

As we look to Romans 7, we really need to review the foundational scripture that underpins Paul's arguments

Let's begin, not in Romans 7, but look instead at Romans 6:1-14

- This passage was the culmination of Paul's claim that those who are spiritually dead can have life – through a union with Jesus

READ Romans 6:1-14

- Also, it is the launching pad for another argument that affirms the freedom to live a righteous life. This claim is developed in the next two chapters of Romans – Chapters 7 & 8
- Brief line of thought we will trace
 - Not under the Law, but under grace (Romans 6:14)
 - How can we legally be freed from the Law? (Romans 7:1-3)
 - Why must we be freed from the Law? (Romans 7:4-6)
 - Explore – Is the Law evil? Romans (7:7-12)
 - What happens to a believer who tries to relate to God through the Law? (Romans 7:12-25)
 - What happens to a believer who relates to God through the Holy Spirit? (Romans 8:1-8)
 - What is the source of our victory experience? Romans 8:9-17)

Paul recognized that believers still feel the pull of sin. That at times when we want to respond to God, we are actually choosing the opposite.

- What does it take to live victoriously?
- How do we experience the flow of the divine power?

Review Romans 6:14

This is the scripture that serves as the basis for our understanding of what Paul is saying in Chapters 7 & 8.

Just as the concept of spiritual death, colored our study of Romans 1-3, chapters 6-8 are set against a background that recognizes that a believer has “two natures.”

Hand out chart 1 “The Believer”

- Man’s human nature got twisted in “the fall” – passion for every way byt God’s
- That is still with us
- Jesus provides us with a “new nature” – a new creation with capacity and desire to respond to God
- These natures are at war – one oriented to good and one oriented to evil
- Reactions, motives, desires, values, and behavior are all channels through which God will express himself through righteousness or evil will express itself through sin.

Now let’s look at Romans 7

How can we legally be free from the Law? **Read Romans 7:1-3**

- Paul uses marriage as an illustration

- A couple is bound to each other until the death of one of the partners. At that point the marriage contract is no longer valid
- When voided, the marriage contract convicts the parties of sin
- Our union with Christ is real too. His death legally released us from any obligation to the Law.
- We died to the Law through the body of Christ – and therefore voids past obligations to live under it Romans 6:14
- Gentiles no longer subservient to false Gods and pagan customs
- Jewish Christians freed from dependence on the Law to serve Christ

Why must we be freed from the Law? Read Romans 7:4-6

- Christ's Body – two views 1. Christ's body as offering for atonement. 2. New community into which believers are incorporated.
- Central to Bible's whole teaching on the Law and the believer
- Christ removes the rule-dominated way of life
- That rule-dominated life aroused sinful passions
- Through Christ, the Law that energizes sinful passions is replaced by the Spirit which energizes the new nature
- "Bear Fruit" continues marriage analogy

Hand out chart 2 "Two Ways of Relating to God"

If the Law is so closely linked to sin, is the Law evil? Read Romans 7:7-12

- Paul argues that the Law allows us to recognize sin – draws us to sin! Spiritually fatal.
- Cookie example – the forbidden seems more desirable

- Approaching life interpreted through the Law (do's and don'ts) energizes our old sinful nature
- However, when we approach life in God's new way, challenge = opportunity, let's God express himself through us
- **Law is a divine gift that makes man a moral being – producing an inward conflict that may be spiritually fatal.**

What is the experience of the believer who places himself under the Law? **Read Romans 7:13-25.**

- Paul digresses and looks back on his own experience
- After his conversion, he tried to live the Christian life under the Law
- In this passage Paul shares his discouragement – no matter how hard he tried, sin kept expressing itself in him.
- **The Law is a divine instrument - sin creates the moral havoc within**
- We have experienced the same thing. We wanted to do good, but ended in failure and shame.

Read Paraphrase – Romans 7:15-23

I don't understand my own actions. I don't do what I want –I do the very thing I hate. Because I don't want to do the things I do, it's clear that I agree that what the Law says is good and right. I'm that much in harmony with God, anyway. But somehow I'm not in control of my own actions! Some sinful force within me takes over and acts through my body. I know that nothing good exists in the old me. The sin nature is so warped that even when I desire good, I somehow can't do it. Sin, dwelling in me, is to blame for this situation. It all seems hopeless! The fact is that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. In my inmost self I delight in God's law. But another principle wars with the desire to obey, and brings me as a captive to my knees before the principle of indwelling sin.

- Paul declares his failure
- The sin nature had retained enough control over him to make impossible to keep the Law and realize the holiness and goodness it reveals.
- Thus, Paul ends chapter 7 with a cry – “What a wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” Romans 7:24

Paul is quick to answer his own question

Read Romans 8:1-8

In Romans 8:1-2 Paul answers his own question – “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Jesus Christ, because through Christ the law of the Spirit set me free from the law of sin and death.”

What happens to a believer who relates to God through the Holy Spirit?

- Paul realized that, even as a believer, he could not keep the Law. Therefore, he quit trying – accepting that he was a hopeless sinner, unable to please God
- Instead, Paul realized the power of the Spirit. He quit trying to do it himself and let God express His divine will through him
- Jesus enters the struggling life of sinful man, and through Him the righteous requirements of the Law are met (vs 4)
- Sinful man has mind set on what nature desires – those living in the Spirit have their mind set on what the spirit desires (vs 5)
- The mind of sinful man is death – the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace (vs 6)
- The sinful mind is hostile to God (vs 7)
- Sinful nature cannot please God (vs 8)

What is the source of our victory experience? **Read Romans 8:9-17**

- We have no obligation to the Law – but respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit

- Baseball example -- 1st base = Law's righteous requirements – keep eye on the ball, on Jesus – gets you to 1st
- Relationship is key – deeper relationship with Jesus = more control of life by the Spirit
- Spirit gives life to our mortal bodies (vs 11)
- God provides resurrection to those who “live in accordance with the Spirit and have their minds set on what the Spirit desires” (vs 15)

Hand out chart 3 – “Comparison: Romans 7 & 8”

- Comparison of the scriptures we covered
- Highlights the difference in the two natures Paul describes