

Romans 7:1-6
Death Terminates a Former Relationship

Introduction: ML-J spent 8 chapters on these 6 verses. We won't be doing that!

1) Illustration: physical death brings social freedom—7:1-3

- a) The question set forth—7:1 ¹ *Or do you not know, brothers* (all believers)—*for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on [kurieu,w] a person only as long as he lives?*
- i) He assumes they are familiar with this universal principle. Paul knows that some of his readers were taught the OT Scriptures, while his Gentile readers were also familiar with law.
 - ii) Only death can terminate the bond between a person and the law. (FSB)
 - iii) This was also a well-known principle taught by the Rabbis: “If a person is dead, he is free from the Torah and the fulfilling of the commandments.”
- b) The illustration—7:2
- This example is not to be used for teaching about marriage, divorce, and remarriage. That is not its intended purpose.
- i) Permanently bound: ² *For [ga,r] a married [u[pandroj] (under the authority of her husband) woman is bound [pf. pass. de,w] by law to her husband while he lives,*
(1) Cf. Gen. 3:15; Eph. 5:22-33
 - ii) Permanently released: *but [de,] if [3rd class, hypothetical] her husband dies [avpoqnh,skw] she is released [pf. pass. katarge,w] (cf. 6:6; 7:6) from the law of marriage.*
- c) The implication—7:3
- i) Hypothetical live husband: ³ *Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress*
(1) *if [3rd class, hypothetical] she lives with another man while her husband is alive.*
 - ii) Hypothetical dead husband: *But ...*
(1) *if [3rd class, hypothetical] her husband dies [avpoqnh,skw], she is free [evleu,qeroj] from that law,*
(2) *and if [3rd class, hypothetical] she marries [gi,nomai] another man she is not an adulteress.*
- d) **Principle # 1:** Death severs one's bondage to the law. Severance from the law allows one to enter a new kind of relationship with God.

2) Application: spiritual death brings spiritual freedom—7:4-6

- a) The principle and its purposes—7:4 ⁴ *Likewise, my brothers, you also have died [aor. pass. qanato,w] (been put to death by God) to the law* (cf. 6:4)
- God gave the Law and God also put us to death to the Law. The Law itself did not die.
- i) The how? *through [dia,] the body* (the death and resurrection) *of (the) Christ, (not His perfect life, but His perfect death)*

- (1) The death of the believer took place when by faith that person became identified with the crucified Christ (cf. 6:3–7). (R. Mounce)
- ii) The purposes:
 - (1) **Immediate** purpose: *so that [eivj] you may belong [gi,nomai] to another,*
 - (a) Specifically: *to him (Christ) who has been raised from the dead (by God),* (cf. Eph. 5:25)
 - (2) **Ultimate** purpose: *in order that [i[na] we may bear fruit [karpofore,w] for God.* (cf. 6:22)
- b) **NEGATIVELY**; what we **were**—7:5 (i.e. in Adam, apart from Christ)
 - i) The when? ⁵ *For while we were living in the flesh,*
 - ii) The what? *our sinful passions/inclinations [pa,qhma], aroused by the law, were at work in our members* (our natural faculties; addressed more in 7:7-13) (cf. Gal. 5:24)
 - (1) The law stimulates sinful passions by arousing man’s innate rebelliousness against God.
 - (a) “The very law that prohibits them encourages us to do them, because **we** are impure.” (ML-J)
 - (2) The law increases the seriousness of sin by showing how it violates God’s will.
 - iii) The why? *to [eivj] bear fruit [karpofore,w] for death.* (addressed more in 7:14-25)
 - (1) Every person will bear fruit, either for death or God.
- c) **POSITIVELY**: what has happened to us—7:6 (i.e. in Christ)
 - i) A **permanent** action: ⁶ *But now we are released [pf. pass. katarge,w] from the law,*
 - (1) Just like the woman illustrated in 7:1-3.
 - ii) A **liberating** action: *having died [avpoqnh,skw] to that which held us captive [kate,cw],*
 - iii) A **purposeful** action: *so that [w[ste] we serve [douleu,w]*
 - (1) Positively: *in the new way [kaino,thj]* (cf. 6:4) *of the Spirit*
 - (2) Negatively: *and not in the old way [palaio,thj] of the written code.*
 - iv) God has granted to us to have a new desire and ability to obey Him.
- d) **Principle # 2**: Death severs one’s bondage to the law. Severance from the law allows one to enter a new kind of relationship with God.
- e) These last 2 verses set the stage for the rest of chapters 7-8.

3) Things we need to remember:

- a) **Challenge**: We could never produce fruit unto God unless that relationship with the law has been changed and we have entered into a new relationship with Christ. (ML-J)
- b) **Hope**: The rule of the law has been severed, and believers are now married to Christ. The law cannot exercise authority over a dead person.
- c) **Encouragement**: We are now free to serve our new master and husband in a new way; i.e. in the Spirit.

Romans 7:7-12
Convicting People of Sin By Means of God's Word

Introduction: This appears to be Paul's autobiography of being convicted of his sin before God. Our sin may not be the exact same sin as Paul's (covetousness), but our sin is just as sinful before the holy God. We all stand in need of the same convicting work of the Word and the Spirit if we are to be genuinely born again. The Moody Bible Commentary says it well: Paul is describing the futile experience of an unbeliever who seeks to conquer the power of sin by keeping his moral standards in his own power.

1) There are rhetorical questions we need to think about—7:7a

- a) The rhetorical questions:
 - i) *What then shall we say?*
 - ii) *That the law is sin [a`marti,a]?*
- b) The emphatic answer: *By no means!*

2) The word of God unmasks the real nature of our sin—7:7b-8

- a) The definition of sin comes through our knowledge of the Word—7:7b
 - i) Don't throw the Word of God away! *Yet ...*
 - ii) *if it had not been for the law, I would not have known [ginw,skw] sin [a`marti,a].*
 - (1) The Word of God sets or defines our moral boundaries. Without the God-given boundaries, sin lies dormant or relatively inactive.
 - iii) *For I would not have known [oivda] what it is to covet [evpiqumi,a] if the law had not said, "You shall not covet [evpiqume,w]." (Ex. 20:17)*
 - (1) We may have a theoretical knowledge of sin as a principle, but there is a specific knowledge of sin as our understanding of God's Word grows.
 - (a) The commandment produces a diving board from which sin is all too ready to jump off.
 - (2) Coveting is an **internal** sin, which is just as sinful as the **external** sins.
 - (3) Will we acknowledge that we ourselves are sinful inside and out?
 - iv) There is an absolute standard, and you and I violate it.
 - (1) How contrary to the government school philosophy (and sadly, some professing Christians) of our day.
- b) The greater our knowledge of the Word the greater the awareness of our sin—7:8a
 - i) Sin is powerful: *But sin [a`marti,a], seizing an opportunity [avformh,] (established a starting point) through the commandment, produced [katerga,zomai] in me all kinds of covetousness [evpiqumi,a].*
 - (1) Similar to your vehicle engine is very quiet while idling, but once you step on the accelerator, it becomes very obvious. (ML-J)
- c) Ignorance of the Word makes us less aware of our sin—7:8b

- i) *For apart from the law, sin [a`marti,a] lies dead.*
- ii) “Sin is always active, but it is hyperactive when the unregenerate human heart encounters God’s law/Word.” (Moody BC)
- d) From a human perspective law is mistakenly viewed as a restriction that in turn causes resentment and gives rise to rebellion. (Robert Mounce)

3) The word of God reveals our spiritual death—7:9-11

- a) We assume we are doing fairly well in our ignorance of God’s Word—7:9
 - i) ⁹*I was once alive* (self-satisfied, self-righteous, self-confident) *apart from the law* (cf. Phil. 3:6), *but when the commandment came* (into Paul’s awakened conscience), *sin [a`marti,a] came alive* (again) [**avnaza,w**] *and I died* [**avpoqnh,skw**] (finally aware of his own inherent inability to do good and spiritual deadness, with the accompanying hopelessness).
 - ii) There eventually comes a time in the process leading to salvation when the reality of the teaching of the Word strikes home.
 - iii) I was dead before, but I did not know. Now I found out that I was spiritually dead. (A. T. Robertson)
- b) Knowledge of God’s Word makes us more aware of our spiritual deadness—7:10-11
 - i) ¹⁰*The very commandment that promised life proved* [**eu`ri,skw**] (to be found unexpectedly) *to be death to me.*
 - (1) We can now recognize sin, along with its guilt and condemnation.
 - ii) ¹¹*For sin [a`marti,a], seizing an opportunity* [**avformh,**] (established a starting point) *through the commandment, deceived* [**evxapata,w**] *me* (with false promises, wrong views of God, His Word, and myself, the rejection of the concept of consequences) *and through it killed* [**avpoktei,nw**] *me.*
 - (1) Sin demonstrates its controlling force in the awakened conscience.

4) We need the right view of the word of God, answering the questions of 7:7—7:12

- a) Logical conclusion: ¹²*So* [**w[ste me,n]**] ...
- b) A proper view of God’s Word.
 - i) Generally: **the law** (emphatic) ...
 - (1) Set apart, reflecting God’s character: *is holy* [**a[giøj]**],
 - ii) Specifically: *and the commandment* (to not covet) *is* ...
 - (1) Set apart, reflecting God’s character: *holy* [**a[giøj]**]
 - (2) Upright, conforming to God’s standard: *and righteous* [**di,kaioj]**
 - (3) Beneficial, accomplishing God’s purpose: *and good* [**avgaqo,j**].
- c) The problem is not the Law. The problem is us. We should never blame the Word of God as the cause of our sin.

5) Things we need to remember:

- a) This is similar to an X-ray or an MRI revealing a health problem. We shouldn’t blame the machine. It is **our** disease, not the machine’s.

- b) The perverse pleasure to carry out what is forbidden is part and parcel of rebellion. One may experience the intense pleasure of doing what is forbidden, thereby manifesting one's independence and right to direct one's life. (T. Schreiner)
- c) An encouraging sign that you are being moved closer to spiritual life is the recognition in your heart that you are spiritually dead.

Romans 7:13-25
Our Total Inability to Obey God

Introduction: This is a much-debated section. Some see this as Paul describing Christians who struggle with sin. Others, including myself, see this as Paul describing his life as an unsaved man while under conviction for his sin but still trying to do something to be right with God, yet apart from the Holy Spirit.

1) I need to recognize my own inability to please God—7:13-20

a) The law is good—7:13-17

i) A natural question—7:13a ¹³ *Did that which is good [avgaqo,j], then, bring death to me? By no means!*

ii) Sin (not the Law) is responsible—7:13b *It was sin, producing [katerga,zomai] death in me through what is good [avgaqo,j], in order that [i[na] ...*

(1) Two purposes:

(a) The Law reveals sin as sin: *sin might be shown to be sin,*

(b) The Law reveals the exceeding sinfulness of sin: *and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure [u`perbolh,].*

(2) The Law is objectively good, but I am not—7:14 ¹⁴ *For [ga,r] we know [oi;da] that the law is spiritual, but I (emphatic) am of the flesh [sa,rkinoj], sold (into slavery) [pf. pas.. pipra,skw] under [u`po,] sin. (cf. 3:9; 7:5)*

(a) I am not good—7:15 ¹⁵ *For [ga,r] I do not understand [ginw,skw] my own actions (the sin of coveting that I am producing) [katerga,zomai].*

(i) Negative: *For [ga,r] I do not do [pra,ssw] what I want [qe,lw],*

(ii) Positive: *but [avlla,] I do [poie,w] the very thing I hate [mise,w].*

(b) The Law is objectively good—7:16 ¹⁶ *Now if [1st class] I do [poie,w] what I do not want [qe,lw], I agree [su,mfhmi] with the law, that it is good [kalo,j].*

(c) The sin I am under (cf. 7:14) is against me and against God—7:17 ¹⁷ *So now it is no longer I (emphatic) who do [katerga,zomai] it, but [avlla,] sin that dwells [oivke,w] within me.*

(i) Paul is not denying personal responsibility for his sin. But sin is not merely an **external** influence, it is an **internal** ruler.

(ii) The invader had managed to secure more than a foothold; he roams the place, considering it his home. (Harrison, Expositor's)

b) I am not good—7:18-20 ¹⁸ *For [ga,r] I know [oi;da] that nothing **good** [avgaqo,j] (emphatic) dwells [oivke,w] in me, that is, in my flesh [sa,rx].*

i) *For [ga,r] I have the desire [qe,lw] to do what is right [kalo,j], but not the ability to carry it out [katerga,zomai].*

(1) ¹⁹ *For [ga,r] I do not do [poie,w] the good [avgaqo,j] I want [qe,lw], but the evil [kako,j] I do not want [qe,lw] is what I keep on doing [pra,ssw].*

ii) ²⁰ *Now if [1st class] I do [poie,w] what I (emphatic) do not want [qe,lw], it is no longer I (emphatic) who do [katerga,zomai] it, but [avlla,] sin that dwells [oivke,w] within me (cf. 7:18).*

(1) Good does not dwell in Paul, but sin. Good is not in him producing good, but sin is in him producing sin, and overcoming his good desires to obey God's good law. (Michael Magill)

2) I need to recognize my own wretchedness before God—7:21-25

a) Evil is in me—7:21-23 ²¹ *So I find [eu`ri,skw] it to be a law (principle) that when I want [qe,lw] to do right [kalo,j], evil [kako,j] lies close at hand.*

i) **Positive**—7:22: ²² *For [ga,r] I delight (take pleasure) [sunh,domai] in the law of God, in my inner being, (cf. 7:15, 18, 21)*

(1) It is precisely here that the great deception of sin occurs. We think that because we know what is right, and intend to do it, that it is enough. (Magill)

ii) **Negative**—7:23 : ²³ *but I see (as a spectator of his own personality) in my members [me,loj] another law ...*

(1) *waging war against [avntistrateu,omai] the law of my mind [nou/j]*

(a) Knowing that God's Law is correct in what it says about me and sin

(2) *and making me captive [aivcmalwti,zw] to [evn] the law of sin (cf. 2:12; 7:14) that dwells in my members [me,loj].*

b) I possess total inability—7:24-25a

i) **My exhausted misery**: ²⁴ *Wretched (miserable) [talai,pwroj] man that I am! (cf. 7:14b, sold under sin)*

(1) The desire for salvation: *Who (not what) will deliver [r`u,omai] me from this body of death?*

(a) Since we are unable to help ourselves, we must look elsewhere.

(b) The entire person, inside and out, of the unbeliever is aggravated by the tyranny of sin. (M. Vanlaningham, Moody Bible Comm.)

ii) **My hope**: ²⁵ *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

c) Conclusion—7:25b *So then,*

- Paul states this as the dead end for all who would seek to be accepted by God through works Such a person knows what to do and so is without excuse, but he cannot do it, because sin enslaves him. He needs to be saved by grace and then to live under grace in the newness of the spirit, not under the law. (Magill)

i) On the one hand: [me,n] **I** (emphatic) *myself serve [douleu,w] the law of God with my mind [nou/j] (emphatic),*

ii) On the other hand: [de,] *but with my flesh [sa,rx] I serve the law of sin.*

3) Things to remember:

a) Never forget your past slavery to sin as an unbeliever.

b) No amount of good intentions, inner resolve, or rules can bring you into a right relationship with God.

- c) ²⁵ *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!* For providing the needed rescue from our misery, our sin, and our rebellion.