

# Romans

PART 11

## THE OLD LAW & THE NEW LAW

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### Flesh Will Always Fail

In chapter 7, Paul explains how the concepts presented in chapter 6 about walking in newness of life stand in contrast to the frustrations of trying to govern sin by means of the old covenant law. The old law, mentioned over 30 times in this chapter, is the theme of this section, teaching us that we cannot overcome sin through sheer willpower to do good. On our own, we will always fail. We can read this chapter and remember, “**this is what it’s like when I forget the gospel and try to deal with sin by the strength of my flesh.**” It is a helpful safeguard for us so that we don’t go back to repressing the sinful flesh as a faulty method for delivering us from the bondage of sin.

### The Purpose Of The Law

God’s goal for humanity is the restoration of our living relationship with Him, not empty adherence to rules. The greatest tragedy of our brokenness in sin is that we fall short of the *glory* of God (Romans 3:23.) Perfectly following the law without a heart for God’s glory was never the plan. The purpose of the old law is to reveal that our design was compromised and mankind is no longer holy or righteous. The law of Moses could not restore that wholeness. We would need a new heart and a new law: the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. This new law brings us a greater freedom: freedom to live for God’s glory. Yet in the new covenant, there is more expected of us, not because we are in worse bondage but because we’ve been transformed to be able to actually obey.

### What Is Meant By “The Law?”

Here in chapter 7, the law refers to the moral laws of God that address how to live a holy life, as summarized by the 10 commandments. It’s not referring to all the ceremonial and civil laws in the entirety of Moses’ writings, because those were either fulfilled by Christ or don’t apply to non-Israelites (things like sacrifices or governmental arrangements of the nation of Israel.) Rather, it refers to the rights and wrongs of the human conscience before a holy God. Though we aren’t required to keep them to remain righteous, these commandments are still good because they teach us about godly living.

### 3 PARAGRAPHS OF CHAPTER 7

#### VERSES 1-6

*We are released from the law with a new spiritual way to serve – an analogy of marriage and death.*

#### VERSES 7-13

*There's nothing wrong with the law; there's something wrong with us. The law reveals our sin.*

#### VERSES 14-25

*Because of sinful flesh, the old law is unable to cause us to live out holiness. We have a desperate need for the new law of spirit and life.*

## Chapter Highlights

### VS 1-6

The law has lordship over a person as long as they're alive. It is a binding obligation until death in the same way marriage is. There is only one way out. We died with Christ and were given a new life so that we could be made one with him instead. The law was our "old husband" from whom we were released when we died. With our old husband (when we were in the flesh,) our sinful passions bore fruit unto death. With our new husband (Christ,) we bear fruit unto God. These 6 verses serve as a summary thesis for the whole chapter.

### VS 7-13

The law is not sin, but it reveals sin. It shows there is something broken in us when it gives commands we inevitably disobey. We are deceived by sin to have evil desires against God's good commandments. In this section, Paul uses 1st person pronouns, displaying that his own story with the law is universal: thinking I'm a good person, realizing I'm hopeless on my own, then finding deliverance in Christ.

Paul's covetousness on the inside was pointed out by the external commandment, "thou shalt not covet." If I don't know about sin, I'm tricked into thinking I have freedom, but sin is actually living in me and lording over me. Ever since the first sin, humans have been captivated by desires for forbidden fruits. There is something deeply broken in human hearts, and the law cannot fix it or restore life. But it can provoke it to be seen. In that way, the law kills me because it removes the illusion that I am alive and free. The law is good, but sinfulness is shown exceedingly by the commandment. You can't blame the law for the conviction of a crime.

### 2 EXTREME POSITIONS ON THE LAW

#### LEGALISM

*Strictly adhering to the law and inventing fence laws to avoid transgressions. In reality, this is rejecting the gospel in favor of obedience without the heart.*

#### LICENTIOUSNESS

*Thinking I am free in Christ to do whatever I want. In reality, this is just going back to slavery to sin.*

## VS 14-25

We should neither say, “by keeping the law I’m closer to God,” nor “the law doesn’t matter – I relate to God how I want.” The answer for both stances is true freedom through acknowledging Christ’s lordship. We can produce fruit with a changed heart that has love for God and a genuine desire for obedience. This is a new way to relate to God.

## VS 14-25

The morality of the law is timeless, but it’s wrong to look to it for saving power. There is no goodness in our flesh to transform our lives. I may have good desires to glorify God, but by myself, I can’t do it. When I sin, though I may be doing something I hate, the law can’t help me defeat sin by telling me I messed up. This is a sure principle: by my flesh, though I may rejoice in the morality of God’s law, every single time I try to overcome sin by myself without the spirit of God, I will serve sin like I’m still a slave to it because evil is present in me. But this is not my true self, and there is only one way I can overcome sin. Romans 8 will show the freeing power of the new law of spirit life in Christ. It enables us to finally walk in God’s commandments.

*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*

*I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.*

EZEKIEL 36:26-27

*I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*

GALATIANS 5:16

Who will save us from this chronic problem? From this deadness in our flesh? The decisive answer is the deliverance from God in Christ, and thank God for the deliverance! He has saved us from the tyranny of flesh, though not yet the presence of flesh. However, one day our bodies will be perfected to be like Jesus’ glorious body, and the presence of sin will be totally gone.

## Conclusion

We’re dead to the condemnation of sin. There is no more death sentence on us. The new law has made us free from the law of sin and death. God condemned to death the sin in our flesh, but not us ourselves. God’s moral law is now fulfilled in us who walk according to the spirit. Paul tried so hard to do the law, but he only actually could when he gave his life away to Christ. The spirit of Christ has overpowered our evil brokenness. This is all so that we can fulfill our design to live in daily relationship with God for the glory of God, fellowshiping with Him in light and sanctification.

*Romans*

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