

• LESSON 12 (June 29) •

Romans 7:1-25

The New Way
of the Spirit

“**F**or sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!” (Rom 6:14-15)

To illustrate this foundation principle, Paul used the figure of slavery as an example in Romans 6.

Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey...? (6:16a)

To further illustrate the same point in Romans 7, Paul uses the institution of marriage as a second example.

Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress. (7:1-3)

While our grasp on the nature of marriage can certainly be enhanced from Paul’s illustration, it’s important to remember that it is an illustration used to make a point within a much larger context. If you are a Christian, the principle reflected upon in Romans 7:1-3 applies to your heavenly Father’s expectation that you would now walk in newness of life.

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in



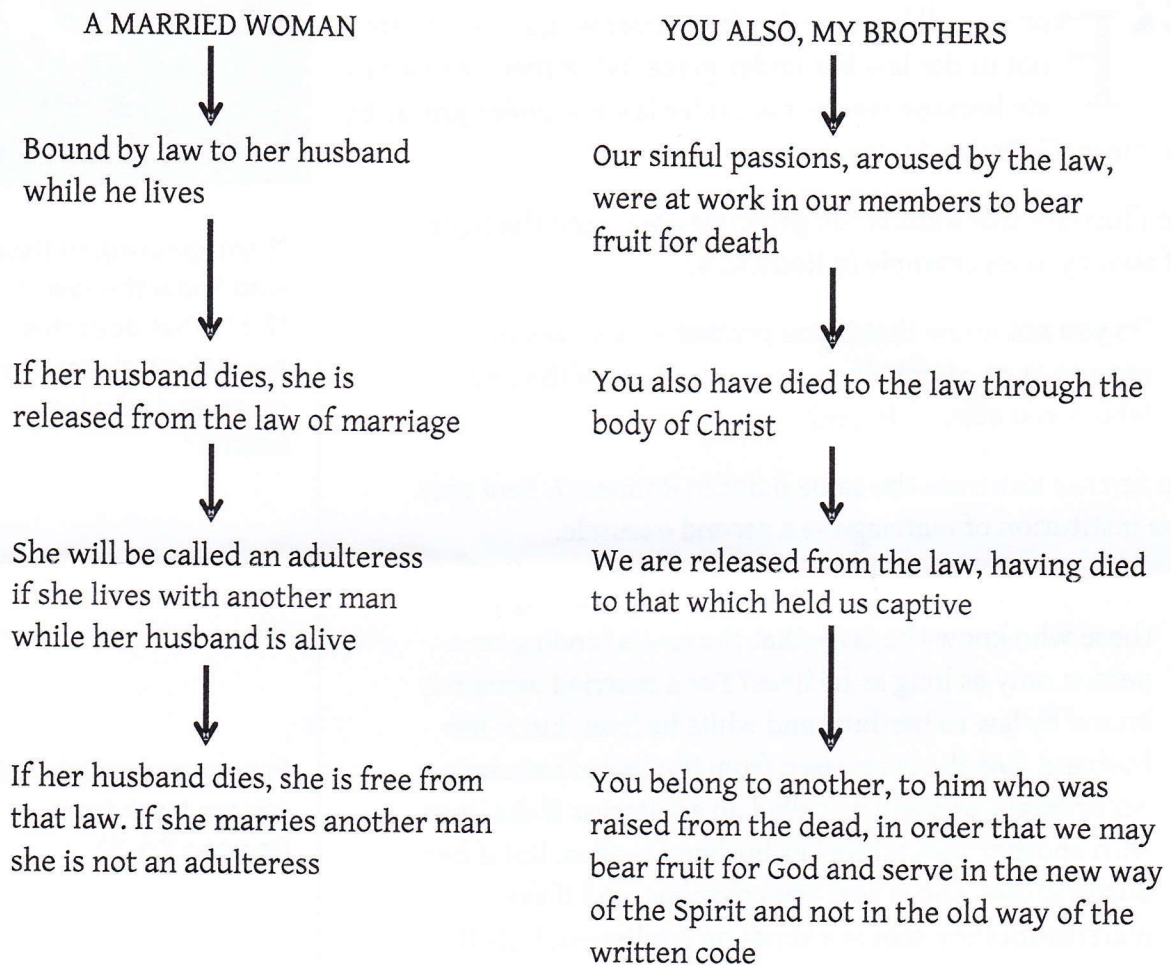
“I am speaking to those who know the law...”
(7:1) What does this parenthetical statement mean and why is it helpful?

In your own words, what can we learn from Romans 7:1-3?

order that we may bear fruit for God. For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code. (7:4-6)

Take the time to appreciate this God-breathed parallel.

PRINCIPLE: The law is binding on a person only as long as he lives.



- ❖ In what way were “our sinful passions, aroused by the law...at work in our members to bear fruit for death”?
- ❖ How did we die to the law which held us captive?
- ❖ In contrast to “the old way of the written code,” what is this “new way of the Spirit”?

This leads Paul to anticipate another question and to provide some very enlightening Spirit-led insight into the purpose of law and its connection to sin.

What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."
(7:7)

How would you summarize this foundational point in your own words?

But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in

Why would anyone even suggest that "the law is sin"?

What is covetousness?

Why would Paul describe sin as something that comes alive, seizes, and kills?

my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (7:8-24)

We have just been given invaluable insight into the insidious nature of sin. What have we learned from these very honest reflections and confessions of Paul?

CLOSING THOUGHT: My record under law is Adam's record. Like Adam and Eve, I once was alive. I had not presented myself as a slave to sin. But the time came when I willfully transgressed the law. Sin came alive and I died. Once I travel this forbidden pathway, law is of no redemptive help. Even though I have the desire to do what is right, death dominantly reigns over and me. "Thanks be to God" that rescue is available "through Jesus Christ our Lord" (7:25a)! Paul will turn his full attention to the blessed scope of this rescue in Romans 8.

Why would Paul write, "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh" (7:18)?

Romans 7:20 puts into words a devastating realization. In what way does sin dwell within us?

The chapter concludes with this summary statement: "So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin" (7:25b). What does this mean?