

Romans 7:1-13
“From Duty to Devotion”

- I. Intro
- II. Vs. 1-6 Signed, sealed and delivered
- III. Vs. 7-13 I fought the law and the law won

I. Intro

Romans chapter 1 dealt with the perversity of sin
Romans' chapters 2-3:18 dealt with the pervasiveness of sin
Romans' chapters 3:18-5:21 dealt with the penalty of sin
Romans chapter 6 dealt with the power of sin
Romans chapter 7 deals with the preoccupation of sin

The word “law” is used 23 times in the 25 verses of chapter 7. What is this legalism that Paul so adamantly warns us against? **It is the belief that I can become pleasing to God by obeying a list of rules and regulations (do's and don'ts).** The weakness of legalism is that it only sees sins plural all the while missing seeing sin singular. It judges the outward all the while missing the inward. The end result of prolonged living under the law is that it will inevitably produce two types of people: Quitters or Pretenders!

- The Quitter: Sooner or later a person living in legalism will give up on this false brand of Christianity, as they are honest about their failure to live up to their own standard and drop out believing that either Christianity failed or they did.
- The Pretender: This person will become extremely hard to live with as they will focus all of their attention on what others aren't doing and what they are doing to escape the nagging reality they are grossly inadequate in most areas.

In this section Paul will discuss two topics that will deliver those who suffer needlessly with either of these two casualties of Church-i-anity.

- Vs. 1 “*Doesn’t the Law help us get a handle on sin?*”
- Vs. 7 “*What good is the law if we don’t need it anymore?*”

II. Vs. 1-6 Signed, sealed and delivered

Vs. 1-2 “*Doesn’t the Law help us get a handle on sin?*” The law addressed by Paul refers to “*a standard of conduct used as a source of righteousness by us and others.*” The most obvious of these is what we call the Ten Commandments, which pointed out our failure never patted us on the back when we got it right. **The law is a diagnostic tool like an x-ray machine; it reveals plainly what has always been there, but was hidden before, so you can't blame an x-ray for what it exposes.**

Paul uses the illustration of marriage to show that “*Death dissolves legal obligation*” in verse 1-3. According to Old Testament Law a husband could divorce his wife, but a wife could never divorce her husband. That’s why Paul uses this analogy as an illustration of someone married to ***Mr. Perfect Law*** and the only way to escape his glaring perfection and your glaring imperfection is to die. Mr. Perfect Law can’t die we have to die to Him, it’s the only way. You see the trouble with living with Mr. Perfection isn’t what you get from him; the problem with Mr. Perfect is what He gets from you, ***imperfection!*** He is always on time, He always follows the rules, does exactly what He is supposed to do. In every situation and every circumstance, you can expect nothing less than perfection. At first he is very attractive, but the problem comes when married to Mr. Perfect we soon discover that though Mr. Perfect is, well, “*perfect*”; we are far from it. And with every burned meal, every late arrival at an appointment, every miss placed action or word we realize that though we are married to Mr. Perfect, he is married to us and all of our imperfection’s stand out like black ink on white paper!

Vs. 3-4 The only antidote is to be free from marriage to Mr. Perfect; but how to accomplish this? You go to your lawyer and say, “*Sir, I want out of my marriage as soon as possible.*” “*On what grounds?*” your lawyer asks. “*Well sir, he’s, he’s just to perfect!*” “*I’m sorry, I think I miss understood you, did you say you want a divorce from your husband because he is, to perfect?*” “*Yes sir, that’s my reason for divorce!*” “*He always acts and behaves perfectly and it’s driving me insane, every time I go into the bathroom, the toilet seat is always down. Every time I go into the bedroom his clothes are always picked up, the bed made, and his side of the sink is clean; I just can’t take it anymore.*” “*Well Mrs. Perfect; I’m sorry to inform you have no grounds for divorce and the only option I can see that will ever end your marriage to Mr. Perfect is death.*”

Folks, you will never see a trial in which they dig up a corpse and charge him with a crime then sentence him to serve time because the authority of the Law doesn’t reach to the grave, we are free from the Law when we are dead. Listen up dear ones as we are told by Paul in Galatians 2:20 that we 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.*” Every one of us in Christ has been set free from our marriage to “*Mr. Perfect Law*” because in Christ we have died so now we are free to be married to **Mr. Love**, Jesus! When we throw off the bounds of legalism we will become fruitful because we will become excited about being married to Mr. Love and **what we saw as duty in our relationship to Mr. Perfect we will now see as devotion to Mr. Love.**

Vs. 5-6 **The Christian Life is meant to be a life lived in love and devotion not legalism and duty!** Far too many churches in an attempt to keep people in the pews have reduced the Christian life to a **legalistic system of expectations and control** so that folks will “**HAVE**” to stay connected instead of running off to the next “*great thing*”. Folks **the answer isn’t to develop a**

better trap it's to remove the doors. “But if you remove the doors won't people run off out into the world or to other fellowships?” Not if the reason they are here is out of devotion and not

duty! **Paul's point is summed up in two statements:**

- a. Vs. 4 “***we have become dead to the law***”: When we were unsaved we were under the authority of the law but when we trusted in Jesus and were united with Him we died to the law. It wasn't the law that dies it was us who died to the law. The law couldn't die because it still rules over people, but we have died to it as believers so that it no longer rules over us. But that doesn't mean that we are just “*lawless*” as we are now “*married*” or “*united*” to Jesus. What this means is that we are no longer motivated by a list of rules to do what is right instead we are motivated out of love to do what we are now created to do love.

- b. Vs. 6 “***we have been delivered from the law***”: This is the logical conclusion that the law cannot exercise authority over a dead person and as such we are delivered from the control and motivation of the law. This deliverance has not made us rebellious or independent it has made us “*bond servants*” servicing out of choice predicated on love. What does such service look like? Well Paul describes it as a service in “*the newness of the Spirit*” instead of in the “*oldness of the letter*”. That means is that our motivation has changed from the energy of the flesh to the energy of the Holy Spirit. It has also changed to a relationship to the Living God from that of the impersonal letter.

There are **four ways you can determine if you are living under the law:**

1. ***You point out how well you are doing, so you can distract others from looking at areas where you aren't doing well.***

2. *You are critical of others, which is another diversionary tactic so others will become distracted and start looking at someone else's flaws instead of yours.*
3. *You struggle with admitting when you are wrong, because if you do you will have to admit you need to change.*
4. *You suffer from anxiety and depression as you cannot maintain your own standards.*

III. Vs. 7-13 I fought the law and the law won

Vs. 7-13 Paul deals with the paradox of the law: *In itself it is holy the voice of perfection but it doesn't bring about perfection in us it brings about destruction.* The root of the word Holy means “*different or out of this world good*”! But how can something “*out this world good*” be so destructive to us at the same time? It is clear by the use of the personal pronouns “*I*” and “*me*” used 8 times in 6 verses, that Paul is describing something that he personally had gone through in the past. Paul anticipates what the argument would be: “*What good is the law if we don't need it anymore?*” To answer this Paul gives *four functions of the law today:*

- a. Vs. 7 *The law reveals sin:* Paul didn't use murder or adultery as an illustration he used the last of the 10 commandments “*coveting*” because it is *invisible* to the naked eye, an inward attitude instead of an outward action. It was for this purpose that Jesus taught on the true intent of the 10 commandments saying that if you lusted in your heart you committed adultery and if you angered in your heart than you murdered.
- b. Vs. 8-9 *The law arouses the sin:* There is something about the human nature that always wants to push the limit. If the sign says keep off the grass but we have to walk on it. If it says, 70 we have to go 75. Legalism doesn't make a person sin less it cause them to sin more because the flesh is got to test the prohibition.

- c. Vs. 10-11 ***The law kills***: The law cannot give life it can only show a person that they are guilty, it offers no solution. There is nothing more deadly than a Christian or a church that is proud of its “*high standards*” and its attempts to live by them in their own strength. These “***Pretenders***” condemn the “***Quitters***” that flee the legalism which only creates more anger and bitterness.

- d. Vs. 12-13 ***The law shows the sinfulness of sin***: People realize that there are such things as evil and sin in the world what they fail to realize is the destructive nature of sin personally. Most folks only recognize that they are a victim of some else’s sin, not that their sin is victimizing others.

Saint’s get back to devotion not duty fall in love with Jesus and things will turn around in a flash. In the book of Isaiah, the prophet spent the first 5 chapters pronouncing woes upon people and nations, ah but in chapter 6 when he came into contact with the living God he said, “*Woe is me*” as he realized that he was no better than the folks he was pronouncing woes upon. The English Philosopher and writer G.K. Chesterton was asked by a woman that wanted him to write about what was wrong with the world he wrote back his reply in two words: “***I am***”. The problems of the world today is not political, economic it’s PERSONAL! Folks the law says, “*Responsibility*” but love says, “*Respond to Me!*”