

How Do We Then Live?

Week 5 - Romans 7:1-6

? What was a silly or seemingly odd rule in your household growing up?

Objectives:

- Discuss how the metaphor of marriage applies to our former relationship with the law and our new relationship with Christ.
- Reflect on what it means and looks like to be released from the law and serve God “in the new way of the Spirit.”

Verse 4 is the center of this section and clearly states the main takeaway: we have died to the law through the body of Christ and now belong to him.

The Authority of the Law

Romans 7:1-3 NIV

Do you not know, brothers and sisters—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law has authority over someone only as long as that person lives? ² For 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 that binds her to him. ³ So then, if she has sexual relations with 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 if she marries another man.

? Why does Paul use the allegory of a marriage to convey his point? What does it reveal about our relationship to the law?

Possible answers: When a spouse dies, the law of marriage no longer applies. Similarly, because we have died with Christ, the law can no longer condemn us.

Leader's Note: The marriage analogy is two-sided in that we were married to Christ under the law. Christ dies, which releases us from the law. We then are free to marry another - the risen Christ. Consider: a new creation in union with Christ.

? What is the primary purpose of verses 2-3?

Possible answers: Death severs relationship to the law. We are now resurrected with Christ and belong to him, not the law.

Freed from the Law, Bound to Christ!

Romans 7:4-6 NIV

⁴ So, my brothers and sisters, 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 for God. ⁵ For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. ⁶ But 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.

? What was the purpose of the law?

Possible answers: At least seven primary purposes: (1) the law was a national charter for the people of Israel to be set apart as a nation, (2) a means to obtain and maintain yourself in the Abrahamic promises of land, blessing, and being the people of God, (3) clearly defines sin (Galatians 3, Romans 3), (4) increases sin (Romans 5), (5) point us to Christ (Galatians 3:19-26), (6) the law was a foreshadow about Christ's sacrifice (Hebrews), (7) shows the ways of God (Psalm 19, 119). In this passage, Paul is honing in on #2 and saying that we are dead to obtaining or maintaining the promises of God.

? Why did we need to be freed from the law?

Possible answers: We could not possibly live up to its standard and would fall short. Living under the law condemned us to judgment.

? Does being freed from the law mean that we will be without sin? How do we deal with the tension between being sinners and being justified?

Possible answers: We live in the "already but not yet." We have been justified by God, and we are being sanctified (made more holy), but we still live in a broken reality. Our identity is rooted in being forgiven and made right through Christ.

For Discussion and Accountability

? What was God telling you through this passage this week? What did you need to hear?

? What are ways that you have been living as if you were still bound to the law? What does it mean for you now to be free from the law and unified with Christ?

? What do you think it looks like for you to "serve in the new way of the Spirit?" How can we come alongside you in this?