

Romans

Romans Chapter Seven

Romans 7: 5-6

June 27, 2010

This is lesson number **46** in our exposition of the Book of Romans.

The Theme of the Letter

“For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**, for it is the **power** of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the **righteousness of God** is **revealed** from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’ ” Romans 1:16-17

Title: “Bear Fruit to God’

Rom 7:1-6

7:1 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? 2 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. 3 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. 4 **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**. 5 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. 6 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.

So far in our exposition of Romans, Chapter 7, we have learned that the believer has died to the law. The believer has died to any system of law, that would enslave him in legalism; he has died to any form of law-keeping that would give him any hope that he can be justified before God by his obedience. God justifies the ungodly! But we also have learned that obedience is a necessary consequence of being justified.

We have learned that according to the law, a death must occur in order that we may be married to another. And so we have died to the law in order that we may be married to Christ. If we have not died to law, any relationship that we may claim to have with Christ, is not to be married to Him, it is an adulterous relationship. Only when we are married to Christ, having died to the law, can we **bear fruit to God**. That is the **purpose** of having died to the law, so that we may **bear fruit to God**. And the fruit to God is **holiness**, without which no one will see the Lord. Heb 12:14

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True holiness does not come from law-keeping and legalism. True holiness does not come from obedience out of fear of retribution from God.

A saving relationship with God, with Abba Father, is one of trust and assurance. Holiness is a life devoted to the praise and worship of God.

In the last lesson, I offered what I believe to be seven characteristics of anyone who is married to Christ - simply put - a Christian. These seven characteristics are not a new law system; they are not a set of rules to check off; they are not legalism, they are things that a believer will **want to do** because he loves Jesus.

This is who you are!

1. A personal knowledge and relationship with Jesus Christ .
2. Authority and Sufficiency of the Scripture over my life.
3. A private prayer and devotional life.
4. Love for God above love for self.
5. Love for others as much as love for self.
6. Fellowship with the saints. Faithful church attendance.
7. Generous financial support of the local church.

You can't be five out of seven; or a "72 percent" Christian.

How do we live before God in holiness?

Don't look for rules, look for principles.

Remember the "Golden Rule" in Matthew?

The world's golden rule is "He who has the gold makes the rules."

Matthew 7:12 Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

This is not a law, it is a principle by which you can know how to deal with any situation that you find yourself in.

whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them

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Rabbi Hillel taught whatever you would not that men do unto you do not so to them. That is negative.

There is so much more that could be said on verse 4, about how we died to the law through the body of Christ. How we did not cause our death to law. How Christ did it in His body on the cross, and that we were in Christ and that He was raised from the dead.

There is no Gospel without the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

That Jesus was raised from the dead, never to die again, is the basis for our fruit to God. We must find our hope and strength in what Jesus has already done for us; not in any law system which will only enslave us and confirm our condemnation.

So now let's consider verses 5-6:

5 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**. 6 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.

Frequently I quote Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones who I believe to be the greatest expositor of the Bible of the 20th Century. On Friday evenings from 1955 to 1968, when he retired at age 69, for 13 years, he preached Romans.

According to Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones it is essential that we understand these two verses because the remainder of Chapter 7 and on through 8:4, are an expansion or explanation of 7:5-6. Paul's style is to give a concise statement, then expand on it and then give a conclusion or summary.

And so, verses 5 & 6 are the key to Chapter 7. If we don't get it right in these two verses, the rest of the chapter will be very confused.

We have said a lot about the law. It is difficult to know in each instance of Paul's letters whether he means "The Law," i.e. Moses, or the law principle.

My conclusion is that here Paul means the law principle because the application is to all men and not only to Jews. He is writing to Jews and Greeks, to all men. Keep

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in mind the law principle includes the moral aspects of the Law given through Moses.

If we are to understand the purpose of the law, it is to be found in these verses and what follows as an expansion of them.

The law, any law system, cannot **justify** a man before God. That simply means that works of obedience cannot cause God to clear your guilt.

Neither can the law **sanctify** a man. That is where legalism will condemn a man. The idea that you must add something to what Jesus has already done will condemn you because you are not trusting Jesus completely.

That is what Galatians teaches us. Don't think that when you believe in Christ and are justified, and born again, that then there is a set of rules to follow that will make you an acceptable Christian. That would mean that you are still under law and not in Christ.

A faithful follower of our study in Romans sent me a quote from John Stott's commentary on Galatians 5:1:

“This freedom, as the whole epistle and this context makes plain, is not primarily from sin, but rather freedom from the law. What Christ has done in liberating us, according to Paul's emphasis here, is not so much to set our will free from the bondage of sin as to set our conscience free from the guilt of sin. The Christian freedom he describes is freedom from conscience, freedom from the tyranny of the law, the dreadful struggle to keep the law, with a view of winning the favour of God and access to God through Christ.”

So my seven characteristics are what describes what you have become and not a set of rules to follow in order to become a Christian and not a legalistic formula in order to keep you saved.

But the law is not dead, nor is it useless. More on the law later.

- Let's look at the phrases in our text to be sure that we know what is being said.

For when we were in the flesh

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The first thing to see is that “For” is a bridge to connect verses 5& 6 to verse 4 and so to explain them.

4 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.

For when we were **in the flesh**

The phrase, **in the flesh**, is used in several ways, but this is the first time he uses it in this manner in this epistle.

Sometimes “**the flesh**” means all of humanity, or humanity in general:

Isaiah 40:6

The voice said, "Cry out!"
And he said, "What shall I cry?"
"All **flesh** is grass,
And all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.

Sometimes “**the flesh**” means the physical body:

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in **the flesh** I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. **Galatians 2:20**

Sometimes “**the flesh**” means the sensual part of our nature:

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 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. [stop]

Remember that Romans is a commentary on Galatians.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of **the flesh** are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. **Galatians 5:16-23**

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Here in Romans 7: 5, the Apostle obviously does not mean all of humanity because he is addressing Christians; something that **was true** of them, but no longer describes how they are.

It cannot mean our physical body, he says “For when **we were** in the flesh,” and we are still here in our physical body.

A similar argument is made that he is not referring to the sensual part of our nature because that too has not been completely eradicated.

Whatever he means is something that once was true of a believer and is now no longer true of a believer.

What then, is the meaning? Well, what is the **context** of the verse? “In the flesh,” as it is used here, is the opposite of “life in the Spirit.”

Cf. Gal 5:17

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.

We were “in the flesh,” but not any longer.

We are still humans; we still have our physical body; and we still have sensual desires. Then what has changed forever?

We have changed ownership. We were slaves to sin but now we are slaves to obedience; to righteousness.

We were in the realm of sin; now we are in the realm of God.

We are in the Spirit; we walk in the Spirit; we live in the Spirit.

...that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. **Romans 8:4**

Remember what Jesus told Nicodemus? You must have a new beginning.

John 3:6

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

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Being a Christian is an “either/or” status.
Either you are a real Christian or you are not a Christian at all.

For example, there is a false teaching that has been around for a long time called the “Carnal Christian Theory.”

Many Baptists use the slogan, “Once saved, always saved.” Many times I have explained that if you define salvation according to the Bible that is a true statement. But it is often used to excuse someone who made a “decision” or a profession of faith years ago, but has not been in church for years; someone who has no present interest in Jesus Christ.

This false teaching says that a man is born into this world unregenerate and that much is true. But, they say, when a man is saved, he is still carnal.

Carnal means “in the flesh.” So they have a man who is saved, but is still carnal. Then, maybe, if he chooses, but not necessarily, he grows in grace and becomes spiritual.

The Bible does not teach any such thing.

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. **Romans 8:8-9**

But doesn't First Corinthians 3 say that some Christians were still carnal?

3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal? **1 Corinthians 3:1-4**
What the Apostle means in the Corinthian passage is that some of the Christians were acting as though they were not saved.

When you compare Scripture with Scripture, Romans 8 is too clear in its meaning not to let it interpret First Corinthians 3.

We once were dead in sin, in the flesh, unregenerate.
But now we are in the Spirit.

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To be “in the flesh” in this context is to be still lost and condemned.

- Next there is the phrase “the motions, or passions of sin.”
Passions, affections, and sinful lusts.

False teachers will try to say that all sex, even married sex, is wrong.
They will say that eating certain foods is wrong.

They will teach that denying natural desires and avoiding society will make you holy. Paul warned Timothy about such perversions.

4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. **1 Timothy 4:1-3**

There are natural appetites and they are not sinful. It is the perversion of these natural desires that comes from being in the flesh.

- The next phrase is remarkable:
For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions
which were aroused by [through] the law

It is hard to imagine Paul, the Pharisee, saying this about the law.

But he is not saying that the law caused us to sin.

What the law does is to stir up sin that is already present;
the law aggravates sin.

- **were at work in our members**

The word “work” is “working powerfully.”
Working with the power of God.

- **in our members**

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We saw back in 6:13 and 19 that “members” includes our thoughts and not only our body. Jesus said that fornication and murders originate in the heart. “In our members” includes our thoughts and imaginations, our mind and what interests us.

to bear **fruit to death**. Cf. **Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death,

Someone said, to be born once is to die twice;
but to be born twice is to die once.

We must see the contrast between bearing fruit to God {4} and fruit to death.

Physical death, as well as spiritual death, is the result of the one sin of the one man: Adam. If a man dies physically in an unregenerate state, or “in the flesh,” he will also die the second death which is eternal separation from God.

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power. **Revelation 20:6**

This a terrible truth, that a man who is “in the flesh” may be moral, he may be religious, but if he is under law and in the flesh, he is a lost man.

So while the law cannot justify and the law cannot sanctify; it does arouse sin.

Romans 5:20 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound.

All the law can do is aggravate sin, it records sin and keeps accounts, it defines sin, but it cannot justify or sanctify a man.

- Verse 6, as does verse 4, defines a Christian:

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.

“But now....” Twice before we have a “But now.” Cf 6:22; 3:21

And the question suggested by Lloyd-Jones is: Do you have a “But now” in your life?

You were in the flesh, but now!

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There are no degrees of being a Christian. King Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian." Paul answered

Acts 26:24-29

²⁴ Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"

²⁵ But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. ²⁶ For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. ²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe."

²⁸ Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

²⁹ And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains."

Yes, there are "babes in Christ." We don't become mature in our personal sanctification immediately upon being justified. But a man that claims to have been saved for twenty years and is still a babe in Christ? Not likely.

It is true that teachers and elders are held to a higher standard.

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. **James 3:1**

1 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. **1 Peter 5:1-4**

Those verses do not elevate a man that is an elder to a higher spiritual level, they simply say that elders will be held accountable for how they shepherd the flock. They should serve as examples, and not as lords over the flock.

Chapter 8 expands verse 6, so we need to understand it correctly or we will be in a muddle when we look at Chapter 8.

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- But now we have been **delivered** from the law

We have been delivered, once and forever, from the law.

Delivered; discharged; set at liberty; set free.

E.g., when I was discharged from the Army Reserve with the rank of captain, I was no longer required to salute a higher ranking officer. I respected them, but they no longer had any authority over me. In the same way, we are discharged from the law. I have great respect for God's holy law, but I am not under law!

The woman who had a husband was under the law of her husband until she was loosed {discharged} from that law at his death.

What we must understand is that the believer is absolutely, completely, and forever set free from the law. Free from its condemnation, 8:1.

Having died to the law, and being married to Christ, the law cannot return and place its claims on me. Christ has satisfied the law and I am in Christ!

- This next phrase is a fine example of how a translation of the original languages into English can give a different meaning than what is intended.

Romans 7:6

But now we are delivered from **the law, that being dead** wherein we were held... KJV

But now we have been delivered from the law, **having died to** what we were held by...
NKJV

But now, **by dying to** what once bound us, we have been released from the law... NIV

But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound...
NAS

But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive... RSV

But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive.... **ESV**

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The law has not died as KJV might imply.

A word to those who may have been seduced by the KJV only movement.

Here is a photocopy of part of John 3 from the 1611 KJV. Read John 3:16.
The words are the same but the spelling is vastly different.

8 The winde bloweth where it listeth, and thou knowest not the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : So is every one that is borne of the Spirit.

9 Nicodemus answered, and said vnto him, How can these things be?

10 Jesus answered, and saide vnto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things ?

11 Verely, verely I say vnto thee, We speake that we doe know, and testifi e that *wee* have seene; and yee receiue not our witness.

12 If I haue tolde you earthly things, and ye beleue not: how shall ye beleue if I tell you of heauenly things?

13 And no man hath ascended vp to heauen, but hee that came downe from heauen, *euen* the Sonne of man which is in heauen.

14 And as Moses lifted vp the serpent in the wilderness : euen so must the Sonne of man be lifted vp :

15 That whosoever beleueth in him, should not perish, but haue eternall life.

16 * For God so loued y' world, that he gaue his only begotten Sonne : that whosoever beleueth in him , should not perish, but haue euerlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Sonne into the world to condemne the world : but that the world through him might be saued.

18 He that beleueth on him, is not condemned: but hee that beleueth not, is condemned already, because he hath not beleued in the Name of the onely begotten Sonne of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loued darknesse rather then light, because their deedes were euill.

Here is my point, if the original 1611 KJV can be updated, why can't another faithful translation be just as good? The KJV has served the church for nearly 400 years, but it is a translation and men can and do make mistakes.

- Discuss the nature of translations.

Formal equivalence {word-for-word} KJV, NKJV, ESV;

Functional equivalence {thought-for -thought} NIV

Paraphrase: Philips, The Living Bible, Good News, et al.

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Then there are translations that have a bias such as the NEB in which the translators allowed no Messianic prophecy in the OT. Genesis 3:15 translates “seed” as “brood.” Seed can be singular or plural, but brood can only be plural and thus cannot refer to Christ.

Another example can be found in 1 Samuel 17 where David fights and kills Goliath. **1 Samuel 17:29**

And David said, "What have I done now? Is there not a cause?" NKJV

And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause? KJV

And David said, What have I done now? ESV

As I was reading through the ESV and came to the account of David and Goliath, I noticed that the phrase “Is there not a cause?” was not there.

So I looked it up and sure enough, while the Hebrew word can be translated “cause,” the context suggests that David was saying, “What have I done now? I was only asking a question.”

Here is the point, I hope. A few years ago I preached a sermon on the phrase, “Is there not a cause?”

It may have been a passable topical sermon, but it obviously was not an expository sermon or I would have seen what the Hebrew language said and not what an English translator wanted it to say.

Now I am not attacking the KJV. All I want you to hear is that you need to read a modern, but a faithful translation. If you insist on the KJV, as it exists today be prepared to look up words that are out of use, such as "wot."

Here are a few of the 330 archaic words in the KJV that must be explained to be understood in 2010.

<http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/kjvwords.html>

Ado	Brigandine	Murrain
Affright	Bruit	Ouches
Afoot	Buckler	Palmer-worm

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Afore	Calkers	Parbar
Afresh	Cankerworm	Phylacteries
Ague	Carbuncle	Pommels
Alamoth	Cauls	Potsherd
Albeit	Chambering	Rereward
Alleluia	Chamberlain	Sackbut
Alms	Cockle	Scrip
Ambassage	Cotes	Seethe
Ambushment	Crisping-pin	Soothsayer
Amen	Distaff	Sop
Amerce	Draught-house	Stomacher
Artificer	Dregs	Taches
Bake-meats	Emerods	Talent
Balm	Eschew	Wimple
Basilisk	Fatling	Watchings
Battlement	Fining pot	Winefat
Bed-chamber	Fitches	
Beeves	Flagon	
Behead	Frontlets	
Behemoth	Greaves	
Bestead	Habergeon	
Betroth	Harsha	
Bewray	Hart	
Bitumen	He-ass	
Blains	Hireling	
Bolled	Hough	
Bolster	Inkhorn	
Booty	Kine	
Bosses	Knop	
Botch	Laver	
Bowels	Lees	
Bramble	Lucre	
Breastplate	Mote	
Breeches	Mite	

To continue:

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If all you read is a paraphrase like The Living Bible, you will mostly be reading a commentary by the author and not a translation.

- Back to our thoughts about dying to the law.

And so the law has not died, but the believer has died to the law.

Paul asks in 3:31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

And in this chapter at verse 7, he defends the law in its true purpose.

We will take that up, D.V.

We died to the law for a purpose:

so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

We are set free from the law that we should serve.... How?

To bear fruit to God in holiness, in the newness of the Spirit...

Not very long ago I asked a man to tell me why he thought the Lord saved him. His answer was to keep him out of hell.

No, I said, that will be the result of being saved, but it is not the purpose.

just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ... **Ephesians 1: 4**

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: **1 Thessalonians 4:3**

This should shut the mouths of the critics of Paul who said that preaching grace will lead a man to antinomianism, that a man who is saved can continue in sin.

No! It is exactly the opposite. **A man saved by grace will pursue holiness.**

If that is not true of a man, then he has no Scriptural basis to believe he is saved.

We serve, we are slaves to obedience to God.

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Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. **2 Corinthians 5:17**

That is what Jesus told Nicodemus, you must be born again, become a new creation, having died to the law, you can now serve in the newness of the Spirit.

and not in the oldness of the letter.

- The word “letter” is “the writing.”

The Law was “the writing,” so referred to because the Law was written by the finger of God of tablets of stone.

We must be careful here. The apostle does not mean that we are trying to keep the Law in a new spirit or attitude.

We are now in the realm of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us and we are not under law. We are discharged from the law forever!

God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." **John 4:24**

I will close with a reminder of what Jesus was teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. He did not do away with the Law, He corrected the way it was being applied in the letter, i.e., If a man had not actually committed the act of adultery, he was not guilty of adultery - that is the letter of the Law.

The spirit of the Law is what Jesus taught with authority, that if a man looks on a woman to lust after her, to desire to possess her, he has committed adultery.

So Paul instructs us “And do not present your members {thoughts and actions} as instruments {weapons} of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” Romans 6:13

This is the most wonderful freedom, to be dead to any law system, and alive to God. This freedom does not lead to licentiousness, just the opposite, it frees you to serve God and to bear fruit to God in holiness.

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5 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**. 6 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.

I need no other argument, I need no other plea;
It is enough that Jesus died, and that he died for me.

“No Other Plea” on page 146