

Our Relation to the Law of God

Romans 7:1-6

Romans 7:1–6 (NKJV)

7 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.

Introduction

It really should not be any shock to us when we see that the world or the culture that we live in has no desire for the law of God. Whenever the lost work feverishly to remove every word of the Law of God from the public life. It should not be no surprise that they do not want bibles in the government schools. When the very mention of God's name is forbidden other than when used in a curse word.

We should not be amazed...

When monuments are removed, words are blotted out and the name of God suppressed.

Romans 8:5–8 (NKJV)

⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not

subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Hatred for the law God is a natural response of the sinner. He desires freedom from the law but **not through Christ.**

The Sinner has a number of ways to free himself from the Law of God.

1. Ignore it. Give not regard to it. Considers it a non issue. who cares attitude.
2. Redefine it. Make God say something he did not say. Define words away culturally --that was then.....
3. Suppress it. - Don't allow it to be spoken, written, repeated, studied or obeyed.
4. Remove it. Take Bibles out of public life.
Remove all references to God and His Law

I am not shocked when I see this. It is just another confirmation that the Word of God is indeed the true Word of God that gives an accurate picture about man.

But when it comes to the church. I would expect an exaltation of the law of God. A reading, and exposition of the Law. An understanding of its purity, its preeminence and position in scripture.

Yet as has happened repeatedly in church history, the Law of God is under attack from within.

Churches and leadership within churches and seminaries are looking at the law differently. Some are redefining it. Some are relocating it to a bygone era never to be seen again. Others are ignoring it. Some are saying that we can know purity and holiness without it, just give me Jesus.

Some are taking verses like
Romans 6:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for **you are not under law** but under grace.

and saying we have no relation to the Law anymore. It plays no role in our lives. We are free from it, not under it and if we no longer read or had the OT it would not matter.

HOWEVER

As you study the Old Testament, you cannot help being struck by the dignity and honor accorded the revealed law of God—

also referred to by such names as His statutes, commandments, ordinances, and testimonies.

— God inspired Moses to write:
Deuteronomy 6:1–9 (NKJV)

6 “Now this *is* the commandment, *and these are* the statutes and judgments which the Lord your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe *them* in the land which you are crossing over to possess, ² that you may fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. ³ Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe *it*, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the Lord God of your fathers has promised you—‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’

⁴ “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord *is* one! ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

⁶ “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Solomon wrote,

Eccl 12:13

¹³ The end of the matter; (when) all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man

[The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ec 12:13). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Psalm 119 uses some **ten** different synonyms for God’s law. The writer declares:

Psalm 119:1 (NKJV)

- 1 Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, Who walk
in the law of the Lord!
- 4 You have commanded *us*
To keep Your precepts diligently.
- 5 Oh, that my ways were directed
To keep Your statutes!
- 11 Your word I have hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You.
- 12 Blessed *are* You, O Lord!
Teach me Your statutes.
- 16 I will delight myself in Your statutes;
I will not forget Your word.
- 34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your
law;
Indeed, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.
- 97 Oh, how I love Your law!
It *is* my meditation all the day.
- 160 The entirety of Your word *is* truth,
And every one of Your righteous judgments
endures forever.
- 165 Great peace have those who love Your law,
And nothing causes them to stumble.
- 172 My tongue shall speak of Your word,
For all Your commandments *are* righteousness.

To his father-in-law Jethro, Moses explained that his primary purpose as the divinely-appointed leader of Israel was to “make known the statutes of God and His laws” (Ex. 18:16).

Isaiah proclaimed, “The Lord was pleased for His righteousness’ sake to make the law great and glorious” (Isa. 42:21).

The great king David was inspired to pen this definitive declaration of the purpose, the eminence, and the grandeur of God’s law:

Ps.19:7-10

“The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb”.

The last command given by God in the Old Testament is

“Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel” (Mal. 4:4).

God’s law was so dominant in ancient Israel that many Jews had made it virtually an idol.

In the Babylonian Talmud, the primary collection of ancient rabbinical commentary on the Torah (the Mosaic law),

Rabbi Raba wrote, “The Holy One created man’s evil inclination but created the Torah [the Mosaic law] to overcome it” (*Baba Bathra*, 16a).

Raba’s comment demonstrates how high the law was elevated in the minds of most Jews.

Rabbi Judah, another noted talmudic commentator, said,

“The nature of the Holy One differs from that of mortal men. When a man prescribes a remedy, it may benefit one individual but injure another. But God gave the Torah to Israel as a source of healing for all” (*Erubin*, 54a).

By the time of Christ, many Jews considered obedience to God’s law to be not only the demonstration of salvation’s godliness that God intended it to be but also the means of salvation,

which God never intended. Faithfulness to the law came to supersede faith in the God who had given the law. As illustrated throughout the gospel accounts, such Jews often accused Jesus of contradicting and disobeying the Mosaic law.

Before his conversion, Paul (then known as Saul) was the epitome of Jewish legalism. In his letter to the Philippian church he testifies to the trust he once had in his own human observance of the law. “If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh,” he wrote, “I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless” (Phil. 3:4–6).

To make clear His own high regard for the divine law given through Moses, Jesus declared early in His ministry, “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so

teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:17–19).

Paul testifies that the oracles of God (Rom. 3:2; cf. Acts 7:38), which were delivered and ordained by God’s own angels (Heb. 2:2; Acts 7:53), could not be anything but sacred and inviolable.

The apostle had already testified: “Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law” (Rom. 3:31).

He later asserts unequivocally that, despite its limitations and inability to save, “the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good” (7:12; cf. 1 Tim. 1:8).

Paul had also declared, however, that “by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:19–20),

and **Romans 5:20**

“the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more”.

Christians are not saved by the law and...
Romans 6:14
“are not under law, but under grace” (6:14).

In chapter 6 Paul explains
Romans 6:14 (NKJV)
14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for
you are not under law but under grace.

In Chapter 7 Paul explains the second part of
of the verse.

Romans 6:14 (NKJV)
14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for
you are not under law but under grace.

Knowing that his readers, especially Jewish believers, would still have a great many questions about the law in relation to their faith in Christ, Paul continues in the present passage to explain that critical relationship.

In the last part of Romans 6, he expounds the first truth of verse 14, namely, that believers are no longer under the law regarding its power to condemn. In chapter 7 he expounds the second truth in that verse, that believers are now under grace.

Yet, in doing so, he refers to the **law twenty-three times in this chapter, eight times in the first six verses.**

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1991). *Romans* (Vol. 1, pp. 355-359). Chicago: Moody Press.

- I. The Axiom
- II. The Analogy
- III. The Application
- IV. The Affirmation.

I. The Axiom

7 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?

The tactful and rhetorical question **Do you not know?** indicates the apostle is once again using a self-evident truth as the foundation of his argument.

The term **brethren** refers to Paul's Jewish brethren (those who know the law). He may be emphasizing this term to assure Jewish believers of his sensitivity to their deep concern about his seeming denigration of the Mosaic **law**.

His primary point here, however, relates to *any* law, as indicated by the anarthrous construction (the absence of a definite article before a noun, in this case, law) in the Greek text.

The literal translation is simply, “to those who know law.”

It should be obvious, he was saying, that any **law**—whether Roman, Greek, or even God-given biblical law—**has jurisdiction over a person only as long as he lives.**

If a criminal dies, he is no longer subject to prosecution and punishment, no matter how numerous and heinous his crimes may have been.

Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy, was never brought to trial for that act because he himself was assassinated before his trial began. **Law is binding only on the living.**

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1991). [*Romans*](#) (Vol. 1, p. 359). Chicago: Moody Press.

This is self evident truth.

Those who have died are no longer under the law.

The Police do not fine or give tickets to dead people.

II. The Analogy

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 *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.

Contrary to the confusing interpretations of some commentators, the apostle is not presenting a complex allegory, or an allegory of any kind.

He is simply making an analogy to marriage law to illustrate the single point he has just mentioned, namely, that no law has jurisdiction over a person after he is dead.

This passage has absolutely nothing to say about divorce and cannot legitimately be used as an argument from silence to teach that divorce is never justified for a Christian and, consequently, that only the death of a spouse gives the right to remarry.

(Such a discussion requires treatment of other passages, such Matt. 5:31–32; 19:3–12; and 1 Cor. 7:10–15.)

Paul is calling attention to the fact that marriage laws are binding only as long as both partners are alive. Being **joined to another man** while her husband is alive makes a woman **an adulteress**, an offender against the law. But to be joined in marriage to another man after **her husband dies** is perfectly legal and acceptable.

marriage vows and covenant
“we say till death to we part.”

A widow is absolutely **free from the law** that bound her to her former husband. Paul, in fact, encouraged young widows to remarry. As long as they were joined to a believer (**see 1 Cor. 7:39**), such widows, he says, should “get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach” (1 Tim. 5:14).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1991). *Romans* (Vol. 1, pp. 359–360). Chicago: Moody Press.

III. The Application

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.

Therefore marks the transition from Paul's brief axiom and analogy to his application,

and his adding **my** before a second use of **brethren** makes that term even gentler and more personal than in verse 1.

It is at this point that Paul begins his spiritual teaching in the passage. Just as the death of her husband frees a woman from the marriage that had bound them together, he declares, **you** (that is, Christians) **were made to die to the Mosaic Law**.

Were made to die translates the aorist

tense of *thanatoō*, which emphasizes the completeness and finality of death.

The verb is **also passive**, indicating that believers do not die naturally or put themselves to death but have been **made to die** by the divine act of God in response to faith in His Son.

thanatoó: to put to death AORIST PASSIVE

Original Word: θανατόω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: thanatoó

Phonetic Spelling: (than-at-o'-o)

Definition: to put to death

Usage: I put to death, subdue; pass: I am in danger of death, am dead to, am rid of, am parted from.

When did we die???

Romans 6:3–6 (NKJV)

³ Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

Galatians 2:19–20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. ²⁰ 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.

⁴ Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ,

Through the body of Christ, who suffered the penalty of death on their behalf, believers are freed from their relationship to the law, just as a widow is freed from her relationship to her former husband.

_____ 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.

And like that widow, believers are free to **be joined to another** husband, as it were, to Jesus Christ, **Him who was raised from the dead**.

Salvation brings a complete change of spiritual relationship, just as remarriage after the death of a spouse brings a complete change of marital relationship. Believers are no longer married to the law but are now married to Jesus Christ, the divine Bridegroom of His church.

The underlying emphasis of the book of Romans is that salvation produces total transformation.

. The purpose of our being joined to Christ is **that we might bear fruit for God**. “For we are His

workmanship,” Paul tells the Ephesians, “created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

The transformed life *will bear fruit for God.*

The great theologian Charles Hodge wrote,

“As far as we are concerned, redemption is in order to [produce] holiness. We are delivered from the law, that we may be united to Christ; and we are united to Christ, that we may bring forth fruit unto God....” (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.], p. 220).

Godly fruit exists basically in two dimensions: **attitude and action.**

The fruit of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s life is manifested internally in his **attitudes** of “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22–23).

As far as godly *actions* are concerned,

Jesus said, **John 15**

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vine dresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit,

He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit”

The writer of Hebrews Hebrews 13:15 speaks of “the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name”,

and Paul prayed that Philippian believers would be prepared for the day of Christ by being “filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God” (Phil. 1:11).

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.

In verse 5 Paul reminds his readers of **four things** that characterized their old lives as unbelievers.

First, they were in the flesh. The unredeemed, unregenerate person can operate only in the area of **the flesh**, the natural and sinful sphere of fallen mankind.

In Scripture, the term **flesh** is used in several ways. It is used in a **morally and spiritually neutral sense** to describe man’s physical being. In that sense, when He became God incarnate, the Lord Himself “became flesh, and dwelt among us” (John

1:14). In fact, one of the certain marks of a true believer is that he “confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh” (1 John 4:2).

Flesh is also used in a moral and ethical sense, but always with an evil connotation. Paul repeatedly uses it in that way in Romans 8, Galatians 5, and Ephesians 2, and in every instance it refers to man’s unredeemed humanness. A person who still lives in the realm of the flesh cannot belong to Christ.

“You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit,” Paul says of believers, “if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him” (Rom. 8:9).

It is possible, of course, for a believer to fall back into some of the ways of the flesh, which he does whenever he sins. Although a believer can never again be in the flesh, the flesh is still able to manifest itself in the believer.

Second, the believer’s old life was characterized by **sinful passions**, the impulses to think and to do evil that are generated in those who are in the flesh.

Third, the believer’s old life was characterized by his sinful passions continually being **aroused by the Law**.

One wonders how a good thing, such as the holy **Law** of God, can arouse that which is sinful. First of all it does so because, apart from knowledge of **the Law**, a person would not know good from evil (see 7:7). **The Law**, in declaring what is wrong, also arouses evil in the unregenerate person because his naturally rebellious nature makes him want to do the very things he learns are forbidden.

Fourth, the believer's old life was characterized by the unceasing **work** of his sinful passions **in the members of his body to bear fruit for death**. *Work is from a Greek verb meaning to operate with power. We get our word energy from it.* The phrase **members of our body** sums up the whole person in all his components as being the victim of **sinful passions** energized to produce the **fruit** of ultimate and eternal divine judgment in **death**.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1991). [Romans](#) (Vol. 1, pp. 360–363). Chicago: Moody Press.

IV. The Affirmation.

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.

6 But now

The transitional phrase **but now** introduces the heart of this brief passage, which presents a radical contrast to the description just given (v. 5) of the unregenerate man.

v 6 b

have **been delivered** from the law,

been delivered AORIST PASSIVE

katargeó: to render inoperative, abolish

Original Word: καταργέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: katargeó

Phonetic Spelling: (kat-arg-eh'-o)

Definition: to render inoperative, abolish

Usage: (a) I make idle (inactive), make of no effect, annul, abolish, bring to naught, (b) I discharge, sever, separate from.

2673 katargéō (from 2596 /katá, "down to a point," intensifying 691 /argéō, "inactive, idle") – properly,

idle down, rendering something inert ("completely inoperative"); i.e. being of no effect (totally without force, completely brought down); done away with, cause to cease and therefore abolish; make invalid, abrogate (bring to nought); "to make idle or inactive" (so also in Euripides, Phoen., 753, Abbott-Smith).

["2673 (katargéō) means 'to make completely inoperative' or 'to put out of use,' according to TDNT (1.453)" (J. Rodman Williams, Renewal Theology "God, the World & Redemption," 389).]

We, that is, believers in Jesus Christ (see v. 4), **have been released from** our old bondage to **the Law, having died to that by which we were** formerly **bound** in the flesh.

Therefore, when a person dies, he is discharged of all legal liabilities and penalties. Because we, as believers, died in Jesus Christ when He paid our sin debt on Calvary, we were thereby **released from** our moral and spiritual liabilities and penalties under God's **Law**. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree' " (Gal. 3:13).

Paul has already declared as forcefully and unambiguously as possible that freedom from the law's bondage does *not* mean freedom to do what the law forbids (6:1, 15; cf. 3:31).

Freedom from the law does not bring freedom to sin but just the opposite—freedom for the first time to do what is righteous, a freedom the unregenerate person does not and cannot have.

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.

Paul's point is not simply that the redeemed person is *able* to do what is right but that he *will* do what is right. In response to their faith in His Son, Jesus Christ, God releases men from their bondage to the law **so that** they will **serve**.

Many English renderings of *douleuō* (**serve**) are somewhat ambiguous and do not carry the full force of the Greek term. This verb does not describe the voluntary service of a hired worker, who is able to refuse an order and look for another employer if he so desires. It refers exclusively to the service of

a slave, whose sole purpose for existence is to obey the will of his master.

Kenneth Wuest gives this accurate and beautiful rendering of verse 6:

“But now, we were discharged from the law, having died to that in which we were constantly held down, insomuch that we are rendering habitually a slave’s obedience” (*Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament*, vol. 1 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973], p. 117).

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.

palaios: old, ancient

Original Word: παλαιός, ἄ, ὄν

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: palaios

Phonetic Spelling: (pal-ah-yos')

Definition: old, ancient

Usage: old, ancient, not new or recent.

[Matthew 9:16 Adj-DNS](#)

GRK: ἐπὶ ἱματίῳ παλαιῷ αἴρει γὰρ

NAS: cloth **on an old** garment;

KJV: cloth unto **an old** garment, for

INT: on clothing **old** tears away indeed

[Matthew 9:17 Adj-AMP](#)

GRK: εἰς ἀσκοῦς παλαιούς εἰ δὲ

NAS: new wine **into old** wineskins; otherwise

KJV: wine into **old** bottles: else

INT: into wineskins **old** if moreover

The old letter could

1. Show the perfect standard of Holiness that we could not attain.
2. It could only condemn because we could not keep it.
3. It could make other conform externally but not inwardly from the heart.

But now we serve and are slaves from the heart.

1. We can keep the law from the inward man
2. We desire to obey from the heart not from external pressure from without.

And Can It Be?

Charles Wesley,

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray—
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.