

SERVING IN A NEW WAY

Romans 7.1-6

As believers in Christ, God is in the process of transforming us radically, not superficially, by Jesus' death and by Jesus' life. We are new creations in Christ Jesus. Old things are passing away, and day by day, we are becoming transformed into the likeness of Jesus.

But how is that transformation taking place? There are some who think that we are saved by grace and transformed by works of good deeds. Now we certainly should be doing the will of God, but many reduce this to the keeping of some form of the law. Are we transformed into Jesus' likeness by keeping the law? What role does the law have for the Christian? Now that we are followers of Christ, how should we view the law?

The Principle Is Stated

“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?” Romans 7.1

The guiding principle around which this section of Scripture is built is that the Law only has jurisdiction or authority over a person as long as that person is alive. Whenever Paul points to the law here, he is referring to it as a standard of conduct.

The Principle Is Illustrated

“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. 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.” Romans 7.2-3

What we are looking at here is not a teaching on marriage, divorce and remarriage, but a teaching on being free from the law. It is an illustration to point out the fact that we are now released from the law and have entered into a new relationship with Christ.

The Purpose Is Stated

*“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**. 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**. 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.”* Romans 7.5-6

The purpose that that God has for all of us is that we might bear fruit. The purpose of being free from the law is not to break the law. The purpose of being free from the law is to enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ which will then enable us to bear good fruit for him (John 15.1-17). What kind of fruit does he want us to bear? There are two kinds of fruit in Scripture.

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus to do good works**, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”* Ephesians 2.8-10

*“So I say, live by the Spirit ... **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”* Galatians 5.14, 22-23

*“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence – **continue to work out your salvation** with fear and trembling, **for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose**.”* Philippians 2.12-13

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