

## Bible Study of Romans (18)

### Romans 7:1-12

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#### Introduction

In chapter six, Paul taught, “for ye are not under the law, but under grace.’ (6:14) A good way to understand this verse is by comparing it to the two covenants. As a paraphrase, it would be something like, ‘for we are no longer in the covenant of works but now we are in the covenant of grace.’ That does not mean we are not more obligated to honor the law of God for His law is eternal. God’s law is the expression of His holy love and that is unchangeably the call for His creatures to reflect. Gladly, that is made possible through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Hallelujah!

Paul continues in Ch. 7 to expand the truth that a believer is “not under the law.” He illustrates this with the marriage relation. Paul shows that *just* as a married woman is discharged from her husband when he dies and therefore is free to marry another, *even so* is the believer discharged from the law as the condition of his salvation through the death of Christ. The comparison only intends to compare the *legal issue* of the believer’s status. Consider a couple who gets married. Before the wedding day they are ‘unmarried’ but the moment they exchanged their vows, they are married. Their *legal status* has changed. But their *personal character* has not changed. The marriage life will change that, either for the better or for the worse.

So, it is also spiritually. When a sinner is united to Christ through faith, his *legal status* changes **the moment** he is united to Christ by faith (Rom. 5:1). He is pardoned from all the guilt and delivered from the curse of sin. Yet a believer is not instantly delivered from his or her sinfulness. It is through the relationship with Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that the personal character of the believer shall be gradually changed (sanctification).

This explains the reality that new believers often find very confusing. Having confessed their sins and brought their plea for forgiveness on basis of the merits of Jesus Christ, they expect to ‘get up and be a new man.’ But it seems that nothing has happened. The heart corruption seems to remain the same. They must admit, “I still find the brewing and boiling of my sinful heart within. I battle with the same temptations still. So how can I possibly think to be saved?”

However, something huge has happened. If we have placed our trust in Jesus, we are ‘spiritually married’ to Him. That is huge. In that marriage, Christ is the head, the source, the power of the believer. All that is Christ’s has become the believer’s and all that is the believer’s has become Christ’s. He has also committed Himself to be their Husband-Savior to perfect or sanctify His people. He will make sure that this spiritual marriage becomes fruitful in a life of sanctification.

#### Discussion questions:

1. What is Paul’s intention with this self-evident question?
2. Paul used the word ‘brethren’ many times to refer to fellow believers. In the Greek, brethren stands for brothers and sisters. What dangers are there in the use and in the non-use of these terms?
3. Why and how is this a suitable illustration of justification by faith? We know that God designed marriage to be a reflection of the relationship of Christ and His people. Is it possible that the ‘marriage law’ also was designed to illustrate or shadow forth the believer’s freedom from the legal curse of sin and relationship to Satan as taught in these chapters?

4. According to vs. 4, what is the best and safest evidence that one is united to Jesus Christ by faith?
5. Compare this verse with John 15:4-8. What do these verses teach us about the believer's fruitfulness? Discuss how we can increase our fruitfulness and what hinders being fruitful.
6. In vs. 5 we are reminded that the believers' first marriage was also fruitful. What are the fruits that flowed out of that union with Satan and sin? Why is it good to remember this truth when we deal with people around us that are unsaved?
7. Vs. 6 should be always read together with Romans 6:14b. Define what is meant with 'serving in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.' How is it different in purpose and in manner?

**In vs. 7-11 Paul comes to defend the law even though the law provoked in him a violent reaction of his sinfulness. This very helpful passage has no doubt comforted many of tenderhearted souls who feel so confused about the inner workings of their heart.**

8. Tell a young child not to touch something and it seems you just awakened them more to touch it. Why is that our fallen natures are stirred up to disobey when the law is put before us as Paul shared in his biographical insight in vs. 7?
9. What are the functions as well as the limits of the law? Compare Rom 2:14-15; 3:20; 4:15; 5:20; 6:14-15; 7:4, 6; 7:5
10. "Taking occasion" refers in Greek to a base of launching operations in time of war. What did Paul experientially describe in this verse? Is that what everyone will more or less experience when God confronts him/her with the law?
11. Is it true that 'sin can lay dormant and unobserved' in someone's life?
12. In vs. 9-10 Paul shared how he 'died' through the commandment of God and his bucking sin nature. In what ways must we understand this 'died'?
13. Which OT history illustrates the spiritual reality described in vs. 9-11 and which is experienced when God comes into our life with His holy law?