

Romans 7:1-25

Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the **law**), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? ²For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. ³So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. ⁴Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another — to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. ⁵For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. ⁶But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

Just as we have received forgiveness of sins, been set free from the penalty of sin, justified before God, and our Old Sinful Nature was Crucified on the Cross with Christ ... we have died to our Old Sinful Nature's control over us (its dominion, its "kingly rule" over us) ... so it is with the Law ... our relationship to the Law has been broken.

Remember, the Law had dominion over us, from the time we were born as humans and it judged us as guilty before God as Sinners, Condemned Already (John 3:18-21,36; Romans 3:19-20,23) The Law is a SchoolMaster to bring us to Christ (a Guardian, a Tutor, a Teacher, a Protector) ... but when we come to Christ we are no longer in need of that SchoolMaster any longer (Galatians 3:24-25). God used the Law to show us that we are Sinners and that we are Condemned before a Holy God. God's Grace, Goodness, and Kindness leads us to Repentance to Embrace Christ as our LORD and Savior. So, for the Believer, we are set free from Sin's Penalty, Sin's Power, and the Power of the Law of God. But this ONLY happens when we are Truly Born Again.

The Rest of this passage is about Paul's relationship with the Law prior to his becoming Born Again in Christ. He was very Religious, very Devout in relationship with God's Law. He was fanatical, to say the least. Remember all that we learned in chapters 5 & 6 about God's Love, Grace, Hope, and Freedom in Christ FROM Sin's Penalty and Power. We don't need to struggle with sin any longer. So, what Paul is talking about in the rest of this chapter relates to Paul and to others like him, raised in a very religious, legalistic home, those that love God's Law, God's Word, God's ways of living, etc. But, that person or those persons are not Born Again. They are just going through the motions in their OWN EFFORTS and Strength, trying to Obey God's Law as a lost sinner, although a Religious Lost Sinner. The Purpose of the Law: (Galatians 3:19) → It was added because of Transgressions (Sins) It was added to handle, to constrain, to restrain the sin of mankind ... to hold it back so that it wouldn't get out of hand ... until Christ Came ... (the Law was a SchoolMaster to Bring us to Christ)

Remember these facts... as we read the rest of this passage. **Paul is giving his own personal testimony of what his life was like BEFORE he met Christ. This is NOT about a Christian after he/she is born again and is struggling with sin. Not even close.**

⁷What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, **I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.”** ⁸But sin (Paul’s own, old, sinful nature), taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in **ME** all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law **SIN WAS DEAD.** ⁹**I was alive ONCE without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I DIED.** ¹⁰And the commandment, which was to bring life (its purpose was aimed and designed by God to bring life), **I found to bring death.** ¹¹For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, **deceived ME**, and by it **killed ME.** ¹²Therefore the **law is holy**, and the commandment **holy and just and good.**

¹³Has then what is good become death to **ME**? Certainly not! But **sin, that it might appear sin,** was producing **death** in **ME** through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. ¹⁴For we know that the law is spiritual, but **I** am carnal, sold under sin. ¹⁵For what **I** am doing, **I** do not understand. For what **I** will to do, that **I** do not practice; but what I hate, that **I** do. ¹⁶If, then, **I** do what **I** will not to do, **I** agree with the law that it is good. ¹⁷But now, it is no longer **I** who do it, but sin that dwells in **ME.** ¹⁸For **I** know that in **ME** (that is, in my flesh [my old sinful nature]) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with **ME**, but how to perform what is good **I** do not find. ¹⁹For the good that **I** will to do, **I** do not do; but the evil **I** will not to do, that **I** practice. ²⁰Now if **I** do what **I** will not to do, it is no longer **I** who do it, but sin that dwells in **ME.**

²¹**I** find then a law, that **evil** is present with **ME**, the one who wills to do good. ²²For **I** delight in the law of God according to the inward man. ²³But **I** see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing **ME** into **CAPTIVITY** to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴O wretched man that **I** am! Who will deliver **ME** from this body of death? ²⁵**I** thank God — through Jesus Christ our LORD!

So then, with the mind **I** myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

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This is Paul the apostle when he was Saul of Tarsus, Jewish Rabbi, Pharisee, growing up to be a Radical Jew who would eventually persecute the church. He is talking about growing up with the Torah and the Old Testament in his life ... day after day ... following the Law ... externally following it. With his mind he fully agreed with the Information of the Law. He assented to the Truth, Agreed with It, Loved it. But loving it, agree with the Truth, etc. did NOT Transform Him or Set Him Free from the Power of the Law of Sin in his own, personal life. He would try to follow God’s Law in Paul’s own, earthly, human power, but could not keep up long. He tried and failed all the time. And every time he failed he felt more sinful. Paul found Himself Held Captive by SIN to do its bidding, even though in his mind, he knew it was wrong ... but he couldn’t help himself. And that is the Point. Paul is **not** talking about what happened to After he was Born Again... but before ... the journey of his relationship with the Law of God ... that lead him to the end of himself, which opened him up to Christ’s Salvation.

God designed the Law so that it would Teach us, as a SchoolMaster, to bring us to the End ourselves... so that we would throw ourselves onto the Mercy Seat of God

→ As that sinner once said “Oh God, merciful to me, a sinner!” (Luke 18:13)

Paul is explaining, in his own life what God was doing, through the Law, that lead to that Day that He met Christ on the road. O wretched man that **I** am! Who will deliver **ME** from this body of death? ²⁵**I** thank God — through Jesus Christ our LORD! → that is not the “cry” of a person who already has a relationship with God, **but** one who is crying out to start to have one, to initiate a new Relationship with God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What can we learn from this passage?

1. **The Law of God was Designed for our Good.**

It was Holy, Perfect, and Good.

God wanted people to follow it for their own Good.

God's Law flows from the Heart of those who are In-Love with God

If you look at the written Law of God, there is nothing wrong with it.

So, why do we sin against it?

Paul found out and did NOT Accuse God for it, never!!!

2. **God's Law, the Spiritual side of God's Law Exposes** our deepest sins, the impossibility of us being successful in fixing ourselves ... sin is too deep and we need Christ's Intervention and Rescue

God's Law Exposes us as who we really are, **sinner**s.

As Paul found out, after the "commandment came" into his life ...

Either it was read to him or it was read to him ... most likely he memorized it as well...

He found out that his thoughts, his tendencies, his selfishness, his self-centeredness, his wants and desires were sometimes contrary to what God said in His Word that Paul should have. Paul found out that Covetousness is a sin. He found that out because God's Word said so (i.e. the 10th Commandment). That is a heart attitude. It is not an action or a behavior. It will eventually affect behaviors, relationships, etc... but at first it is an attitude. God says it is SIN. He didn't know how to fix himself even by being more religious.

3. **Growing up in a highly religious home [even today in a Christian Home with Genuinely saved, born again parents],** one that may be legalistic, or just even if it **perceived** to be legalistic but may **not** really be legalistic – sometimes kids who are still sinners bound by sin – they can try to FAKE it to MAKE it ... and try to Be Good and Holy, externally, even agree with the Bible in their mind and heart ... yet fully struggle with sins and failures. They might seek to **cover** them up on their own, hide them, etc. (**fig leaves**) Those kids will seek to be Good, to Learn the Bible, God's Word, the Law of God, God's Righteous Ways for Humans to Live, etc... and find that they are not experiencing close and real relationship with God, etc. This is what Paul was experiencing and it is **never God's fault a person is in this kind of situation. Remember** this principle: **Knowing Information Doesn't Change a person.**

a. It can lead a person to become very radically religious and legalistic (as Saul of Tarsus was)

- OR -

b. It can lead a person to reject and hate God, the Bible, their parents' way of life, etc... They will somehow justify their rejections very well in some cases - OR -

c. It can lead a person to accept that he/she is a depraved sinner and in need of Christ's Redeeming Love – which eventually happened to Saul on the Road to Damascus.

HUMILITY is the KEY to Receiving Christ – True Repentance and Trust in God

Knowing the Information is Only the first step ... **acting upon it**, just like that sinner did, is the final **step: he cried out and beat on his chest:** "Oh GOD, be merciful to me, a sinner" ... Jesus said that person was Justified before God.

Paul humbled himself, just like that, after he met Christ on the Road to Damascus.

Paul was showing us, how we can share our Testimony about our coming to Christ, while we are sharing the Truth of the Gospel of Christ This shows folks that we, too, were depraved sinners on the way to Hell, but now we are saved because of Christ... in the same way, they, too, can Repent and Believe in Christ, just like we have. ☺