

## Romans 7

**7:1** Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? <sup>2</sup>For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. <sup>3</sup>Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

<sup>1</sup> γινώσκουσιν γὰρ νόμον λαλῶ = Roman citizens were knowledgeable in secular civil law (Paul uses νόμον in introducing his statement, without the definite article (i.e., ὁ νόμος). The Christians in Rome knew that civil law, just as the Mosaic Law, was binding upon a person until (but not beyond) death.

<sup>2-3</sup> The apostle uses the marriage contract as an example of the lifelong binding nature of law. Under ordinary circumstances a spouse remained legally bound to their partner until death.

<sup>4</sup>Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. <sup>5</sup>For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. <sup>6</sup>But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

<sup>4</sup> ἀδελφοί = Paul refers to his readers as “brothers” for the first time since 1:13 indicating fraternal care and brotherly admonition.

καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐθανατώθητε τῷ νόμῳ διὰ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ = We were once wed to the Law. Because we have been united to Christ in baptism (6:1 ff.), His death is now our death (6:2-3). His resurrection is now our new life (6:4). Having died in Christ we are freed from our previous bond to the Law and are betrothed to Jesus.

<sup>5-6</sup> ὅτε γὰρ ἦμεν ἐν τῇ σαρκί = Paul uses “in the flesh” not in the sense of “body” (which we still have and will have forever after the resurrection) but in the sense of “old self” in servitude to law/sin contrasted with “new self” freely and joyfully serving by “the Spirit” in Christ. Thus, the old self bore “fruit for death” ([καρποφορῆσαι τῷ θανάτῳ] 7:5.) and the new self bears “fruit for God” ([καρποφορήσωμεν τῷ θεῷ] 7:4).

<sup>7</sup>What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” <sup>8</sup>But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. <sup>9</sup>I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. <sup>10</sup>The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. <sup>11</sup>For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. <sup>12</sup>So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

<sup>7</sup> ὁ νόμος ἀμαρτία; μὴ γένοιτο = The Law is not sinful, we are sinful!

ἀλλὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνων εἰ μὴ διὰ νόμου = The Law reveals or diagnoses what is inside of us (i.e., sin!).

<sup>8-9</sup> ἀφορμὴν δὲ λαβοῦσα ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς... ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἡ ἁμαρτία ἀνέζησεν = not the Law, but our rebellious reaction to the Law, results in sin.

<sup>10</sup> ἡ ἐντολή ἡ εἰς ζωὴν αὕτη εἰς θάνατον = The Law promises life to those who keep it. The defect is not with the Law it is with our sinful inability to keep it.

<sup>11-12</sup> ἡ γὰρ ἁμαρτία ... αὐτῆς ἀπέκτεινεν ... ὥστε ὁ μὲν νόμος ἅγιος = Sin kills through the Law despite the fact that the Law, itself, is holy.

<sup>13</sup> Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. <sup>14</sup> For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. <sup>15</sup> For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. <sup>16</sup> Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. <sup>17</sup> So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

<sup>13</sup> ἀλλὰ ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἵνα φανῇ ἁμαρτία, διὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μοι κατεργαζομένη θάνατον = The law does not create, but rather reveals, the sin within us.

<sup>14</sup> That which is “spiritual” (πνευματικός), the Law, contrasted with “flesh” (σάρκινός), our old sinful nature.

<sup>15</sup> The apostle’s “flesh”/old self is at war with his “spiritual”/new self. As a result, his old desires (ἀλλ’ ὁ μισῶ τοῦτο ποιῶ) are at war with his new desires (οὐ γὰρ ὁ θέλω τοῦτο πράσσω).

<sup>16-20</sup> The apostle describes his current (post-conversion) experience as a Christian (present active indicative verbs abound). The desires and works of the flesh/old self vs. the desires and works of the spirit/new self. This was his Christian experience. This is your Christian experience. This is an explanation of the normative Christian life on this side of eternity.

<sup>21</sup> So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. <sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, <sup>23</sup> but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. <sup>24</sup> Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

<sup>21</sup> θέλοντι ἐμοὶ ποιεῖν τὸ καλὸν ὅτι ἐμοὶ τὸ κακὸν παράκειται = Even as a Christian, and a holy apostle, Paul’s desires are at war.

<sup>22-23</sup> συνήδομαι γὰρ τῷ νόμῳ = The new self/“inner being” takes pleasure in God’s holy Law even while his old self/“members” are captive to sin (αἰχμαλωτίζοντά με ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τῆς ἁμαρτίας).

<sup>24-25</sup> Our hope is not to transform/rehabilitate the old self/“body of death”/“the flesh” but to be delivered from it by Christ our Lord.