

NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

— A Study of Romans —

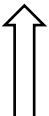
Lesson Thirteen

Romans 7:1-25

*For I do not understand my own actions.
For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.
Romans 7:15*

Day 1

Pray: Isaiah 55:11



Father, may your word not return to you empty but accomplish your purpose in me.

Read: Romans 7:1-25. Read it again in another translation such as NLT.

Observe:

- Write key words and themes, repeated words, or phrases. Circle on your Scripture pages any transition words (therefore, but, because, if/then etc.)
- Are there any commands to be obeyed, or truths to be trusted?
- What questions do you have about the text?

Day 2- Romans 7:1-6

1. What statement does Paul make in verse 1?
2. In verses 2-3 Paul gives an illustration to help explain what he means. What is Paul's point stated in 4a?

a. Put a check by all the points that are true. (Look back to 6:3-7,11 as well)

We have died with Christ.

We have died to the law.

We have died physically.

We have died to sin.

3. What is the reason we died to the law according to verse 4?
 - a. Who did we belong to before we died to sin (or to stick with Paul's analogy, who were we married to before)?
 - b. Paul says believers have died to the law so that we may belong to another. How does it impact you that you belong to Jesus?
 - c. What is the reason we belong to Jesus according to verse 4?

Digging Deeper:

God's grace to us—far from allowing us to continue in sin—was so that we would *bear fruit for God* according to verse 4. What do the following verses teach about our purpose as children of God?

¹⁰ *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.* Ephesians 2:10

¹⁴ *He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds.* Titus 2:14 (NLT)

- How do the following verses help us know why this is our purpose? (Hint: it's not for the reward)

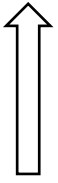
³⁵ *“Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked.* ³⁶ *You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.* Luke 6:35-36 (NLT)

⁷ *So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.* Ephesians 2:7(NLT)



Paul has still been answering the question in 6:15—*Are we to sin because we are not under the law but under grace?* Hopefully we are beginning to see how absurd this question is. Jesus died, and our old selves died with him, so that we can *belong* (v.4) to him—it is for a relationship with him! He didn't die so that we could keep on sinning and just show a get out of hell free card. He died to give us abundant life with him!

- ◆ Using Paul's marriage metaphor— if you were married to the man of your dreams and he was everything you ever wanted and more, how ridiculous would it be to ask if you can still keep dating other people? How does this help you think about your relationship with Jesus, your motivation for obeying and serving and the kind of freedom you have and don't have?



Father, thank you for setting me free from the law and sin so that I can have a relationship with you! How wonderful to belong to Jesus, to be tethered to him who loves me perfectly and calls me to live out his life of goodness and beauty.

4. How do those who have been released from the law and have died to sin, serve God now according to verse 6?

For Discussion:

Do you think it is easier to be led by the Holy Spirit or to be led by a written code? Why?

Picture and Ponder:

7¹⁻³ You shouldn't have any trouble understanding this, friends, for you know all the ins and outs of the law—how it works and how its power touches only the living. For instance, a wife is legally tied to her husband while he lives, but if he dies, she's free. If she lives with another man while her husband is living, she's obviously an adulteress. But if he dies, she is quite free to marry another man in good conscience, with no one's disapproval.⁴⁻⁶ So, my friends, this is something like what has taken place with you. When Christ died he took that entire rule-dominated way of life down with him and left it in the tomb, leaving you free to "marry" a resurrection life and bear "offspring" of faith for God. For as long as we lived that old way of life, doing whatever we felt we could get away with, sin was calling most of the shots as the old law code hemmed us in. And this made us all the more rebellious. In the end, all we had to show for it was miscarriages and stillbirths. But now that we're no longer shackled to that domineering mate of sin, and out from under all those oppressive regulations and fine print, we're free to live a new life in the freedom of God. Romans 7:1-6 (MSG)

Day 3- Romans 7:7-13

1. Paul has been showing a chain of law-sin-death in the previous verses so what does he want to make clear in 7a?
 - a. What does the law accomplish according to verse 7?

For Discussion:

Verse 8 teaches that the law reveals sin in us. Tim Keller helps us understand: "...when the commandment of God comes to us, it actually aggravates and stirs sin up in our hearts, showing us not just what sin is in general, but how sin resides within us".¹ When boundaries or parameters are placed on us it stirs up the rebelliousness in our hearts. How have you experienced this?

Digging Deeper:

In verse 9 Paul says that at one time he was *alive apart from the law*, meaning he thought he was spiritually alive, but really, he was apart from the *true* meaning of the law. How does Paul describe how he viewed himself before he was saved according to the verses below?

- Why do these accomplishments make him think he is spiritually alive?

Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people 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 righteousness under the law, blameless. Philippians 3:4-6

- What warning did Jesus have for the Pharisees in the verses below?

For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:20

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Matthew 23:27-28



Paul is testifying in verse 9 to having his eyes opened to his true condition and being convicted of sin by the law. In Matthew 5 in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught that the true meaning of the law went deeper than external conformity. For example, do not murder. Jesus taught that you are guilty of breaking this command if you hate, are angry with, or insult someone. The true meaning of the law, as Jesus revealed it, slays us, leaving no breath in us for self-righteousness.

- ◆ Are you more likely to pay attention to external sin in your life? Think of an external sin you struggle with. What deeper inward sin does it point to?

2. Paul says in verse 10a that the law promised life, but it proved to be death. Look back to 2:13. How does the law promise life?

- a. In what way does it bring death?

3. What actually brought death according to verse 11 and 13?

a. What else do you learn about sin?

4. In verse 12, what is Paul's final answer to the statement in verse 7?

Day 4- Romans 7:14-20

1. In verse 14, how does Paul summarize what he has been saying (See the NLT)?

For Discussion:

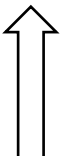
Do you relate with Paul's confession in verse 15? What does it teach you that the Apostle Paul who wrote much of the New Testament struggled this way?

2. What do you discover about Paul's desires in verses 15-20?

Digging Deeper:

Verse 17 reminds us of the old excuse "the devil made me do it". Read the verse below to help us understand what Paul means when he says it's not he who is committing the sin?

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)



Father thank you for making me a new person in Jesus! Thank you for seeing me this way even when I sin—your grace is so incredible.

Scholar's Note: "Paul is not attempting to escape responsibility, but rather putting his finger on the real culprit--indwelling sin."

Flesh- In theology, the seat of lust and sinful passions—fallen human nature (Rom. 7:18; 1 Cor. 3:1-3; Gal. 5:16-21) or the hopeless efforts of humankind to attain salvation by works (Gal. 3:3; Phil. 3:3). Flesh can also denote the material component of humankind as opposed to the immaterial spirit or soul. (Rom. 1:3, 4:1)² "Flesh can also refer to our natural human state, our natural moral potential."³

3. What does Paul say about his fallen, human nature (his flesh) in verse 18?

Digging Deeper:

In 1 Corinthians Paul is talking to Christians—his brothers and sisters in Christ, and in Matthew Jesus is talking to his closest disciples. What do you learn about the flesh, sinful nature and Christians from these verses?

Dear brothers and sisters when I was with you I couldn't talk to you as I would to spiritual people. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world (ESV- as people of the flesh) or as though you were infants in Christ. ²I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren't ready for anything stronger. And you still aren't ready, ³for you are still controlled by your sinful nature (ESV- still of the flesh). You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world?

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 (NLT)

Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Matthew 26:41



Three times in this passage Paul speaks of indwelling sin (vs.17,20, 23). This is sin that has refused to move out. It cowers in the corner or under the stairs even though we, as believers, are under new ownership. Sometimes it sees an opportunity and comes out and takes over. At times it sneaks up on us and other times we just aren't paying attention as it inches out into the living room. We surrender to its control because we have temporarily forgotten who's in charge and whose we are.

- ◆ Spend some time in prayer asking God to show you sin that is at home in your life.

Day 5- Romans 7:21-25

Scholar's Note: In verses 21-23 (ESV) Paul uses the word *law* in three different ways:⁴

1. God's law or standards. V.22
2. A general principle. V.21
3. A force or power. V.23

1. What is the conflict going on inside of Paul according to verses 22-23 (use NLT)?
2. In verse 23 Paul uses the phrase *waging war*. Why do you think he uses this phrase?

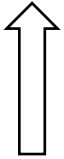
For Discussion:

What does Paul's exclamation in 24a, that he is wretched, reveal about his heart? What would it say about someone who felt no grief over the sin in their life?

3. In the NLT write out Paul's heart-cry question and answer in 24b-25a.

Picture and Ponder

"Spiritual health never comes from belittling sin, but from a willingness to bathe its filthy entirety in the compassion of God."⁵



Thank you, Father for Jesus my Savior; that every sin past, present and future has been cancelled by the cross of Jesus; that your mercy and grace continues; that there is no condemnation for me in Christ Jesus my Lord!



And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.

Romans 8:23 (NLT)

- ◆ What is the hope that keeps us from despair in our battle against sin in our lives?

Picture and Ponder

"For our salvation, we can only ever look to God's Son, dying on a cross for us, as Paul showed in chapters 1 to 4. For our hope, we can only ever rest in his righteousness, as we saw in chapters 5 and 6. And for our ongoing obedience, for any real change, we will need to rely not on our own efforts, as chapter 7 has established, but on the work of God's Spirit, which will transform our lives and our relationships, as the rest of Romans will show."⁶

One Thing:

What is one thing from this week's study that God has impressed on your heart, or convicted you about; is there something new that you learned or is there a verse you want to ponder and meditate on?

Praise God for this and thank him for the work he is doing in your life. Ask him to help you remember this and live it out for his glory.

¹ Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series) (p. 178). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

² Demoss, Matthew S.; Miller, J. Edward. Zondervan Dictionary of Bible and Theology Words (pp.91-92). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

³ Ortlund, Ray. Supernatural Living for Natural People . Christian Focus Publications. Kindle Edition.

⁴ Keller, Timothy. Romans 8-16 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series Book 2) (p. 4). Kindle Edition.

⁵ Chapelle, Bryan. In the Grip of Grace: When You Can't Hang On: The Promises of Romans 8. Grand Rapids 1992. P.27. As quoted in Ortlund, Ray. Supernatural Living for Natural People . Christian Focus Publications. Kindle Edition.

⁶ Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series) (p. 191). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

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