

Romans 6:15-7:6 — Shall We Sin (Occasionally) Because We Are Not Under Law But Under Grace?

Memory Verse

Romans 12:1-2 NKJV

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The big picture of Romans 6-8: The three questions that Paul answers

In Romans 6–8 Paul is defending the doctrine (teaching) of justification by faith that he taught in Romans 3:21-5:21. He anticipates and answers three common objections or misunderstandings that he knows that people will have:

1. Justification by faith means that all sin can be forgiven because our justification or forgiveness has nothing to do with what we do or don't do (we only have to repent and believe)—*But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant* (Romans 5:20 NLT)
Misunderstanding: "I should continue in habitual sin so that I can receive more grace" (Answered in Romans 6:1-14)
2. Justification by faith means that we are no longer under the authority of law (see Romans 4:13-15)
Misunderstanding: "I am free to live as I please" (Answered in Romans 6:15-7:6)
3. Justification by faith means that the purpose of the law is to show us how sinful we are by it arousing and exciting our sinful passions—*"But then Law came in, [only] to expand and increase the trespass [making it more apparent and exciting opposition]"* (Romans 5:20a AMP)—(which means that the law was not given as a way for us to earn God's favour or our salvation)
Misunderstanding: "Paul was saying that the law was sinful" (Answered in Romans 7:7-25)

Revision of Romans 6:1-14—Know, Reckon, Yield

There are three things that every believer needs to know, believe, and do to overcome habitual sin:

1. **Know**: understand that the power of sin was broken once and for all at the cross (v 6),
2. **Reckon**: believe this to be true (v 11), and
3. **Yield**: The evidence or result of genuine belief or reckoning is that they will habitually **yield** or submit their body to the Lord instead of sin (vs 12-13).

Reckon: "Paul didn't tell his readers to feel as if they were dead to sin, or even to understand it fully, but to act on God's Word and claim it for themselves. Reckoning is a matter of faith that issues in action. It is like endorsing a check: if we really believe that the money is in the checking account, we will sign our name and collect the money. Reckoning is not claiming a promise, but acting on a fact. God does not command us to become dead to sin. He tells us that we are dead to sin and alive unto God, and then commands us to act on it. Even if we do not act on it, the facts are still true." (Warren Wiersbe)

The importance of reckoning ourselves to be dead to sin—maturity and freedom from habitual sin is only a decision away

Like going from being single to being married, or from being a boy to being a man, there is a moment in every Christian's life where, for the first time, they must make a choice, and once they have made that choice, there is no going back to how life was before—and *nor do they want to!*

What many Christians don't understand well, is that part of the Christian life is a journey that involves a maturing process—God gives every believer the opportunity to grow up, to go from being immature to mature. The Old Testament example of God's dealing with His people Israel, gives us a good picture of what this journey looks like for us today.

1. **Enlist in God's army:** By the blood of the Passover lamb, God redeemed His people and brought them out of the land of Egypt. In our situation, Jesus, by His substitutionary death on the cross, redeems us from the sin that we were a slave to. This is a picture of our initial salvation. By paying our sin debt, Christ, the *Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world* (John 1:29) freed us from the penalty and power of sin.
2. **Boot camp:** Like with the Israelites, God leads us into the *barren and unfruitful* wilderness. It is during this stage that God teaches us His word and helps us to understand that He is a loving Father by His provision for us (Israel—physical blessings, the church—spiritual blessings, see Ephesians 1:3).
3. **Join the battle:** God gives us opportunities to learn to love and trust Him through obedience. For the Israelites, it meant crossing the Jordan river, trusting that God would be with them and would enable them to defeat enemies that were otherwise too big and too strong for them.

Hebrews chapters 3 and 4 recounts the fact that the first generation of the Israelites refused to believe that God loved them and therefore refused to obey Him—their hearts were hard and unbelieving and in a “settled state of rebellion against God”—*they remained perpetually immature, carnal, or fleshly their whole lives*—they never entered into the promised land, which is a physical picture or type of entering into God's rest (see Hebrews 3:10-4:11).

However, the second generation of Israelites responded differently: they choose to grow up, to become mature. They, by faith, believed or **reckoned** (considered it true), that God loved them and God was in control (see Hebrews 13:5-6), This meant that they were willing and able, by God's power working in them (see Philippians 2:12-13), to yield themselves to God and do what was humanly impossible: they obeyed God's command to cross the flooded Jordan river on dry ground and defeat the enemies that were too big and too strong for them. Once that Jordan river was crossed, they could never go back to the wilderness wasteland. Once in the promised land they would sometimes doubt, disobey, and be disciplined. But overall, it was a life of victory, where, little by little, by faith in God, they eventually gained control of the entire promised land.

*In the same way, every believer today is given the opportunity to grow up, to become a young man (see 1 John 2:14b), to permanently leave behind the barren and unfruitful life where they were perpetually living in hard-hearted unbelief, and so allowing the evil desires of their sinful nature to control them. How can they grow up? **by reckoning their old man to be dead**, and so for the first time experience the joy of being controlled by the Holy Spirit and the desires of the new nature.*

Other pictures or types of the believer's initial decision to reckon themselves dead to sin

<p>Living in unbelief in the wilderness (the old man <i>has never been</i> reckoned to be dead to sin)</p>	<p>Living by faith in the promised land (the old man <i>is</i> reckoned to be dead to sin)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refuse to enter into God's rest because of perpetual (ongoing) unbelief, heart hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, live by human effort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter God's rest by believing His promises: means to cease from our own works or human effort, and instead live by God's power—Hebrews 3:7-4:11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak, not abiding in the word of God, haven't overcome the wicked one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong, abiding in the word of God, have overcome the wicked one—1 John 2:14b
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live in perpetual frustration that you don't have the desire or power to do what you know is right (Especially prayer, reading your Bible, and staying in fellowship)—Romans 7:13-25 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and more controlled by the Holy Spirit, so prayer, reading your Bible, fellowship (koinonia) with the saints, and commitment to your church becomes something that you want to do: God's desires become our desires—Romans 8:1-13, 2 Peter 1:3-5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perpetually producing the destructive fruit of the sinful nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and more producing the fruit of the Spirit—Galatians 5:16-23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruled by the passions and desires of the sinful nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to the cross—Galatians 5:24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bodily appetites ruled by the sinful nature, often vacillating between licentiousness and legalism in the perpetually unsuccessful attempt to live a godly life by the power of the sinful nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bodily appetites ruled by the Spirit more and more—Romans 6:15-7:25, 12:1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body used as an instrument of sin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body used as in instrument of righteousness more and more—Romans 6:12-13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking according the sinful nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and more walking according to the Spirit—Galatians 5:25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking in darkness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and more walking in the light—Ephesians 5:8, 1 John 1:6-7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominated by habitual sin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have overcome habitual sin—Romans 6:1-14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not abiding in Christ or obeying God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abiding and obeying more and more—1 John 2:3-6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not in fellowship with God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and more in fellowship with God—1 John 1:6-7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't agape love the brethren (especially immediate family) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agape love the brethren more and more (especially immediate family)—1 John 2:9-11, 4:20-21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A superficial understanding of the Scriptures based on human reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A deeper and more accurate understanding of the essential teachings of the Bible as we are taught by the Spirit—John 16:13, Hebrews 13:9, 2 Peter 3:16, 1 John 2:24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have not died to self, therefore not following Christ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have died to self, and are therefore following Christ more and more—Luke 9:23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk by sight (feelings and emotions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk by faith (facts)—2 Corinthians 5:7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not filled with the Spirit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and more often filled with the Spirit—Ephesians 5:18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deceived and blind to our own sinfulness: self-righteous and proud attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of our sinfulness, broken and humbly asking God to reveal our motives to us—Jeremiah 17:9-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My will be done (have not denied myself) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God's will be done (submitted)—Matthew 26:39, Luke 9:23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no practical or observable difference between all unbelievers, and also those who are immature believers, because they all live according to the desires of their sinful nature—1 Corinthians 3:1-3 	

Shall We Sin (Occasionally) Because We Are Not Under Law But Under Grace? (Romans 6:15-7:6)

We now come to where Paul answers the second objection that some will have because of his teaching concerning justification by faith: *Shall we sin [occasionally] because we are not under law but under grace?*

Romans 6:15-23 NKJV

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! ¹⁶ Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? ¹⁷ But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. ¹⁸ And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹ I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. ²² But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The believer under grace and the problem of occasional sin (Romans 6:15)

Romans 6:15 NKJV

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

Romans 6:15 NLT

Well then, since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not!

v 15 **Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?** Another way of rephrasing this question could be like this, "Since I'm justified entirely by grace, it means that nothing I do or don't do will affect my salvation (it's not by works or law keeping). Therefore, why can't I just dabble in sin a little bit?"

v 15 **Shall we sin:** The verb tense of the Greek word **sin** is the *aorist active*, meaning to dabble in sin occasionally. This is in contrast to Romans 6:1 where the verb tense for "**continue in sin**" means to live a life characterised by sin (living in habitual sin).

"The verb in verse one is in the present subjunctive, speaking of habitual, continuous action. The verb in verse fifteen is in the aorist subjunctive, referring to a single act." (Wuest)

The question in 6:1 was, "Why not sin more and more (remain in habitual sin) so we can receive more grace". Paul told us why we must not continue in habitual sin in verses 2-14. Now, the question in 6:15 is, "What's the problem with committing the occasional sin, or dabbling in sin, if it's not going to affect my positional standing with God?"

The first reason that believers should no longer dabble in sin: If I choose to sin then I am serving the wrong master (Romans 6:16-23)

Romans 6:16-17 NKJV

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? ¹⁷ But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

Romans 6:16-17 NLT

Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. ¹⁷ Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you.

v 16 **Do you not know that to whom you present [yield] yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves:** Whatever I submit or yield myself to is my master, they will control me (e.g. TV, movies, gaming, lust, being a man-pleaser, or the things of the Lord).

v 16 **Of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness:** Paul tells us that there are only two choices. As Bob Dylan famously sang in the chorus of his song *Gotta Serve Somebody*:

*You're gonna have to serve somebody
Well, it may be the Devil or it may be the Lord
But you're gonna have to serve somebody*

v 17 **Though you were slaves of sin:** **Were** is past tense because we have already been freed from the power of sin. Paul taught us in 6:6-7 that because Jesus crucified our old man when He died on the cross, we are free from the power of sin; we are no longer slaves of sin. We have a new identity, we are a new creation.

v 17 **Obedied from the heart:** This represents a life of faith, where our obedience is not just doing something because we think we have to (legalism), but rather because we want to, based on a love relationship with God—His desires become our desires, and we literally get to do exactly what we want to do.

Psalm 37:4 NKJV

Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

v 17 **That form of doctrine [teaching]:** This is God's word. This is what we put our faith in. It's easy to know if we really have put our faith in God's word, because if we have we will obey it, but if we haven't, then we won't. Time will tell if our obedience is **from the heart**, because if it is, then it will last—our lives will be characterised by obedience over the long haul.

v 17 **That form of doctrine:** "This phrase is part of a beautiful picture. The word **form** describes a mold used to shape molten metal. The idea is that God wants to *shape* us—first He *melts* us by the work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Then He *pours us* into His mold of truth—**that form of doctrine** and shapes us into His image." (David Guzik)

v 16 **Sin leading to death:** Jon Courson has a good application. “Why not continue in sin? I’m reminded of the entertainer who, although he was warned that lions could never be completely tamed, treated the lion he used in his act as a pet—until the night the lion jumped on him and killed him. So, too, our adversary goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). “Oh, but I’ve got this sin under control,” we say. “Nice lion, nice lion. It’s part of my act; I need it for my job.”

Watch out. Paul says, “Know this: the sin with which you’re playing around, the sin you think you’ve got under control, is going to come back and eat you alive.”

- “But I only shoplift occasionally.”
- “I only look at pornography sporadically.”
- “I lie rarely.”

Be careful. Paul doesn’t say, “No,” he says “know.” Your pet sin will get you. It will hurt you. It will kill you.

Sin is not my master, therefore I should not obey it

Romans 6:18 NKJV

And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Romans 6:18 NLT

Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.

Romans 6:18 AMP

And having been set free from sin, you have become the servants of righteousness (of conformity to the divine will in thought, purpose, and action).

v 18 **And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness:** The believer’s life is under new management. Just imagine that you changed jobs. You turn up for your first day at work and start doing your new job, but then at lunch time you go back to your old boss and ask him what he wants you to do and start working there again—even though you’re on the books at the new job. As believers, we need to leave the old job, the old life behind, and live according to the new life—in other words, *be who you are!*

v 18 **free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living:** What does it mean to be a slave? It goes much further than just being an employee who clocks out at the end of the day. Kenneth Wuest defined the ancient Greek word for a slave here by these terms:

- One born into a condition of slavery
- One whose will is swallowed up in the will of another
- One who is bound to the master with bonds only death can break
- One who serves his master to the disregard of his own interests

This was true for us as unbelievers as we whole-heartedly served sin, even though it would kill us. The same is now true for believers who have been born again into God’s family, so we should serve God to the disregard of our own interests—denying ourselves.

v 18 **Set free from sin:** Remember, we only sin because we choose to, God has made it so that we never *have* to sin. Yes, there is a battle going on inside of us and we will sometimes give into the desires of our sinful nature, but we never have to (see Galatians 5:16-17).

Three principles we need to know to avoid dabbling in sin

Romans 6:19-23 NKJV

I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

²¹ What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. ²² But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:19-23 AMP

I am speaking in familiar human terms because of your natural limitations. For as you yielded your bodily members [and faculties] as servants to impurity and ever increasing lawlessness, so now yield your bodily members [and faculties] once for all as servants to righteousness (right being and doing) [which leads] to sanctification.

²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ But then what benefit (return) did you get from the things of which you are now ashamed? [None] for the end of those things is death. ²² But now since you have been set free from sin and have become the slaves of God, you have your present reward in holiness and its end is eternal life. ²³ For the wages which sin pays is death, but the [bountiful] free gift of God is eternal life through (in union with) Jesus Christ our Lord.

v 19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh: Paul is using slavery as a picture or illustration of this spiritual principal that whoever we yield ourselves to obey, they become our master.

v 19 For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness... so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness: Remember our change of employment scenario—we need to turn up to the correct workplace—we need to remember to serve our new master because we don't work for the old one anymore. Here is the first important principle: As when we were unbelievers we gave ourselves fully in our service to sin, so now as believers we should also give ourselves fully to serving God.

v 19 Lawlessness leading to more lawlessness... Righteousness for holiness: Here is the second important principle: once we start down a particular path, we will want to keep going down that path, so choose carefully which path you start to go down because it's hard to stop once you start. We can go down the path of sin, which will only lead to more sin: we become more like the world and less like Jesus. Or, we can choose to go down the path of righteous living, which leads to greater holiness and sanctification—we become more like Jesus and less like the world.

v 20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness: Paul points out that the unsaved person, who is a slave of sin, is free in regard to righteousness—they have no obligation, motivation, or reason to do anything that pleases God. In fact, it's impossible for the unsaved person to do anything that pleases God, because they are always controlled by the desires of their sinful nature (see Romans 8:7-8)—their old man is still dominating and controlling them.

v 21 **What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed?:** Here is the third important principle that we must remember: everything we do will have a consequence, whether good or bad. Sin will always result in shame, and eventually death, even if *the passing pleasures of sin* feel good for now (see Hebrews 11:25). Conversely, righteous living will always lead to an eternal reward and experiencing the joy of having fellowship with God now.

“In a time of temptation, these truths can seem unreal—so we must rely on God’s Word. When we are tempted, faith reminds us of the bitter fruit of sin when our feelings may forget that bitter fruit.” (David Guzik)

v 23 **Wages of sin:** “Every sinner *earns* this by long, sore, and painful service. O! What pains do men take to get to hell! Early and late they toil at sin; and would not Divine justice be in their *debt*, if it did not pay them their due wages?” (Clarke)

v 23 **But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord:** Always remember that everything we have from God is a gift, it’s by grace, by definition it can’t be earned or deserved or worked for.

Summary: the three principles that will help us to keep from dabbling in sin:

1. As when we were unbelievers we gave ourselves fully in our service to sin, so now as believers we should also give ourselves fully to serving God, our new master.
2. Once we start down a particular path, we will want to keep going down that path, so choose carefully which path you start to go down because it’s hard to stop once you start.
3. Everything we do will have a consequence, whether good or bad.

Reasons why we should no longer dabble in sin, even though we are dead to the law (Romans 7:1-6)

Romans 7:1-6 NKJV

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.

An illustration: The Law only has authority over someone while they are alive

Romans 7:1-3 NKJV

Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion [authority] 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.

Romans 7:1-3 NLT

Now, dear brothers and sisters—you who are familiar with the law—don't you know that the law applies only while a person is living? ² For example, when a woman marries, the law binds her to her husband as long as he is alive. But if he dies, the laws of marriage no longer apply to her. ³ So while her husband is alive, she would be committing adultery if she married another man. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law and does not commit adultery when she remarries.

v 1 **The law has dominion [authority]:** Paul taught in Romans 6:14 that *you are not under law but under grace*. Romans 6:15–23 then explained the practical implications of what it means to no longer be under the authority of the law. But now in 7:1-6 Paul will explain exactly why we are no longer under the dominion or authority of the law.

v 1-3 **The law has dominion over a man as long as he lives... If her husband dies, she is free from that law:** This states the obvious fact that death ends all legal obligations and contracts. A wife is free to marry another man if her husband dies, because the law of marriage no longer has any dominion or authority over her; it no longer applies to her because the death of her husband ended the contract.

The application for the believer: Because we died with Jesus, we are free from the law

Romans 7:4 NKJV

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.

Romans 7:4 NLT

So, my dear brothers and sisters, this is the point: You died to the power of the law when you died with Christ. And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, we can produce a harvest of good deeds for God.

Romans 7:4 AMP

Likewise, my brethren, you have undergone death as to the Law through the [crucified] body of Christ, so that now you may belong to Another, to Him Who was raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God.

v 4 **Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ:** In Romans 6:3-8 Paul taught that when we died with Jesus we also rose with Him. The emphasis there was that we are dead to the power of sin because the old man was crucified with Christ. Here however, Paul says that we are not only dead to sin, but we are also dead to the law. Just like we don't have to do what our sinful nature urges us to do because the old man has lost its authority over us, so we are no longer subject to the law—we no longer *have* to keep the law because we are dead to it. When we died with Christ, the law's power and authority over us was taken away forever.

“This is so wonderful! You have become dead to the law. That’s the key. You’ll never see a dead body in a courtroom trial because when a person is dead, he’s no longer under the authority of the law. So, too, because you died in Christ (Galatians 2:20), you are free from legalism. Thus, there is no reason to be preoccupied with your failings, your lack of prayer, your lack of love, your lack of anything. There is no reason to try to live up to the rules, regulations, and expectations you’ve put upon yourself. When you realize that you died with Christ positionally on Calvary, you’re free from the demands of the law and free instead to just love the Lord.” (Jon Courson)

“Believers are through with the law. It is not for them an option as a way of salvation. They do not seek to be right with God by obeying some form of law, as the adherents of almost all religions have done.” (Morris)

v 4 **That you may be married to another:** Here Paul continues the illustration. The law is represented by the husband, and the law is eternal, so the only way for a man to be free from the dominion and authority and condemnation of the law was to die with Jesus,. Then, when we are raised up together with Him we are free to be joined or married to Christ.

v 4 **That we should bear fruit to God:** Here we see yet another reason why the believer is not free to sin just because they are dead to the law: the purpose of Jesus freeing us from the condemnation, dominion, and authority of the law was so we could bear fruit to God, not live for ourselves.

This is both a serious warning and a glorious promise. The warning is in the word **should**. It doesn’t say “will” **bear fruit to God**. So here we see that while it is God’s desire for the believe to experience fruit (peace that passes understanding, love beyond our comprehension, overflowing joy etc), there still remains the option that we will choose to continue producing the negative and destructive fruit of the sinful nature. We will bear fruit, but what kind of fruit is completely up to us.

The law only arouses the desires of our sinful nature, which then bear fruit to death

Romans 7:5 NKJV

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.

Romans 7:5 NLT

When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of sinful deeds, resulting in death.

Romans 7:5 AMP

When we were living in the flesh (mere physical lives), the sinful passions that were awakened and aroused up by [what] the Law [makes sin] were constantly operating in our natural powers (in our bodily organs, in the sensitive appetites and wills of the flesh), so that we bore fruit for death.

v 5 **When we were in the flesh... bear fruit to death:** Before salvation, there is no new nature, and so it is one possible for the unsaved person to bear bad or destructive fruit. The immature believer who has not reckoned themselves dead to sin also can only produce bad fruit. The big problem here for the immature believer, the believer who is living solely by the power of their sinful nature, is that when they try to use the law to help them keep on the straight and narrow, it only stimulates their desire to break that law, and so they inevitably fail.

Again, it all comes back to desire. If I'm not walking in the Spirit, first having reckoned myself to be dead to sin and yielded my body to God, then I simply won't have the desire to obey God—the only desire I will have will be the desire to disobey God (see Romans 8:7-8). Focusing on that negative desire will only cause it to become stronger.

The main point here is that we must also reckon ourselves dead to the law, otherwise we cannot produce the good fruit that glorifies God. Verse 6 makes this clear.

Dead to the law, freed from legalism and the fear it produces, and so able to live the new life in Christ being motivated by love

Romans 7:6 NKJV

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.

Romans 7:6 NLT

But now we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit.

Romans 7:6 AMP

But now we are discharged from the Law and have terminated all intercourse with it, having died to what once restrained and held us captive. So now we serve not under [obedience to] the old code of written regulations, but [under obedience to the promptings] of the Spirit in newness [of life].

v 6 **But now we have been delivered from the law:** This is a summary of Romans 7:1–5. Having died with Christ at Calvary, we are also dead to the **law** and so are **delivered** from its dominion or authority over us. What does this mean in practice for us:

- We no longer have to keep the law as a way to earn God's favour and forgiveness (the law cannot justify us)
- We no longer have to use the law as a kind of self-help or self-improvement program (the law cannot sanctify us or help us grow closer to God)

v 6 **So that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit:** Our service for God no longer needs to be motivated by fear, rather we get to enjoy a love relationship with God. Jon Courson has a good application. "Newness of spirit" speaks of the New Covenant, of an entirely new way of living (Jeremiah 31; Ezekiel 36). "No longer will I give you tables of stone," the Lord declares in the New Covenant, "but I will write My will upon the table of your heart. Every day will be an adventure. Some days I might awaken you at 4:30 A.M. to seek My face and to pray, while other times, I might tell you to sleep in."

That's the way Christianity was meant to be. But what have we done? We have constructed legalistic systems and expectations both personally and corporately.

We were meant to live in a newness of the Spirit, moment by moment obeying, yielding, and asking, "Lord, what next?" Therefore, throw off the yoke of legalism. Walk in the Spirit. Respond to His direction—and I guarantee you will find yourself on the adventure of a lifetime!"

David Guzik asks a searching question: "How well do you **serve in the newness of the Spirit?** It is a shame that many serve sin or legalism with more devotion than those who should serve God out of the **newness of the Spirit**. *It is unfortunate when fear motivates us more than love.*"