *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? ²For 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. ³So 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. ⁴Therefore, 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. ⁵For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. ⁶But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*

We have been talking about Sanctification, the progressive spiritual development.

Does justification void the Law since it's by faith?

Talking about sanctification, if we are no longer under the Law, have we just voided the Law – not this time in the name of faith, but this time in the name of grace.

Which then poses the question.

What is the believer's relationship to the Law?

Romans 7 really gives us a full answer to that.

Chapter 6, from verses 15 to 23, addresses that we are not under the Law as a dominating master, but under grace. Which we are all grateful for. When law is our dominating master, it will destroy us. It will render us guilty before God and bring us to damnation. We are under grace as an operative principle through the work of Christ and our faith in Him.

We have a new relationship to sin Paul goes on to say in verses 15 to 23. We used to be the slaves of sin, now we are the slaves of righteousness.

- Our relation to the Law before we were saved was one of condemnation.
- Our relationship to the Law now is one of obedience.

- We used to be the slaves of sin, living lies that endlessly violated the Law.
- We have now become slaves of righteousness. We live lives of obedience to the Law.

That's what being a slave of righteousness means. Because the only way we know what is righteous is by revelation of God in His Law.

So, we know we have a new relationship to the Law. Before, we lived in violation of it.

Now we live in submission to it.

But what about that statement "you are not under law?"

How far can we push that?

That is a very important question for us to answer.

We will look at the answer that really unfolds at the beginning of Romans chapter 7.

1. Proverb,
2. Analogy,
3. Application, and
4. Submission.

1. Proverb.

V 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?*

Paul uses “brethren” here, indicating his sensitivity to a subject that could be filled with a lot of emotion.

Paul being tender in trying to move them along graciously. But he does point up the difficulty of being ignorant on the issue.

Paul is talking to people who understand the priority of the Law, who have an Old Testament mentality, or who have even, in a Gentile environment. They have heard the apostle Paul talk about the role that the Law plays.

Paul says that I am answering the question of what is your relationship to the Law?

The Law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives. Anybody who knows law knows that.

The Law is binding only as long as somebody lives. When you are dead, the Law has no power over you.

That is the nature of law.

An obvious statement.

A self-evident truth.

The Law doesn't apply to dead people but to the living.

A person is subject to the Law only as long as he is alive. Anyone knows the Law is intended for the benefit of earthly man and binds only the living.

We have these endless trials of murderers, but we don't try anybody who was killed by the police. Once they are dead, there is no trial because the Law can't be brought to bear on the dead. A simple thought, but file it in your mind.

The proverb begins to answer that the Law only has jurisdiction over a person when that person is alive.

2. Analogy.

Then he takes an analogy to try to kind of explain that a little bit.

For example, let's just pick one law:

The law of marriage.

V 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.*

This is a very simple analogy to help us understand the axiom that the Law only applies when people are alive.

A married woman the Greek word is **hupandros**, means under a man, which emphasizes the role that women play in submission to their husbands.

She is “subject to” a man – that’s the word for being married.

By that, she is bound by law – **dedetai**. It’s a perfect tense. She is an ongoing relationship of legal binding to her husband.

This is seen here as a permanent bond, and there is no release.

This is what the law says: Wife is bound by law to her husband while he is living. Now, this has found its way into the marriage ceremony where we hear people say that they will be faithful to their covenant until death do us part. That’s the key thought.

Marriage is for life.

One man, one woman for life.

That is what marriage is.

That is what the covenant of marriage is, and the law is binding.

If her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning her husband.

How free is she?

She is completely, totally, and absolutely free.

1 Corinthians 7:39, *A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.*

Paul talks about a widow being free to marry in the Lord. She is as free as if she was never married. There are no residual obligations to dead people. You are completely free. There is no further obligation.

1 Timothy 5:14-15, *Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. ¹⁵For some have already turned aside after Satan.*

If you are young and you are widowed, find a husband to care for you and protect you and stay home and raise your children.

Don't get caught in the trap of running around loose in society with all the bad things that can happen to a woman in that kind of situation.

Death ends the law that binds two people permanently together in marriage.

Everybody understands.

A very simple analogy.

V 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.*

Life and covenant marriage valid until death. After death, there is no binding at all. It's not trying to give us a complete understanding of marriage-remarriage, nothing about divorce.

This isn't the text where you go to get your picture of what God tolerates in terms of marriage and divorce, and there aren't any exception clauses.

The law binds a man to a woman for life, and when death comes, it's over. Death ends the rule of Law.

The proverbial is the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives. Marriage is simply an analogy by which you can see that.

V 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.

So, death ends the marriage, so she is free.

Whereas as long as the person lives, she is bound by the law.

3. Application.

V 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.*

The “therefore” is the transition, and the connector.

- You used to have a contract.
- You used to have a covenant.
- You used to be bound to the Law.
- You used to have this obligation to which you were mandated to bring about fulfilment.

But that’s changed.

You also were made to die to the Law.

Literally, you were put to death.

You were killed in regard to the Law. It's a violent phrase, a violent word used to recall even the violent death of Jesus Christ.

The Law has no more dictatorship over you.

The Law has no more power over you.

The curse of the Law has ended because it cannot make any claim on you if you are dead.

It ceases to have any authority in your life.

How are we to understand this?

The Law as a condemning power.

You are no longer have any interest or obligation as a condemning power it has no authority over you but only as a moral responsibility.

All the Law can do is kill you. But once you have died, it has no more power.

Now, it's going to do that to everyone.

Either you are going to die under the condemnation of the Law yourself, or Christ is going to die under the condemnation of the Law for you, and you therefore in Him.

V 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.

“You were made dead,”

In the original. *“You were killed; you were put to death.”*

You didn’t put yourself to death.

You were put to death by the marvellous miracle of being in Christ in His execution.

The offering of the body of Christ on the cross was your death and my death, the death of all who would ever or will ever believe.

Hebrews 10:10, *By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

In that one offering, when He took the full fury of the Law for us, we were delivered from the Law as a source of condemnation.

This is what we learned back in chapter 6.

Romans 6:4-6, *Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the*

likeness of His resurrection,⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be ^[a]done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin

Sin is no longer is our master!

Romans 6:14, *For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*

This is the very heart of understanding the Christian gospel.

We can't be justified by the Law because we can't keep the Law.

- ✓ The Law is holy, just, and good.
 - ✓ The Law is perfect.
 - ✓ The Law has a right to set the standard.
 - ✓ The Law has a right to hold every human to the standard.
 - ✓ The Law has a right to punish every violation of the standard because that's consistent with God's absolute holiness.
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- God cannot overlook any sin.
 - God cannot overlook any iniquity.

Every sin ever committed by every person who has ever lived will be punished. Everyone!

Either that punishment falls upon the sinner, or it falls upon the substitute. For us who put our trust in Christ, we are placed into Christ in His own death.

Jesus, in death, satisfies the Law.
The Law demands death.

Jesus dies the death the Law demands, pays the penalty in full, and so we are no longer under the Law in terms of its condemnation.

Jesus Christ redeemed us not from the moral element of the Law, but from the curse of the Law by being made a curse for us.

Galatians 3:10-13, *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." ¹¹ But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." ¹² Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them." 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"),*

By His blood, by His flesh, by His cross, by the body of His flesh all throughout the epistles of Paul here, "Through the body of

Christ we have been delivered from the penalty of the Law, from the condemnation, the damnation, the just punishment of the Law.”

The Law can't make you holy.

The Law can't be kept.

Therefore, it cannot be a means of salvation. It is only a means of initially condemnation. But Christ has taken that punishment for us.

Galatians 2:20, *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

V 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.*

There was a sense in which we were married to the Law. That's the analogy.

We were bound to the Law, bound to the obligation the Law demanded from us, bound to maintain the Law, to keep the Law, and we would be judged on our faithfulness to the Law.

But when we died in Christ, the law has no longer any hold on us. It cannot condemn us.

It has been satisfied. The punishment has been paid in full. We now have a whole new covenant relationship.

We have a new husband if you want to use the analogy.

We have been joined to someone else, *“even to Him who was raised from the dead.”*

We are united with Christ in His death, in His burial, and in His resurrection life.

We are no longer slaves to sin.

We are freed from sin’s dominion.

It is no longer master over us.

Romans 6:19, *I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.*

We used to be slaves of sin, free from righteousness.

Now we are free from sin, slaves of righteousness.

So, we live this new life.

We have a new marriage. In this sense and this sense alone, the Law lays no claim to us. This is the greatness and the glory of our salvation.

4. Submission.

V4, “in order that we might bear fruit for God”

In order that we might now do something we never could do, when we were bound by the Law, and that is obey the Law.

When we were bound by the Law, when we lived under the Law dictatorship, authority, its demands, its commands, its mandates but unable to obey it and therefore under its condemnation, the one thing we could not do was bear any fruit to God.

The Law was given then to condemn us.

The Law was given to cause our sin to be revealed.

Romans 7:9-10, *I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. ¹⁰And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.*

As long as I didn't know the Law of God, I had no real definition of sin. But when the Law arrived and I understood it, then sin was everywhere alive, and I saw myself for what I really was dead man. Sin deceived me and destroyed me.

So, when you are in covenant with the Law, you are in a situation of condemnation and death, and you cannot bear fruit unto God.

By the deeds of the Law, no flesh is justified.
They that are in the flesh cannot please God.

There is nothing in us that is good or can be good, but suddenly now, by faith in Christ, we have a whole new Master –Christ Himself. We have a whole new life resurrection life. We have a whole new capacity. We can bear fruit unto God.

Philippians 1:11, *being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

We are filled with the very righteousness that is defined and described in the Law of God. It's just a total, absolute reversal of our former condition.

Colossians 1:10-12, *that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing*

in the knowledge of God;¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

Justification does not lead to sin but to holiness.

Justification leads to a new kind of slavery.

You are not justified and given saving grace in order that you can run amok so that grace may abound.

It doesn't happen and it can't happen because you are transformed.

Your old life is dead, and you have risen to a new kind of life, and you now love holiness. You are no longer under the tyranny of the Law, but you can now do for the first time what you never could do in the past, and that is you can obey the Law and bear fruit unto God.

Because you died in Christ and the tyranny of the Law is broken, you now live in Christ and for the first time can fulfil the Law.

V 5, *For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.*

All that ever happened to you before you came to Christ was that you were living under the Law, but you couldn't obey the Law.

All the Law did was arouse your sinful passions.
The Law stimulates sin.

That's what Paul said in Romans 7:9.
Once you come across the Law of God, it just exacerbates your sin. It's almost like finding out what sin is so that you can do it since you can't restrain yourself.

All the Law of God does is stir up sin.
All the Law of God does is exacerbates sin.

You have such sinful impulses. it's like putting a sign out in front of your children that says, "Don't touch this." They probably wouldn't if the sign wasn't there.

But if the sign is there, you can be certain they will touch it.

Along comes the glory of the gospel justification.

Justification doesn't lead to more sin that grace may abound. Quite the contrary. Because you have died, you have a whole new life that loves righteousness and holiness an expresses its freedom in obedience, not disobedience.

You now have a capability to keep the Law for the first time ever and to bear fruit unto God.

What does justification produce?

Justification produces

- ✓ Holiness,
- ✓ Righteousness, and
- ✓ Fruitfulness.

The very opposite of what you used to live in when, by sinful passion, aroused by the Law, you were simply bearing fruit for death.

Conclusion.

V 6, But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

That's the heart of everything.

The Law is still holy, and it is just and good.

In the past, when we were bound to the Law, we tried to serve in what Paul calls the oldness of the letter. When we were in the flesh, when we were dominated by sinful passion, aroused by the Law, when the members of our body were producing

only fruit unto death, we were trying to serve by the letter of the Law.

We were trying to activate out some kind of religious moral behaviour. It was just superficial. It was just on the top, on the surface. It was just by the letter of the Law.

Now that we have been released from the Law, we no longer function the way we used to.

We are no longer slaves bound only to the superficial.
We serve in the newness of the Spirit.

Same Law, but for the first time we can do it from the heart in the newness of the Spirit, from deep within a transformed heart.

This isn't new!
This is simply new covenant theology.

Jeremiah 31 is the great new covenant section of Scripture.

Jeremiah 31:33, *But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

That's what it means to be saved.

It doesn't mean that you are free from the Law.

It means that you are no longer under the condemnation of the Law.

You are no longer stuck being bound to the Law and guilty of its violation and only capable of serving the letter of the Law – that is the specific aspect of the Law.

You now have the Law of God inside of you, on your heart it is written.

Ezekiel 36 which is the other critical Old Testament and new covenant text. In verse 25 of

***Ezekiel 36:25-27**, Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.*

Do you remember the words of Paul?

2 Corinthians 3:6, *who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the [a]Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

What is the believer's relationship to the Law?

We are not under law.

We are under grace in terms of the lost condemnation.

The Law cannot condemn us.

We are no longer alive to the Law in the sense that we have any covenant with the Law that binds us to suffer the consequence of violating it. We have died. The Law has done its deed to us.

- Justice has been rendered.
- The Law has been satisfied.

The Law is holy, just, and good. It has been satisfied. It had a right to call for our death. We died in Christ. We are now free from that relationship, married to another, namely to Christ.

We now are no longer under condemnation by the Law, but we are still under obligation to the Law.

For the first time not trying to keep it in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit that comes from a transformed heart.

The word "newness" is *kainos*, new in quality not *neos*, new in chronology.

We can join with David and say, "Oh, how I love Your Law.

We can say with the apostle Paul, “The Law is holy. The commandment is holy, righteous, and good, and spiritual.”

To be free from the Law is to be free from its penalty, not free from its morality, its spirituality, its holiness, its righteousness, nor its goodness.

The Law is still binding on us, and sanctification comes as we hear, understand, and obey the Law.

Any believer who doesn’t know the Law of God, doesn’t know the Word of God, is seriously hindered in that sanctification process.

We can now, for the first time since our salvation, serve the Law of God and therefore serve God Himself, for the Law reflects God.

We can serve from the heart in the newness of Spirit and produce fruit that pleases God.

We serve not because the Law is our master and we have to or be damned, but we can’t.

We serve, and we can, because Christ is our husband, and we have the power by the Spirit within us to do what we love to do and what we know please the One we love.

1 John 2:3, *Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.*

Everything has changed.

God's Law – still holy, righteous, good and that Law will propel people, as it always has, and will continue to do into an eternal hell because they deserve its punishment for violating it.

Or that Law will be the delight and the joy of the believer's life. We, having been delivered from its condemnation, seek to honour its reflection of our own God, the God we love.