

A Christian's Relationship to the Law 1/20/2018 Sunday AM

Introduction

- Many Christians today struggle with understanding why the Old Testament and the Law are important to them.
- Most of them do not even read the Old Testament, they only spend time in the New Testament.
- This morning we are going to discuss **A Christian's Relationship to the Law** using **Romans 7:1-12**.
- In our first passage, **Romans 7:1-6**, Paul addresses the negative effects of the law and its relationship to believers.
- In the second passage, **Romans 7:7-12**, Paul addresses why the law is important to us.

Romans 7:1-6

¹Do you not know, brothers--for I am speaking to men who know the law--that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? ²For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. ³So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man. ⁴So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. ⁵For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. ⁶But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

- **V. 1** – Here we see that Paul's intended audience would have been people that understood what the law said.
- He assumes that his readers know "that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives."
- **Vv. 2-3** – In these verses we see Paul illustrate his point in **v.1** with this story about a remarried widowed woman.
- The marriage vows bind a man and woman together while they are alive, however if one dies, the other is released
- Too much can sometimes be read into these verses, Paul is simply using a "human argument" to make a point, his point is that death can indeed bring freedom from the law and lead to a new relationship.
- Read **1 Corinthians 9:1-12** (**v.9** specifically) and **1 Corinthians 7** for further study on divorce itself.
- **V.4** – Here Paul begins to bring the illustration home to what happened with us through Christ.
 - We "died to the law" just as the husband died in the illustration.
 - This dying allowed us to enter into a new relationship with Jesus Christ so we can "bear fruit to God."
- **Vv. 5-6** – Paul returns back to his comparison to us under the old system and us now under the new system.
- Under the law we "bore fruit for death," however now that the relationship has been severed by death, "we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way..."
- Paul wants us to understand that we have gone through a proper divorce and that we now need to move on toward the new relationship with Christ.
- When we continue to sin, we continue to partake in our old relationship.
- So clearly, a believer's relationship to the law is one that is estranged. It is a relationship of our past.
- Does this mean then, that the law is useless to us and that we should abandon it all together?

Romans 7:7-12

⁷What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." ⁸But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. ⁹Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. ¹⁰I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.

¹¹For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. ¹²So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

- **V.7** – Paul has gone on at length to make sure that the people understood that the law is what showed us our sin.
- However, the law itself is not sin!
- Paul continues to explain the law's role in setting a standard, and by doing so, we realized immediately that we were not meeting that standard.

- **Without the measuring stick, we would be blind to our state of failure.**
- **V. 8** – Once we know that something is wrong, temptation then begins to work on us.
- Sin or our capacity to sin, seizes on the opportunity of knowledge to produce tempting desires within us.
- Prohibiting something often makes people want to do that very act.
- When those desires are acted upon, they are sinful.
- **V. 9-10** – Paul is simply relating in personal terms what he had said over and over.
- It appears to many that Paul is in **v. 9** relating to all humanity before the Fall in **Genesis 3**.
- There was no sin, then a commandment was given, and at that time “sin sprang to life and I died.”
- The very rules that were intended to keep us on a course toward life, ultimately showed us we were dead **v.10**.
- **V. 11** – Sin deceives people by misusing the law. It is filled with false promises and deceptions.
 - Sin promises to satisfy our desires even more than the last time.
 - Sin promises that our actions can be kept hidden, so no one will know.
 - Sin promises that we will not have to worry about consequences.
 - Sin promises special benefits: wisdom, knowledge, and sophistication.
 - Sin promises power and prestige in exchange for cooperation.
- Don't buy into sin's lies!
- **V.12** – **It is not the law that is the problem, it is sin.**
- As Paul says in this verse, “the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.”
- The purpose of the law is:
 - It is a revelation of the nature, character, and will of God.
 - Its ethical components were incorporated in Christ's teaching.
 - It teaches us about sin
 - It demolishes self-righteousness.
- As Christians, we are no longer “under” the specific requirements of the law, period.
- However, we still use the law to inform us and guide us in obeying “the law of Christ” as taught in the NT.
- Take sexual immorality for example, the New Testament speaks often about this topic, however it is only in the Old Testament that we see the details of what constitutes sexual immorality.
- The law continues to be a mirror for us to look into, and see our imperfections as we measure ourselves against the perfect will of God.
- The New Testament summed up the law with these verses: **Matthew 22:37-40**, “³⁷Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”
- A Christian that “throws away” the law and the Old Testament is shallow at best and unsaved at worst.
- We may not be bound by the letter of the Law anymore, however you cannot understand Christ's sacrifice nor why you need a Savior if you do not understand the Law.
- Don't throw the law away, learn from it.

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Romans 8:1-6