

Romans 7:1-12

Romans 7:1-12 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. (7) What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet." (8) But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. (9) I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. (10) And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. (11) For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. (12) Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

Questions On The Text

How can a person be freed from the law?

Verses 1-4: Paul uses an analogy to answer this question. In considering this analogy, it must be remembered that it is not meant to be an exhaustive study on the issue of divorce and remarriage. That said, Paul says that a married woman can not marry another man while her first husband is still alive. Otherwise she would be an adulteress. However, if her husband dies, she is free to remarry.

In the same way, those under the law are bound to the law till death. But having died with Christ on the cross and then raised from the dead as new creations, they are now free to be bound to the Lord Jesus Christ instead of the law.

What is the result of being freed from the law?

Verses 5-6: While under the law, a person's sinful desires are aroused. This is because those under the law are attempting to achieve their righteousness through obedience to the law. In other words, self-righteousness through self-effort. But self-effort is not the domain of the Spirit but of the sinful flesh, and sinful flesh cannot help but sin.

In contrast, the person who through the cross has died to the law is brand new and able to serve in newness of the Spirit.

If the law arouses sin, is the law therefore bad?

Verses 7-12: In verse 5, Paul said the law arouses our sinful passions. Now he asks, "Doesn't that mean that the law is bad?" His answer is two-fold. First, it is the law that makes people aware of sinful behaviour. The commandment that you must not covet (Exodus 20:17) not only prohibits coveting, but also brings the knowledge that coveting is sin.

Second, Paul explains that it's not the law that is at fault. If, when the law is given, my sinful desires are aroused, then it is only possible because I have sinful desires that can be aroused. It is not the law that

deceives and kills me, but the power of sin within me. The law and the commandments are holy and just and good.

Further Questions For Discussion:

How did the cross set you free from the demands of the law?

Have you ever lapsed back into trying to achieve your own righteousness through self-effort? If so, what was your experience?

Do you ever fall into the trap of trying to be “good enough” for God?

If you are free from the law, does that mean you can break all the Ten Commandments?

How does being under the law arouse the sinful passions of the flesh?

How can you ensure that you avoid the self-effort cycle?