

[Romans 7:1 – 6]

~ Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God has left the unbeliever behind in our learning through the epistle to the Romans. Those who cannot grow in the grace and knowledge of our Savior and Lord are shut out at this point. I have no message for them because this is God's wisdom, and the world labels it foolishness. Well, we come to another *spectacular* chapter of truth in this report. Until we return to Chronicles in our study and resume in the Old Testament, only believers are welcome on this expedition. Does that sound harsh? – Too bad! They likely stopped reading a long time ago anyways.

What the Spirit of God is teaching in this section of Scripture could be called *Powerless Sanctification*! In fact, this report could be entitled '***Don't Do it This Way!***' We began the theme of sanctification in chapter five. The last part of chapter five dealt with *Potential Sanctification*. Then, we considered *Positional Sanctification*, which means we are in Christ; but *NOT* the Christ Who walked down here two thousand years ago – we are joined to the living and true Christ who died and rose from the dead, and lives today, and forevermore. The Lord Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God at this very moment as you read, and I type; making intercession and performing High Priestly duties that keep you – and me – eternally saved! We are told to be identified with that rite, and we are also told to reckon on that rite. On that basis we are to present ourselves to God! Friends, we set sail now on an ocean that has no bottom.

You and I cannot live a so-called Christian life. It is impossible to govern ourselves accordingly to achieve a saintly existence. God never asks us to live a "*Christian life*" in the Bible, either; what God wants to do is live His life through us! That's the only way He is conducting business. The believer cannot produce sanctification in his own life by exerting some self desire for some other nature. You can talk about wanting to live for Christ all day long but, my friends, until we take the act of presenting ourselves to Him to a level of reality in our transformed daily lives – and recognizing that we

are joined to Him as the Living Christ – we are going nowhere with and doing nothing for the Lord! You can just write that down.

There are two interesting subjects in chapter seven of this epistle. First, we observe the common *shackles* that bind a saved soul in the first fourteen verses. The law cannot produce sanctification in the life of the believer; in fact, the law restrains man and holds him back from furthering the cause of Christ. Don't bother telling me about being free in Christ; remember, Paul had made himself a volunteer prisoner in chains of the Lord Jesus. The other subject is the *struggle* of the saved soul. The *shackles* and the *struggles* of the saved soul are the two topics in the following passage, friends. Do you know anything about either of these subjects?

Dr. Griffith Thomas quoted Dr. Alexander White, saying, “... whenever a book is submitted for consideration, I immediately turn to the comments on Romans chapter seven and, according to the view taken on that section of Scripture, decide if the author is worthy of thoughtful consideration.” We're going to find all of these subsequent lessons from Paul highly logical, to be sure. Gödel said, “... it's one hundred to one, when a reader does not find the apostle Paul logical, that the reader is not understanding his thoughts.” We're heading over some impossibly high mountain peaks in God's government; but – you ain't seen nothing yet, friends. We're going to attain to some *dizzying* heights in chapter eight. Our safari takes the direct route to Heaven – straight up; and straight through.

~ To dwell above with the saints of love
That will sure be glory ~
~ But to live below with the saints I know
Now that's a different story ~

We should understand another angle, too; portrayed as a struggling saint who reaches out, grabs blindly at some unknown spiritual parachute and, at the first moment of any turbulence, frantically jumps out of the airplane. He has no training in skydiving and discovers about halfway down he has grabbed a backpack full of books – and those big, weighty books are the law. That man is in big trouble; he won't live through this – he doesn't *want*

to live through this. If he is honest, he will tell you he doesn't measure up to the law, either.

Multitudes of saints accept defeat as normal Christian living. Most are content to continue on a very low level of shabby, sloppy living — and theirs is usually a sad and sorry state of personal existence and function — and they almost always deem it service to Christ! Well, God doesn't want us living that way, friends. We are going to have to learn we cannot do anything for Christ in and of ourselves; and whatever we do for Him of our own power will have to be undone — by Him! I recognize this is not easy medicine; but we're all in pretty bad shape today, friends. We are going to have to learn to turn *ALL* of our situations over to the Spirit of God. That's the only way we can ever yield ourselves to His direct will.

Most new Christians, and those who are not growing in Christ, will invariably turn to some aspect of the Mosaic Law in an effort to emulate a model of their concept for what they consider "*right Christian living.*" So, Paul is going to demonstrate by example how the Mosaic System has no claim on any believer. We know the law condemned man; the law was a ministry of condemnation. It would be a moot point to write a letter to the judge who just sentenced you to death asking him how you should live in prison in the meantime. Well, that makes understanding the shackles of the saved soul essential – critical – in this chapter....

1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

~ "*Know ye not*" is an expression Paul uses again and again; and when he asks "*know ye not....*" You can just write it down that they didn't know! He asks this question several times in several epistles. When Paul says he speaks "*to them who know the law;*" he is asserting that he knows what he is talking about. The Corinthians majored in *not* knowing. Sadly, they were content in abject ignorance. What Paul really wanted to ask them is: "*.... are ye so ignorant that ye didn't know this basic tenet of truth....?*" See, this is all so simple that is mind-bogglingly-complicated.

Israel was labeled a “*peculiar people*” because God had chosen them. No other nation was chosen by God as His representatives of Scripture to the world. Israel was governed directly by God under the Mosaic System of Levitical Law for over a thousand years by this time in which we are studying, and they had utterly failed obeying the law. They had experienced captivity at the direction of Jehovah. Even the physical land itself was favorable for adapting to and observing the law — and they *WANTED* to obey — but couldn’t — and didn’t! Naturally, the Mosaic Law pertained directly to the physical land in many ways. We studied that omnino in our consideration of the Pentateuch. In Jerusalem, Peter spoke to the Jews, and said, “...*we failed the True and Living God handling His laws and precepts...*” Even the most devout Jew was condemned by the Mosaic Law.

So, the following illustration Paul presents is a prime example of how we are free from the Mosaic Law. Unfortunately, many people take off on an extreme tangent and attempt to extract rules for marriage and divorce in this passage; but, my friends, we are *IN NO WAY* talking about marriage and divorce now - we’re talking about the believer and the so-called Christian life....

2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

~ Under the Mosaic System, if the spouse died, the surviving party was no longer obligated under the marriage vow, of course. If adultery had been committed, the Mosaic Law would have turned the offending party into a little rock pile outside the city – so, they would be dead! That means the faithful party was free to remarry according to the words of the Lord Jesus!

Deuteronomy 22: 22 *If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel ~*

In some ancient cultures if a man died, his wife was burned to death and buried with him! Well, thank God we never followed along with that practice! If we stoned every adulterous man and woman in this country, I doubt there would be enough people left to constitute a nation. A topography of hundreds of millions of rock piles isn't very appealing, 'ya know? So, let's *not* make an attempt to apply the Mosaic Law to the present day of grace — because an application of grace is characteristic of God, it is tenable, and is the more reasonable overall interpretational conclusion in the light of the entirety of Holy Writ.

Today, we're joined to the Living Christ. We are no longer joined to the law in any connection as Christ has fulfilled the law. The question then becomes: who was the first husband? – and there are different interpretations from mine that are plausible, I recognize that. Dr. Newell sets forth Adam as our position in the first husband. That is the interpretation we'll take on safari because it best follows suit with the rest of this epistle and Scripture, in general. Remember, chapter five brought us the *first* Adam and the *Last* Adam; the first man and the second man. The Lord Jesus Christ is Head of the new race we are brought into as believers.

We were joined to Adam through our old nature; and the law was given to control the old Adamic nature. However, the flesh is unable to keep that law! We've considered that before, and we'll come back to it in this epistle.

The Mosaic Law became an impossible millstone around the neck of the nation Israel. The law never did lift them up. It kept them in slavery for almost fifteen hundred years. Well, during that time the demands of sin had to be met! The problem was: man couldn't meet them. Make no mistake, my beloved readers; the law is a ministration of condemnation and death!

If the Gentile had to adopt the law when they became believers, then there would have been no hope for any Gentile conversions ever. Christ died in His Body, and we are identified with Christ in His death! That makes us dead to the law and the law dead to us. We're no longer joined to the first Adam because we are now joined to Christ. Only the Living Christ can enable us to bear fruit. He is the husbandman! We know Christ no longer after the flesh; but the resurrected Christ is He to Whom we are joined.

To a new man or woman in Christ, our standard is become "*... old things have passed away.*" All things are become new. The premise we live under in grace is the ipso factor of Holy Writ! If you are a believer, then believe it! Attempting to live under the law is, well, it's ridiculous. We're joined to the True and Living Christ today; our lives are to glorify Him with! That's all; and how important it really is!

Anyone who is honest will tell you they cannot keep the law in and of their own power. God's law was a straight jacket placed on humanity for the control thereof, and mankind trampled it underfoot and discarded it. The flesh has no capacity or injunctions to follow the law; and the flesh has no *JOY* following the law. So, their rebellion was against the irrevocable law for which the penalty was death. Verse six tells us we should bring forth fruit *even though* we are dead to the law. Our obedience now is a matter of our *want* and *delight* to do His will. That's when we are truly set free. We should give ourselves to Christ in love in a way that was never possible under the law. It's a much higher plane of living than the Ten Commandments — or any other Levitical ordinance.

Our Spiritual Safari ends this leg of our expedition serving Christ; because we love Him! Jesus asked Simon Peter three times, "*... lovest thou Me?*" Simon Peter knew he loved Jesus, but Simon Peter also knew that Simon

Peter was a complete failure. That realization by Simon Peter about himself was when Jesus could finally say to him, “.... *feed My sheep!*” Get a hold of these great truths and the Lord Jesus will bring forth fruit in your life, friends! Simon Peter loved the Lord Jesus Christ.

This lost and dying present evil world is shut out from God completely by the cross of Christ! To the believer, Jesus asks, “.... *lovest thou Me?*” Jesus is asking you and me that question right now. Do we love Him? Jesus said, “.... *if you love Me, keep My commandments.*” Our world, as believers, is all on the basis of loving the Lord Jesus Christ, friends. I cannot stress to you how important that really is ~