

14. ROMANS SERIES: Freedom From the Law

Romans 7:1-6

Please Read Romans 7:1-6

In this chapter Paul is continuing to deal with the consequences and fruits of justification. Previously he has dealt with peace, freedom from sin, holiness of life and life everlasting, and now he comes to freedom from the Law.

This chapter marks a return to Paul's argument of Romans 6:14, *'For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.'* Before explaining what he meant in that verse, Paul believed it necessary to explain that justification by faith was not to be used as an excuse or an occasion for sin. Now he returns his focus to the Law and its place in the Christian life.

Verse 1: The apostle is writing to people who should know (cf 1 Cor 6:2,9,16,19; Rom 6:3) that we are no longer under law, but under grace (6:14). He is full of emotion as he speaks to those who are his brethren in Christ, some of whom may have doubts regarding salvation by grace alone. These people know the Mosaic Law and should know that they no longer need to fear the Law of God.

The Law only has dominion over a person while he lives, implying that when a person is dead, he is free from the Law's authority and dominion. When a person is dead, the Law can no longer demand obedience from that person. In other words, the dead person is freed from the authority of the Law and no longer answers to it.

Verses 2,3: In these two verses Paul uses an illustration of marriage to underscore his point in verse one.

When a woman is married, the marriage bond is for life according to Law (Gen 2:22-24; Mal 2:13-16) and if she breaks that bond by marrying another without Biblical grounds for divorce, she becomes an adulteress (Mk 10:12). Though the marriage bond is for life, it does not extend beyond death, so that if the husband dies the woman is free to marry

another and is not to be regarded as an adulteress. The Law of marriage was dissolved by the death of the husband and no longer applies to her.

Verse 4: As it is death that dissolves the marriage bond, so it is death that dissolves the legal bond between the Law and us. The death of the husband had freed the woman from her requirements to the Law regarding marriage and so the death of the believer in Christ has freed the believer from his legal requirements to the Law (7:4; Gal 2:19-21). That death is the death of Christ our Substitute, His death being the believer's death to both sin and the Law (6:8).

Through the body of Christ crucified, our debt to the Law was paid in full (Is 53:4,10; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; Eph 2:15,16), the Law requiring nothing more of us and therefore rendering us dead to the Law. We no longer need to find a righteousness that the Law demands (10:15; Gal 3:12), for it has been fully met in the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore no longer prescribes the conditions of our salvation. Indeed, the Law has no authority over us whatsoever as Christians, for we have died to it, as we have also died to sin.

We have been made dead to the Law in order to be united with another and that is Christ (Col 3:3). Therefore the Law, as sin, no longer has any dominion over us. We have been placed, by being in Christ, outside of the Law's dominion. This doesn't leave us lawless however, for the Lord Jesus Christ is now our Lord and Master and we live in such a way under His authority that we bear fruit of obedience to Him (6:21,22; Gal 5:22,23; Eph 2:10; 5:9; Tit 3:1).

Verse 5: In this verse Paul uses an argument similar to that of Romans 6:18-20. When we were governed by our sinful nature, the Law aroused in our faculties sinful passions (7:7-13) that revealed themselves in bad fruit (Gal 5:19-21), resulting in death (6:21). What the Law did was to prove us sinners and to condemn us as such.

NOTE: INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY QUESTION: What is serving 'in the oldness of the letter (7:6)?'

Verse 6: By means of our death with Christ, we have been released from the authority of the Law, for it no longer has any dominion over us whatsoever. Sin's debt is paid to the Law and Justice of God, and sin's dominion is also removed, and so our position before God has changed tremendously.

The Law provided no means whereby a sinner was able to obey its requirements, though it outlined how a person was to order their lives and what God required of them. All attempts at obedience to the Law were futile and the Law was an impossible means of salvation. But now free from the dominion of sin and also the Law, we are able by the work of the Spirit within us to serve the Lord acceptably.

We no longer try to keep the written Law that condemned us in order to obtain life. Rather, we now seek to obey the One who has saved us and to whom we are now bound as willing

bond-slaves and this by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY

How did the Law bring death?

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