

INTRODUCTION - ROMANS 7:1-25

This chapter continues the focus on the believer's decision to choose either the law of sin or the law of God. At issue is the question of how one is able to affirm the decision to live righteously and remain susceptible to sin. This chapter addresses the struggles of moral perfection and spiritual development for the believer. We are asked to consider that one's struggle with sin remains even after the choice is made for the law of God. With the help of the previous portions of this letter, we now get a deeper sense of the transformation from being one of "the living dead" to becoming one who is "dying to live."

Keep up: complete N.T. Wright, *Romans: 18 Studies for Individuals and Groups*, p 42-45.

Romans 7:1-13 → Understand the stipulations of the law.

- **7:1-6 The analogy of marriage demonstrates the law's functions for believers.**
 - ◆ *Finitude of marriage.* When one partner dies, the bonds and duties of marriage die also. The same is true with the law.
 - ◆ *Failure within marriage.* Unfaithfulness in marriage carries consequences. The same is true with the law.
 - ◆ *Fruit of marriage.* Joining in matrimony constitutes new life with new allegiances that can help defend against old/former passions. The same is true with the law.

- **7:7-12 The application of meaning illustrates the law's utility for believers.**
 - ◆ *The law makes one aware of sin.* Sin is the believer's problem; not the law. The law enables this reality to be seen.
 - ◆ *The law notes the advance of sin.* Sin is not a silent participant in the believer's life. The law tracks sin's effects.

Romans 7:13-25 → Overcome the inner turmoil caused by sin.

- **7:13 Connecting the law's stipulation to the law's acceptance. *Is the law good?***
 - ◆ Don't contradict the purpose of the law by assigning to it the problem of sin.
 - ◆ Don't confuse sin with the instrument by which sin is detected.

- **7:14-20 An existential concern. *Why are believers still susceptible to sin?***
 - ◆ The battle for the upper hand is waged on the field of enslaved flesh.
 - A spiritual law for enslaved flesh.
 - A liberative law for enslaved flesh.

- **7:21-25 An experiential conclusion. *Can believers be free from the power of sin?***
 - ◆ *Sin remains a constant struggle.* Our standing in Christ does not insulate us from the constancy of sin.
 - ◆ *Jesus redeems the confessing soul.* Our standing in Christ does rescue us from the penalty of sin.