

Romans Part 23 – Chapter 7

Sunday, September 4, 2022

With input from David Jeremiah, <https://activechristianity.org/truth-romans-7-not-want>, <https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/Heart,-Known-To-God>

Romans 7:1-6 *Or do you not know, brothers and sisters (for I am speaking to those who know the Law), that the Law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?*

The law judges our behaviors, not our intentions. We tend to judge others by their behaviors and judge ourselves by our intentions.

But Jesus knows our heart...

Jeremiah 17:10

“I, the LORD, search the heart,
I test the mind,
To give to each person according to his ways,
According to the results of his deeds.

Proverbs 16:2

All the ways of a person are clean in his own sight,
But the LORD examines the motives.

1 Chronicles 28:9

“As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.

² *For the married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he is alive; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.*

³ *So then, if while her husband is alive she gives herself to another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress if she gives herself to another man.*

⁴ *Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you also were put to death in regard to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.* ⁵ *For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were brought to light by the Law, were at work in the parts of our body to bear fruit for death.*

⁶ *But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.*

Romans 7:4: *Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you also were put to death in regard to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.*

⁵ For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were brought to light by the Law, were at work in the parts of our body to bear fruit for death. ⁶ But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

⁷ What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? Far from it! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “YOU SHALL NOT COVET.” ⁸ But sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. ⁹ I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin came to life, and I died; ¹⁰ and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; ¹¹ for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it, killed me. ¹² So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

¹³ Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? Far from it! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by bringing about my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

When Paul gets to verse 7 he is not saying he is thinking about sin all the time. Paul was living a crucified life. He was not serving the law of sin with his mind. (Romans 7:25) To the extent that he had light, he delighted in the law of God in the inward man. (Romans 7:22) That meant that he delighted in love, in goodness, in mercy – that was the **attitude** and **intention** of his mind. In those areas where he had received light, he crucified sin in his body. His mind that was serving God stopped these sinful desires.

However, there were many areas in Paul’s life where he had not yet received light. Here he was taken captive by the law of sin in his flesh, so that he did things that he hated. “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 7:23.

Someone who is willfully committing sin is not doing what he hates, **because his mind approves of it.** Remember from James: “When desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin. Conception takes place when we consent to the desire with our mind – then sin is born. (James 1:14-15) Such a person is serving the law of sin with his mind.

Paul was not writing about this kind of sin in Romans 7. He was serving the law of God with his mind, but at the same time, sin that was still present in his flesh would manifest itself without his approval – he was serving the law of sin with his flesh.

“I can’t stop a bird from flying over my head, but I can keep it from building a nest on it!”

These reactions from the flesh could come as thoughts or feelings that he had to battle down (temptation), or as actual actions or words, which never passed his consciousness as a temptation. He received light about these later, realizing they weren’t according to God’s will, and therefore something he hated (deeds of the body).

The law is spiritual, but Paul found that he was carnal, sold under sin. With his mind he served God, but he also noticed that nothing good dwelt in his flesh. (Romans 7:18) So, with his flesh he couldn’t

do anything other than to serve the law of sin. His mind (which served God) was against his flesh (which served sin), and this created an opposition of will in his body. (Romans 7:23)

“But now it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells in me.” Romans 7:17. It wasn’t Paul (his conscious mind) who did the things he hated, but it was sin that dwelled in him (his flesh). (Romans 7:17) He hadn’t seen it; he hadn’t received light over it. That is why he exclaims, “Oh wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” Romans 7:24.

Romans 7:14-25: *For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold into bondage to sin. ¹⁵ For I do not understand what I am doing; for I am not practicing what I want to do, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ However, if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, that the Law is good. ¹⁷ But now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin that dwells in me. ¹⁸ For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. ¹⁹ For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. ²⁰ But if I do the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin that dwells in me.*

²¹ *I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²² For I joyfully agree with the law of God in the inner person, ²³ but I see a different law in the parts of my body waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin, the law which is in my body’s parts. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.*

Romans 7:18–25 — New Living Translation (NLT)

¹⁸ And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can’t. ¹⁹ I want to do what is good, but I don’t. I don’t want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. ²⁰ But if I do what I don’t want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹ I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. ²² I love God’s law with all my heart. ²³ But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. ²⁴ Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? ²⁵ Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God’s law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

Notice in the comparison of verses in Chapter 6 and 7 that our old self is dead, we are now living in the flesh:

Romans 7

For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. (Rom 7:14)

For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. (Rom 7:15)

So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. (Rom 7:17)

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. (Rom 7:18)

For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. (Rom 7:19)

But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. (Rom 7:20)

but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. (Rom 7:23)

Romans 6

knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; (Rom 6:6)

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, (Rom 6:12) and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. (Rom 6:13)

May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? (Rom 6:2)

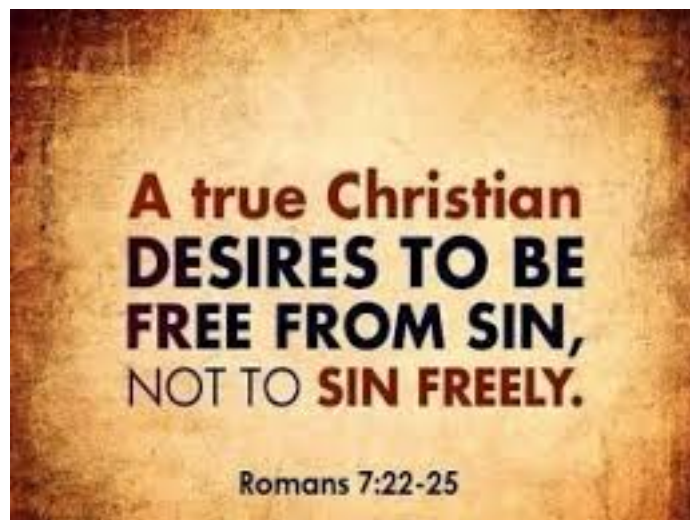
But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, (Rom 6:17) and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. (Rom 6:18)

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. (Rom 6:20)

But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. (Rom 6:22)

We cannot be more perfect, or serve God more at a given moment, than to the degree that we have received light. But we need to walk in the Spirit, which means acting according to the light that we receive. Then we will get to see more of that flesh, more of that body of sin that is to be destroyed as time goes by. We count ourselves dead to sin (Romans 6:11), so when a new area is revealed to us in God's light, that sin is also crucified. Then we are disciples of Jesus, denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily. (Luke 9:23-24)

This is a glorious way to walk on! We should not feel bad when God gives us more light and we get to see our sin in this light, but we should rejoice and be happy. Now we can do something about it! Now we can put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit. (Romans 8:13; James 1:2-3) It is not the Spirit that does it for us; we need to do it by the Spirit. Then we enter into sanctification – more and more liberation as our body of sin gets destroyed little by little and is replaced by a new creation – the virtues, the life of Christ, divine nature!



David Jeremiah: “There are very few things that divide Christians like their attitude towards the law. The two towers of legalism and license polarize many congregations. Legalism is the tendency to reduce one’s relationship with God to a set of rules which can, in turn, be used as a standard to measure spirituality. License is the improper application of our liberty for the purpose of gratifying the flesh rather than allowing the Holy Spirit to control our lives.”