



The Christian's relationship to the Law was a subject that Paul felt he needed to be very clear about. He was asked about it wherever he went, and was often criticized for being too "soft". But the radical message of God's grace means a decisive break with the Law - which is the subject of chapter 7.

### WHAT DOES IT SAY?

#### Romans 7:1-13

<sup>1</sup> Do 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? <sup>2</sup> 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 of marriage. <sup>3</sup> So 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.

<sup>4</sup> So, 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. <sup>5</sup> For 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. <sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> What 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." <sup>8</sup> But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. <sup>9</sup> Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. <sup>10</sup> I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. <sup>11</sup> For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. <sup>12</sup> So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

<sup>13</sup> Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Verse 1: Where else in Romans 1-8 does Paul use this question "*do you not know?*"

When you find these occurrences, list the things Paul wants us to *know*:

What illustration does Paul use in verses 2-4?

In verse 4 Paul says that we "also" died to the law. What else has he told us we've "died to" in the last chapter?

The word translated "*sinful nature*" in verse 5 is literally "*flesh*". Using a concordance, find out where "*flesh*" or "*sinful nature*" occurs most in the New Testament.

What do you think Paul means in verses 4 and 5 when he talks about *bearing fruit*?

Look up "*fruit*" in a concordance; how often does it occur in the New Testament?

Based on the New Testament occurrences (or using a Bible dictionary or wordbook) what is your definition of *bearing spiritual fruit*?

Paraphrase the questions Paul answers in verses 7 and 13.

Verse 13 describes the *purpose* God had for the Law - write a definition in your own words (see also Galatians 3:19-25):

## LIFE RESPONSE: What Does it Mean to Me?

In verses 7-8 Paul tells us that he had a problem with *coveting* (see *Exodus 20:17*). Why would it be natural for a legalistic person like Paul (as a Pharisee) to feel he was doing OK with the rest of the 10 Commandments, but to stumble over this one?

Do you have Pharisaic tendencies?

Read **Jeremiah 31:31-34**, where God describes the New Covenant, which was then future, but which we now enjoy. According to the Jeremiah passage, how is the New Covenant different from the Old?

OLD	NEW

### What is the “flesh”?

“Apart from God, humanity is characterized by a complex web of thoughts, desires, values, and actions that are in opposition to God’s intended pattern for us.

In both Testaments, “flesh” is a complex word with many meanings. The NT emphasizes humanity’s moral inadequacy. When they are isolated from God, human beings are energized by evil desires and guided by perceptions that distort God’s will and His nature. The word “flesh” reminds us that we are caught in the grip of sin.

God does not free us now from the flesh. Instead, he provides a source of power that will release us from the *domination* of the flesh. Jesus The Holy Spirit lives within us, and He is the source of new desires and a new perspective.”

Larry Richards,  
Expository Dictionary of Bible Words

Read all of **2 Corinthians 3**. How is the ministry of the New Covenant different from the Old?

The New Covenant frees us to be ourselves; to admit our weaknesses; we have given up on trying to impress God and other people. But when we try to live under the Old Covenant instead of the New, we often try to hide our inadequacies with religious lingo and fake behavior. John Fischer wrote the following song parody - “*Evangelical Veil Productions*” - about this tendency we have. Can you identify with what Fischer is saying?

*“Evangelical Veil Productions! Pick one up at quite a reduction; Got all kinds of shapes and sizes; Introductory bonus prizes! Special quality, one-way see-through; You can see them but they can’t see you. Never have to show yourself again!*

*Just released - a new Moses model; Comes with shine in a plastic bottle, It makes you look like you’ve just seen the Lord! Just one daily application and you’ll fool the congregation, Guaranteed to last a whole week through.*

*Got a Back-from-the-summer-camp veil, with a mountain-top look that’ll never fail, As long as you renew it every year. Lots of special Jesus-freak files, everyone comes with a permanent smile, One-way button, and a sticker for your car.”*