

## Rom. 7:24-25 (WCF 19:6-7) "Free to Serve"

**For the Children:** In life, people can be free and not free at the same time. A criminal may get free of the police and be free from jail; but he is not free of his sins and crimes. A person who does not love God may feel he is free of Him, but he is trapped in his sins as well. And a believer is free from punishment of his sins, but he is not free to ignore the Lord and carry on sinning as if God did not care. A believer is not free from God's rules for living. For the Lord has chosen His people to be like *holy* priests. He has also put the love of God within us. That love makes us want to please the Lord, not go against His ways. **Questions:** What is the ongoing struggle for God's children? In what ways are we free from God's Law, and in what ways are we not free? When does our struggle end?

---

### **Introduction:**

#### **First Point: The Christian's Warfare**

- 1) The Conflict of Two Natures: Only the believer has 2 natures, the old self that is aligned with sin, and the new self aligned with God (Eph. 4:22-24, Rom. 6:6). The sharp contrast is put here in terms of "flesh" (human nature as dominated by sin); "the members of the body" (the body parts that sin uses to show the remaining influence of the "law of sin"; in contrast to the "inner man" (the most central and determinative part of the regenerate man, with his "mind" that desires the things of God and serves His Law. Failure in this conflict leads the believer to cry out in misery, "Who will set me free?")
- 2) An Ongoing Struggle: Some say that the contrast is between Paul before conversion and then after. V. 25 shows that the struggle is ongoing, present-tense – "I *am* serving..." That this refers to the Christian's struggle is true to our experience. Moreover, the joyful agreement with God's Law (v. 22 etc) could not be said of an unregenerate man

#### **Second Point: The Christian's Freedom**

- 1) Thanks to God Through Christ: The cry of misery is not despair. It does show that the Christian cannot solve his own problem of remaining sin. But there is a solution in Christ (v. 25).
- 2) Free from the Body of This Death: We are not set free from the body of this death – this struggle – in this life (Rom. 8:23). Only in the next when our body dies, will we be without sin. See Phlp. 3:21, 1 Cor. 15:50ff. Regeneration does not end the struggle, though we are justified when we have faith in Christ.
- 3) Free from the Law: This freedom is not freedom in every sense from God's Law. The apostle is very positive about the Law (vss. 14,16,22,25). We are freed from the law as a "covenant of works" (WCF 19:6). The believer is neither justified by keeping it nor condemned for breaking it. We are also free from the ceremonial law and the numerous rules set when the Law was a "tutor" for under-age children (Gal. 4:1ff). But we are still "serving the law of God" (v. 25)

#### **Third Point: The Christian's Service**

- 1) Serving the Law: The freedom of God's people is for service. V. 25 means we are still "bond-servants" of the Law. Hence WCF 19:6 says we are told our duty by the Law and directed and bound to walk accordingly. See 1 Cor. 7:19, Jam. 1:11, Rom. 6:17, 2:8, 2 Cor. 2:9, 1 Jn. 5:2-3, 2 Jn:6, 1 Pet. 1:14-15
- 2) Serving with the Mind: However, we serve the Law now with the "mind," with a whole-hearted inner agreement and desire wrought by God's Spirit (Rom. 7:6,16,22). This was promised for the new covenant (Jer. 31:31ff). The Spirit's work makes grace and law work in harmony in us, so that we want to obey (WCF 19:7)
- 3) A Useful Friend: WCF 19:6 mentions also that the Law shows us our sin and our need of Christ, helps us fight against remaining sin and encourages us with the promise of gracious rewards for obedience. These good uses make the Law a most useful friend and master – but only if we first have Christ as our great Friend and Master

### **Conclusion:**