

“Until Death Do Us Part”
Romans 7:1-6
Berean Baptist Church
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INTRODUCTION

Romans chapter six teaches that we are dead to sin and thus free from its power. But how do Christians relate to the Law – the core of Ten Commandments (Exd 20) and the 613 total commandments that Paul had dedicated his life to (Phil 3:5-6). When someone trusts Jesus, do they have to keep some of the commandments, or maybe, all of them?

In this passage, the Scriptures teach us that all who are in Christ have died to the Law so that we can be fully united with Jesus and serve in His Spirit. We see that a Christian's relationship with Jesus should be as exclusive as a faithful marriage and that only the most extreme change can break the power of God's law to condemn us. This change is death...

Christian, count yourself dead to the Law of self-righteousness so that you can serve God faithfully!

Romans 7:1-3 Marriage Illustrates Spiritual Realities

Vs 1 “for I speak to them that know the law,” Paul is speaking of the Old Testament Law which reflects God's intent for marriage. Death is the end of all personal obligations under the Law.

Vs 2 Marriage is one of the most significant personal obligations within the Law. The Bible teaches that in marriage each spouse binds themselves to the other; live for the good of the other; and put the other first.

“Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power (authority) of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power (authority) of his own body, but the wife (1 Cor 7:3-4).”

When a couple does this their home can reflect the joy of heaven because selfless love and service reflect the very heart of God.

“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself...For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband (Eph 5:28-33).”

Vs 2 “bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth” The Bible also teaches this commitment to sacrificial love should be life long.

Deuteronomy 24:1-5 gives a provision for divorce but this was an extreme, desperate measure and never the way that any marriage should have gone.

The allowance for divorce does not reflect God's will for a marriage, but His willingness to work with people who have made bad decisions and the need to protect people living in a fallen world.

When Jesus taught on God's allowance for divorce in the Law of Moses, “He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so (Matt 19:8).”

Jesus says “from the beginning” because Marriage came into the world before sin, the Law, and even death itself!

Now, someone who has gone through a divorce can still live a life full of holy joy and serve God mightily. But the Scriptures teach, and experience shows, that divorce is not the way marriage should be.

See marriage as God intended, a life long commitment to live for another reflecting spiritual truth.

Now, if your marriage (or marriages) did not go as planned, know that our God is a God of grace and healing! He powerfully blesses and uses broken people.

But don't believe the world's lie that marriage is a cheap and easy thing! See it for what it is, a lifetime commitment to a holy order that has been reflecting God's love into the world since the beginning of time.

Vs 3 Points out two aspects of marriage that help us think about a Christian's relationship to the Law

Vs 3 Marriage demands exclusivity “So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress” Marriage is, by definition, an exclusive relationship. It is not possible to be married and dedicated to multiple people.

Vs 3 Marriage is not easily broken...“but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law;” Death breaks the bond of marriage. This does not mean that your spouse in heaven stops loving you, but it does mean that the obligations of marriage end when the spouse dies.

So, marriage, as God intended, is an exclusive relationship reflecting the love of God that is only broken by death.

Tying this all together not only gives us guidance in our relationships but sets us up for the powerful spiritual truth that this passage shares...

Romans 7:4 “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.”

Christian, your relationship with Law or Grace is like a marriage. When you were trying to establish your own righteousness by doing your best to live right (keeping a law), you were under that law like a married person is obligated to their spouse.

But when you trusted Jesus you participated in His death (Rom 6:5-8). So you are now free from your old marriage to the Law so “that ye should be married to another.”

Vs 4 “married” The word that we translate “married” in this passage speaks of a deep connection that binds the entire being of one to another. Literally, “that you should be in existence to another...”

Even as you participate in Jesus death, you participate in His resurrection So that you are united **“even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”**

You must die to righteousness by the Law before you can serve God in the Spirit!

If you are in Christ then you died with Christ and are beyond the reach of the Law. In the same way that death ends the obligations of marriage, Jesus' death ends the obligations of the Law for all that are united with Jesus through faith.

“ 2Co 5:14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, they were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again (2 Cor 5:14-15).”

This central point that the bond of the Law has been severed by our death with Christ allows us to see two very important truths that Vs 3 prepared us for...

Vs 3 and 4 Just as earthy marriage demands exclusivity for life, so does spiritual marriage.

A Christian who depends on God's grace but is still trying to establish their own self-righteousness is like someone married to two people; they cannot really be dedicated to either!

The same is true for someone in Christ but living in sin; you are committing spiritual adultery against Christ your husband.

If you are cheating on your spouse, they may not stop loving you, but your relationship will never be what it could be while you are unfaithful.

The same is true in your relationship with Jesus, when you “cheat” on Him by putting yourself under the Law or sin, He never stops loving you, but your relationship will not be fruitful until you come back to Him.

If you are in Christ, then you are dead to the Law! You have no business putting yourself, or anyone else, back under the Law trying to earn favor with God.

Romans 7:5-6 Our New Life With Christ

Vs 5 “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law...” The idea is that before a Christian is in Christ, they are “in the flesh” this body and world cursed by sin. We all had the Law, either the Old Testament or the Law of God written on our hearts by nature (Rom 2:14-15), and we all had sin.

The Law is designed to expose and destroy sin, so when the Law and sin come in contact with us, they work death in us.

Vs 6 “But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held”

All those in Christ have been delivered from the Law by dying with Jesus.

Compare Vs 2 and 6

“...but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.”

“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held...”

This compassion is the heart of the passage's point; Paul uses an identical phrase when he says “loosed from the law” in Vs 2 and “delivered from the law” in Vs 6.

Just as nothing less than death can rightfully end a marriage, nothing less than death can break the Law's power over you.

And if you are willing to die to self (reject your own evil nature) and trust Jesus, then you do die with Him so that you can share in His new life.

Vs 6 “the letter” refers to the written code of the Law (Rom 2:29, Rom 7:6, 2 Cor 3:6) that was given to Moses by God. The Law is good and fulfills it's purpose perfectly, but it was only a stage in God's plan. And **“the Spirit”** is obedience to God driven by the working of the Spirit of God within us.

Paul teaches that “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

Christian, count yourself delivered from the Law and its death, and alive with Christ to His service!

CONCLUSION

If you have not died with Christ, if you are still going about trying to establish your own righteousness, then see from this text that the Law will have domain over you for as long as you live this way.

There are over 600 commandments in the Law, have you kept every one of them perfectly?

“But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee... (Deut 24:15).”

If you are under the condemnation of the Law, then you need a radical change to break the Law's power over you: *you need to die to sin and self-righteous by admitting your guilt; repenting of your sin; and seeking Jesus mercy!*

Jesus already died for you and arose from the grave to save you. If you give your life over to Him then He will raise you up when He comes again.

Christian, count yourself dead to the Law of self-righteousness so that you can serve God faithfully!

Love Vs Legalism

Christian, if you are in Christ then you should count yourself dead to the Law and living to God's service. Marriage is a beautiful illustration of our relationship to Jesus. In a healthy marriage, you don't do nice things because you're afraid that your spouse will stop loving you. But, you want to be happy because of the love that you share. The same is true in your relationship with God.

Let's talk about how this works practically...

“Legalism” is the belief that you earn or keep your relationship with God through good works. Legalism is a serious problem, but...

Be careful about accusing people of legalism because you are making a judgment about their heart – their inner person!

1. Do Christians have to keep the Ten Commandments to keep God's love? – No, Christians are dead to the Law so that we can be spiritually married to Jesus. And Jesus, the perfect husband, will never stop loving the bride that He died to save.

2. Is it possible to earn part of your salvation through keeping the Law? – No, you cannot be under the Law and under Jesus any more than you can be faithfully married to two people. You must choose between the complete judgment of the Law or the complete mercy of grace.

So, be careful in what you teach children about obedience. If children learn to think that they earn or keep God's love (or your love) by keeping rules, they are learning legalism.

3. Should Christians live according to standards? – Yes, "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him (Joh 14:23)." And the Bible teaches that standards and correction greatly improve one's life (Psl 19:7, Heb 12:6).

The key is that a Christian seeks to obey God because we already rest in His love, not because we think we can earn that love.

So, rather than start with a list of rules and imply that they work up to God's love. Start with God's love and explain why the rule is appropriate because of that love, and why the rule is actually good for us because it comes from a God who loves us.