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## CHAPTER

# 7

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# ROMANS 7

## The Burden of Proof: Believers and the Law

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**For the good that I would  
I do not: but the evil  
which I would not, that I  
do.**

**—Romans 7:19**



## ROMANS 7:1 – 25 (NKJV)

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? <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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.



<sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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.” <sup>8</sup> But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. <sup>9</sup> I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.



## ROMANS 7:1 – 25 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. <sup>11</sup> For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. <sup>12</sup> Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

<sup>13</sup> Has 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. <sup>14</sup> For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. <sup>15</sup> For 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.



<sup>16</sup> If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. <sup>17</sup> But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. <sup>19</sup> For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

<sup>21</sup> I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. <sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. <sup>23</sup> But 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.





## ROMANS 7:1 – 25 (NKJV)

<sup>24</sup> O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> 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.



# Introduction

In his commentary, Dr. Warren Wiersbe states, “Something in human nature makes us want to go to extremes, a weakness from which Christians are not wholly free. ‘Since we are saved by grace some argue, ‘we are free to live as we please...But we cannot ignore God’s law, others argue...We are saved by grace to be sure, but we must live under law if we are to please God.’”

In this chapter, Paul argued, “You were not justified by keeping the law and you cannot be sanctified by keeping the law.” Paul discussed three topics, to help us understand and apply “the law.”



# The Burden of Proof

Paul defends himself against the accusation that he is disparaging the law and that the law is lawless.

## ROMANS 7:1

<sup>1</sup> 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?

## JAMES 1:22-25

<sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; <sup>24</sup> for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. <sup>25</sup> But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.



# Point I: The Authority of the Law

## ROMANS 6:15

“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!”

## ROMANS 7:2-3

<sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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.



# Point I: Authority of the Law

THE LAW	
<b>Husband</b>	<b>Woman (Wife)</b>
Married	Bound
Alive	Adulteress (remarry)
Dies	Released
<b>Believer</b>	<b>Believer</b>
Die to the law	Released (to marry)
<b>GRACE</b>	

Paul uses this illustration to show that **the believer** has a new relationship to the **law** because of their union with Christ.



## ROMANS 7:4

<sup>4</sup> 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.

- Paul uses the analogy of marriage for the believer to confirm that when you were unsaved and in the flesh, you were indeed bound to the law.
- The law did not die – We died!
- We don't have to keep focusing on the guilt and judgement of our actions.



# Point I: Authority of the Law

## ROMANS 7:5-6

<sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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.

- In our old life of sin, we brought forth fruit “unto death”.
- The newness of the Spirit is the new life of grace, and with it we bring forth good fruit “unto God.”



## MATTHEW 5:17

Jesus said, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

## TITUS 2:11-14

<sup>11</sup> “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, <sup>12</sup> teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, <sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”





# Point II: The Ability of the Law

## ROMANS 7:7

<sup>7</sup> 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.”

- Paul contends that the one of the purposes of the law is to reveal our sins.
- If there was no law, would we have known sin?

### Reference Scriptures:

**Romans 3:20** “By the law is the knowledge of sin”

**Romans 4:15** “Where there is no law, there is no transgression”<sup>17</sup>



## ROMANS 7:8-11

<sup>8</sup> But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead. <sup>9</sup> I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. <sup>10</sup> And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death. <sup>11</sup> For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*.



## Point II: The Ability of the Law

- The law cannot give life, but it shows the sinner that he is guilty and condemned.
- We always want to eat the forbidden fruit.

### Reference Scriptures:

**I Corinthians 15:56** “The strength of sin is the law”

**Galatians 3:21** “Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.”



## ROMANS 7:12-13

<sup>12</sup> Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. <sup>13</sup> Has 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.

- Paul highlights that the law is not sinful – it is holy, just, and good!
- The problem is not with the law; the problem resides with our own sinful nature.



# Point III. The Inability of the Law

## A. The Law Cannot Change You

### ROMANS 7:14

<sup>14</sup> For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin

- The old nature knows no law, and the new nature needs no law.



## B. The Law Cannot Make Us Do Good!

### ROMANS 7:15-21

<sup>15</sup> “For 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. <sup>16</sup> If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. <sup>17</sup> But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. <sup>19</sup> For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. <sup>21</sup> I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.”



## Point III: The Inability of the Law

### B. The Law Cannot Make Us Do Good!

- Our minds, will and body can be controlled either by our old nature or our new nature, by either flesh or by the Spirit

#### Reference Scripture:

#### I Corinthians 10:13

” No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*. ”



## C. The Law Cannot Set You Free!

### ROMANS 5:22 – 25

<sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. <sup>23</sup> But 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. <sup>24</sup> O **wretched** man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> 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.





# Point III: The Inability of the Law

## C. The Law Cannot Set You Free!

- Our old nature wants to keep us in bondage.
- Because the believer is united to Christ, he is dead to the law and no longer under its authority.

### Galatians 5:16-18

<sup>16</sup>” I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. <sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”



# ROMANS 7: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ **The Law's Purpose:** The purpose of the law is to show sin, not to provide the ability to overcome it. The law reveals our need for a savior, which is found in Jesus Christ.
- ❖ **Righteousness Through Faith:** Paul emphasizes that righteousness, or being made right with God, comes through faith in Christ, not through adherence to the law.



# ROMANS 7: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ **No conflict:** The Law is not opposed to the promises of God, but it also doesn't provide salvation or righteousness. Paul's admission of his own internal conflict shows that such struggles are normal.
- ❖ **Paul's Conclusion:** Faith in Jesus is the way to righteousness, not a life lived in fear of the law.



# THE LAW

- ❖ **Explains what sin is**
- ❖ **Exposes the sin in us**
- ❖ **Expresses our need for a savior**

## Psalm 19:7-8

<sup>7</sup>The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul;  
The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;  
<sup>8</sup>The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart;  
The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;