

# Romans

## Bible Study

### Dead to the Law

#### Romans 7:4—15

It is so important that the believer understand our position in Christ in this Dispensation of Grace. We have become a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15). We are no longer operating under the jurisdiction of the flesh, but are now free to serve Christ under the operation of the Holy Spirit. The old nature was a slave to sin and death, and was completely unable to free itself of the law of sin (Romans 7:23—25; 8:2). Since we have been made dead to sin (Romans 6:2), we can now be alive unto Jesus Christ (Romans 6:11). Since the Mosaic Law only makes sin more sinful (Romans 4:15; 5:20), we are also set free from the Law also. Our identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection has freed us from sin and from the law (Galatians 2:19). We are no longer identified with sin, death and the Law because we are identified with Christ.

Being dead to the Law means that the Law has no jurisdiction over us. It does not control us in any way. We are not to set out to try to obey the Law because it only amplifies sin and leads to death (2 Corinthians 3:7—9). If we have been set free from sin, death and the condemnation of the Law, then why would we try to live by the Law? Living by the Law is done through the flesh. Living for the Lord is done through the Spirit.

#### **Is the Law bad?** (verse 7)

When presented with the idea that the Law only brings condemnation and death, people would often argue that we are saying the Law must be bad. That argument is like saying I look so bad in the morning because my mirror is at fault. The Law is like a mirror that tells me where I have failed, but does nothing to fix the problem. That does not make the Law bad, but does show how bad I am. The Law is not sin, I am the sinner. When people are given a law, the natural instinct is to break that law because of the sin that dwells in each person. This is why a “wet paint” sign moves people to touch the paint. As soon as we are told we can’t do something, we desire to do it.

Most people disagree that we are dead to the Law. They often speak about being under grace and not the Law, yet they don’t agree that we are dead to the Law. They somehow want to include the teaching of the Mosaic Law into today’s Grace program by calling the Law God’s grace, or by saying we need the Law in order to understand what God requires. When we tell someone that we are dead to the Law and that the Law has no control over us in this age, they accuse us of saying that the Law is bad. This is what Paul is arguing about beginning in verse 7.

One problem for those who want to hold onto the Law is that they don’t adhere to the whole Law. They pick and choose which ordinances they will follow, or they will change the intended meaning to fit today’s lifestyle. For instance, the sacrificial system is eliminated by claiming that it was done away with when Christ went to the cross as the perfect sacrifice. However, no such repeal of individual ordinances were ever made. Even in the Millennial Kingdom, sacrifices will be performed in the temple (Ezekiel 43:20, 26; 45:15, 17, 20). The sacrificial system of the Mosaic Law is still in play once God begins to deal with Israel, after the Rapture.

The other problem, of changing the meaning of words, is exemplified in how most people define what the Sabbath means. The Old Testament Law was very specific as to when the Sabbath was to be observed, and how it was to be observed. The weekly Sabbath is the period from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. There was no leeway in this interpretation. Today, man has changed

the Sabbath through inference, since believers are shown meeting on the first day of the week after Jesus had risen from the dead (John 20:19; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2). Unfortunately, they are inferring something that was never implied by Scripture. Mankind is not qualified to make these kind of changes. However, God made it perfectly clear through the Apostle Paul that we are to consider ourselves dead to the Law, meaning we are not under its control in any manner, including observing special days or festivals (Colossians 2:16; Romans 4:5).

### **Benefit of the Law** (verse 12)

The Law is actually holy, just and good because it came from God. While it shows us what God expects of mankind, it also demonstrates that no one is capable of living up to His standard. As Galatians 3:24 says, the Law was our schoolmaster that lead us to Christ. An understanding of the purpose of the Law should make all men conclude that they need help because they have broken the Law countless times. The only way to escape the condemnation of the Law is to believe in Christ. Believing, by faith, makes us dead to the Law. We no longer try to please God by obeying the Law, which is what most people try do before being saved. Unfortunately, most people continue to try to please God by following the 10 Commandments even after they have believed. God expects us to consider ourselves (the old nature, the flesh) dead so that He can work within us through the power of the Holy Spirit. Trying to live by the elements of the Law is always done in the power of the flesh. Instead of living by the requirements of the Law, we need to realize we are dead to the Law.

### **I am the problem** (verse 18)

The Law is holy, just and good, however I am not, because of my natural man. There is nothing good that comes out of the flesh, the old nature (Galatians 5:19—21; 1 Timothy 1:9—10). The flesh is reprehensible to God and therefore completely unusable by Him. The flesh cannot be fixed up, renovated or repaired. The only time God is able to use us for His glory is when we live as if the flesh is dead. The Christian walk is characterized by giving up. We are to give up living in the power of the flesh and live by the power of the Holy Spirit. The flesh and the spirit of man are contrary to one another and cannot live side by side (Galatians 5:16—17).

When my sin nature is confronted with the Law, it magnifies my sin, making my condemnation greater. As Paul asks in verse 13, how could that which is good (the Law) bring death? It actually does not bring death since I was already dead. It merely points out that I am a sinner, unable to please God through obeying the Law. The Law is good, but it has no power within it to bring me righteousness, only condemnation.

This was the problem with the Pharisees. They were attempting to obtain righteousness in their own power, without Christ. Israel failed to obtain righteousness because the Law only pointed out their failure to obey the Law (Romans 9:31). If righteousness could be obtained through obedience to the Law, then why would Christ have needed to die on the cross (Galatians 2:21; 3:21)?

The man who lives by the Mosaic Law could receive life (Leviticus 18:4—5). Unfortunately, no man was able to live up to the ordinances of the Law (Romans 9:31). But now, in this Dispensation of Grace, we can understand that our righteousness is not obtained through the Law, but by faith in Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:9). For the believer, Christ made us dead to the Law so that the Law has no jurisdiction over us. We have been set completely free from the condemnation of the Law and are now slaves of righteousness.

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