

Parson to Person

ROMANS 7 PART 1

“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? For 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. So 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. Therefore, 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. For 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. But 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.

What 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.’ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good” (Romans 7:1–12 NKJV).

Both history and Paul have made clear that the law was given to the Jews and not to the Gentiles. Herein is another example, for he said, *“I speak to those who know the law”* (vs. 1). This statement flows naturally as the Gentiles were not required to know the Law—but the Jews were. To the Jews God spoke, *“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates”* (Deuteronomy 6:6–9 NKJV). Therefore, every Jew would be in the focus group Paul was addressing. However, to the Gentiles he spoke very differently.

The point Paul was making with the Jews in this context was similar to what he shared earlier in chapters 5–6. There we learned that we are to *“reckon”* ourselves *“to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (6:11), and therefore note that sin no longer has any power over us—as believers. In this case he re-emphasized what he began to share in chapter 6 saying, *“you are not under law but under grace”* (6:14).

By illustration Paul likens the believer to a woman whose husband has died. The husband (in this case) is likened to the law—thus allowing the woman to remarry another man: Jesus. Therefore, in the same way (but illustratively communicated in reverse order), the believer is to understand that the law is dead (see 7:1–3), and as stated earlier in chapter 6:14 (of the same order), the believer is to *“reckon”* (6:11) him- or herself to be *“dead to the law”* (see 7:4).

As mentioned last week, Jesus has, *“...abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances...”* (Ephesians 2:15 NKJV), and that He has, *“wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross”* (Colossians 2:14 NKJV). Therefore, we should understand that the Old Covenant law is dead and the believer is free to be married to Christ Jesus without any further recourse leveled against us by the law. Did you get that? The law is dead!

The point made here is that the law is dead to us, and we are dead to the law. Therefore, the law can no longer condemn the believer and thus the believer is free to live without condemnation and rest in the grace of God.

The Scriptures clearly defined the purpose of the law:

- 1) The law was a check and balance system to bring restraint to unbridled wickedness. (1 Timothy 1:8–10)
- 2) The law pointed out the greatness of sin. (Romans 3:19–20; Romans 7:7–13) Thus, we establish the law. (Romans 3:31)

- 3) The law kept a continual guardianship over man and therefore served as a schoolmaster/tutor—providing no deliverance from sin—but intended to lead us to Jesus. (Galatians 3:21–25)
- 4) The law was prophetic in nature—pointing to Jesus through the sacrificial system. (Exodus, Leviticus, Hebrews, etc.)
- 5) The law was legislative/administrative in its handling of civil affairs in Israel. (Leviticus, Deuteronomy, etc.)
- 6) The law has been used in the development of laws and administrations in countries/states (outside of Israel) who base their worldviews on the “Judeo/Christian” model.

I love you all, Pastor Paul