

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## ROMANS 6:1-7:13

In January 1972, two men were hunting on the South-sea island of Guam when they made a startling discovery. The men found an active Japanese soldier.

His name was Shoichi Yokoi. For 28 years Shoichi had lived on the island, in a jungle cave, still fighting World War 2. **He didn't know the war was over.**

At one point Yokoi had found a pamphlet dropped by US planes calling for his surrender, but Yokoi refused to believe the enemy's offer of amnesty. For over a quarter of a century Yokoi lived in fear of capture.

He spent his days in a cave, and only came out at night. Shoichi lived off frogs, rats, snails, river eels, nuts, papayas, mangos. The war had ended - victory was decided - the world had changed. News of surrender had been *received*, but *not believed* - and as a result, Shoichi Yokoi lived in self-imposed bondage.

And sadly, this is the plight of many Christians.

**The war in us is over.** Victory was decided on the cross. The sacrifice of Jesus sets off an explosion of grace that transforms everyone who believes. The cross of Jesus generates a miracle in the deepest part of a person. At our core we become a new creation...

Yet like Yokoi, if we don't know and believe the news its impact will be minimal. If you live in a cave of *doubt*, you need to trust in Jesus. It's faith that wins the fight.

Romans 6 begins, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!" Remember, in 5:20 Paul had stated, "Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more," but such a comment can be misinterpreted... Since the more we sin the more grace God supplies, you could assume it's our duty to sin! Let's really whip up some sin so God can show off how generous He is with His grace.

There once was a Russian monk named Gregory Rasputin. He lived in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and actually taught this heretical idea. He was called, "*The Mad Monk.*" He said, "If you are simply an ordinary sinner, you are not giving God an opportunity to show His glory, so you need to be an extraordinary sinner."

Rasputin was a drunkard, a womanizer - *a disgrace to God's grace.* His flawed logic is like a teenager saying he's got to keep a messy room so all his friends will see that his mom is a great housekeeper.

Ask my kids if they were willing to try that on their mom and they'll sound like Paul, "Certainly not! Are you out of your mind? She would've killed me!" God's grace should never be used as an excuse for *our sin.*

Paul writes, "How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" Grace doesn't perpetuate sin, it produces freedom from sin. *And it does so in an interesting way.*

Here's a radical thought - in Christ we "*died to sin.*"

When you're dead you're no longer aware or pulled by outside forces. Sin loses its stranglehold on a dead man. A corpse is no longer influenced or drawn by sin.

To “*die to sin*” means sin stops calling the shots.

In Chapter 4-5 Paul has been discussing how the cross of Jesus *provides us God’s blessing and demonstrates to us God’s love*. It works *for us and in us!* It *cleanses our record*, and it *changes our nature*.

Grace effects us not just *judicially by cleansing our sin*, but also *effectually by transforming our hearts*.

The writer of the classic hymn “Rock of Ages” had this in mind when he penned the line, “Be of sin the double cure, save from wrath and make me pure.”

Jesus delivers us not only from the *penalty of sin*, but also from the *power of sin*. In essence the cross paid for more than a paint job. It installs in us a new engine.

And in Romans 6 Paul is going to pop the hood on our salvation to reveal the work God has done inside those who embrace the cross and believe in Jesus!

Verse 3, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness of His resurrection...*”

Paul uses two terms here to describe what happens when we come to Jesus - a theological term, “*baptism*” and a biological phrase, “*united together*” or “*grafted.*”

The word *"baptize"* has multiple meanings in the Bible. We think of water baptism, but here it speaks of a spiritual experience. It means *"to induct, or install."*

When a rookie quarterback goes into an NFL game for the first time, and gets sandwiched between a few 300 pound behemoths we say *"he got his baptism."*

He's now joined the league. He's part of the game!

And this is what happened when you put your faith in Jesus, you were baptized into Him. You became part of all that Jesus has *acquired* and has *accomplished*.

The biological term Paul uses in verse five is *"united together."* It means *"to grow together, or be grafted."*

Ever see two trees grow together? They touch at a certain point, and began to grow as one. Well, we're now connected to Christ and are growing in Him!

And this is where the plot thickens!

In Christ we share in all He has *acquired and accomplished* - that means that when Christ died, in a spiritual sense you died with Him. When He was buried you joined Him. When He rose, you rose with new life.

This is what we illustrate with water baptism. *You're in the pool as a sinner... You're buried under the waters of death... But then you rise again, alive in Christ!...*

And I'm pretty good about bringing folks up (*I've never lost anybody in a current*). And I'm careful, not just to prevent a drowning, I'm just as concerned about depicting the spiritual

reality. For you are not just part of Jesus' death and burial, you also share in His life!

In the early 90s the US invaded Iraq. It was called Operation Desert Storm. Military chaplains reported a spiritual awakening among many of our troops. Dozens of soldiers embraced Jesus, and asked to be baptized.

But there's not a lot of water in that part of the world, so one clever chaplain came up with a novel idea...

He dug a shallow grave, covered it with plastic, and filled it with water. Which fits the symbolism perfectly.

Spiritually, when you connected to Christ, He came to dwell in you and you began to dwell in Him. You share in all He's accomplished. So that, when He died a part of you died. When He rose a part of you rose.

Blaise Pascal wrote, "One of the greatest principles of Christianity is that what happened in Jesus happens in the soul of the Christian." It's strange to think that we share in an event that occurred 2000 years before we were born, and where we've never been - *yet it's true!*

As surely as the nails were driven into the hands of Jesus you died with Him. And as surely as He walked out of the tomb resurrected you share in His life. Bible commentator Frank Gaebeline expresses it so well. He writes, "Our spiritual history began at the cross."

Remember when Elisha raised the woman's son from the dead, 2 Kings 4 describes the miracle, "And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on

his eyes, and his hands on his hands; and he stretched himself out on the child...”

*How creepy is that...* Elisha interfaces with the child, and the virtue residing in Elisha transferred to the corpse. Life flowed *through contact - by connection*.

But likewise, when Jesus was nailed to the cross, in a mystical and spiritual way your old sin nature was nailed there with Him. In your heart of hearts you “**died to sin.**” What Jesus did *for* all mankind, He did *in* you.

I know it sounds weird, but here’s a way to stretch your thinking... In the making of a movie, scenes are shot first with the actors. There’re no special effects, no music, just the actors. Later in the process, the extras gets dubbed on top of the original, actors-only clip...

Well, in God's mind and heart when you came to Jesus, your spirit - the deepest part of who you are - got transposed on top of the crucified Christ.

*God dubs in your old man over His only Son.*

At that moment, the life you lived at odds with God dies with Jesus. Now when the footage rolls you’re there, but *in Christ - crucified with Him - a new person*.

This is what Paul says in verse 6, “**knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him...**” Once a little boy came home from Sunday School, and said he learned that Paul’s father was one of the thieves on the cross.

His mother wondered where he’d gotten such a wild idea. He quoted Paul in Romans 6:6, “**my old man was crucified with Christ...**” *That’s not what Paul meant!*



*But it's actually close...* Paul's father had a father, who had a father... all the way back to Adam. Adam sinned - Adam bombed... *the original Adam bomb*. And the fallout of that original sin is felt in every human heart. Everyone of us is born with a sin nature.

This is what Paul calls *"the old man."* It's the rebel you. It's the *before Christ* version of you. It's you governed by selfishness and pride - the you that ran from God... But when you came to Jesus this natural inclination to reject God and pursue sin was crucified.

*This will help...* In the book of Romans, Paul sees human beings as divided into two partitions. Each of us is made up of **an inner man** and **an outer man**.

The real you is the inner you. It's the spiritual part of you - the part of you that when you leave this body will continue to live for all eternity. Whereas, the outer man is *"the flesh."* This is the part of you that returns to dust.

When I die some pastor is going to look down at my corpse, and say, **"This isn't the real Sandy Adams. This body is just the shell. The nut has gone."**

In a sense the day after you gave your life to Jesus you looked about the same as you did the day before.

Maybe there was a smile on your face, and a bounce to your step, but your stature, and accent, and smell - your physical features appeared about the same.

That's outwardly... but inwardly, in your spirit, you became a new creation. A radical change took place in the depths of your being - **in Christ you died to sin.**

The old man was crucified. Your sin nature was replaced with a new nature. The inborn tendency to sin was replaced with *love for God* and *love for others*.

And notice the past tense. Our old man “*was crucified with Him.*” For years I heard Bible teachers tell me I needed to crucify *the old man*. So I tried to say “no” to sin, discipline my body, master my passions.

But nothing I could do physically was able to change what I was on the inside. Nobody crucifies themselves.

Crucifixion is never suicide. Someone else drives in the nails. Dying to sin isn’t my work. It occurs in Christ.

Take a pig off the farm - clean him up - dress him in pants, shirt, and little boy shoes. Take him home and treat him like a child. *But a pig is still a pig!* You can’t alter what he truly is... without changing his nature.

And this is mankind’s problem.

**We can’t change what we are** - we’re sinners at heart. We can dress ourselves up in religious garb, and speak religious phrases, and develop religious habits.

We can clean ourselves up. But deep inside we are sinners waiting on an opportunity to act sinfully. Only God can truly change us, and His solution is the cross.

God’s answer to our sin nature isn’t turning over a new leaf, or some behavior modification, or hypnosis, or psychiatry, or reality therapy, etc., etc. The only way to get victory over our *old man* is to crucify him.



It's not a 12 step approach we need. **It's a one step approach.** You need to fully believe that *your old man* died with *God's only Son*. The power is in the cross.

Understand, when you come to Jesus, He doesn't just add to your life - *His nature, His Spirit*. No, the sin nature you are born with gets subtracted from your life.

2 Corinthians 5:17 reads, "**Old things have passed away...**" I use to think the old nature was left to slug it out with the new nature. I was taught by well-meaning, but mistaken teachers, that nothing died at my salvation. *My sin nature* continued side-by-side with *God's new nature*. The net result was a split personality - two natures competing for obedience. And it was up to me to deny the old, and submit to the new.

Here's the illustration that confused me... ***Two dogs live in my heart - a good dog and a bad dog - and the dog I feed the most is the dog that grows the strongest and takes control.*** On occasion the good dog wins, but most of the time the bad dog rules the yard of my life.

But that's not biblical. You're not a doghouse with two dogs. Your old dog is dead, and buried. You need to know - to really believe - a new dog has taken over!

It reminds me of two ole country boys. They were playing with a turtle that was crossing the road. One fellow pulled out a knife and chopped off the turtle's head - yet its body kept walking along the blacktop.

*It caused an argument...* Elmer said, "**That turtle is dead, it doesn't have a head.**" Otis replied, "**No way, how can a turtle be dead when it's still walking?**"

Just then up walks Bubba. They asked Bubba to settle the issue. *"Is that turtle dead or not?"* Bubba's reply was classic. He said, *"Well boys, it seems to me that there turtle is dead, he just don't know it yet!"*

And if we're still struggling with sin this is our problem! This is why Paul begins verse 6, *"knowing this..."* The key is *to know that you know* that in Christ you're not the same person. You're brand new inside.

There's a cartoon... It's a Home Bible Study. The topic is Romans 6. This lady is trying to be really honest with the group. She confesses, *"Well, I haven't actually died to sin, but I did feel kind of faint once."*

And you might be thinking something similar. *I've run from sin - I've wrestled with sin - I've struggled with sin, but I've died to sin?...* that's a stretch. Even now you feel very alive to *tempting desires and sinful thoughts*.

So here's the million dollar question, *"If I died to sin when I came to know Jesus; then why do I still sin, and why do I continue to feel the pull of sin?"*

Look closely at verses 6-7, *"Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin."* Notice in these verses Paul mentions *two pockets of sin* - or two strongholds of sin in a person's life. There **was** *"our old man"* and there **is** *"the body of sin."*

Remember I'm two parts - *inner man* and *outer man*.

Inwardly, in my spirit, I'm a new creation. But in this body - my flesh - I'm the same guy I've always been.

That means the body still knows how to sin. That's why Paul calls it *"the body of sin."* Before I came to Jesus I spent 20 years programming my mind, hands, tongue, feet, and emotions to do sinful, selfish stuff.

To make matters worse, I still live in a world that eggs on *"the body of sin."* The language, and desires, and images - that surround me 24/7 all point me to sin. This world reminds me of who I was apart from Christ.

And even though I know I'm new in Christ... **old habits die hard!** Have you ever crawled out of bed at 6 AM on a Saturday morning, think it's Friday, and start to get ready for work? Our auto-pilot betrays us...

I use to drive a car with a stick shift. Kathy drove the automatic. But whenever I got in my wife's car I'd reach for the phantom shifter... **Some actions take time to stop even when the reason for them no longer exists.**

And this is what happens to a Christian.

Deep inside I'm a new person - but my feelings, and thoughts, and emotions have been conditioned to act and react in sinful ways. Under pressure... it's easier for me to revert back to an old habit - just fall into the rut - than it is to cultivate new habits and new patterns.

The key is **to know that I know!** As Paul said in verse 6, *"knowing this..."* It's when I really get my mind around that

truth of who I am in Christ, then the “*body of sin*” is “*done away with.*” Or it’s effect gets negated.

When I know who I am spiritually in Christ that truth allows me to turn a deaf ear to my fleshly desires.

If I see myself in Christ, I lean on the resources He makes available to me... But if that’s not my identity - If I see myself as the same person I once was - then I’ll listen to *the lies of this world*, and lean on *the lusts that I’ve learned*. **Real faith** builds a new identity based on the cross - and what God says about me in His Word.

Paul continues in verse 8, “*Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.*”

*For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.*”

In the Old Wild West days bad guys were wanted “**Dead or Alive.**” Whereas, Christians are made “**Dead and Alive.**” We’re dead to sin **and** we’re alive to God.

We don’t just share in the crucifixion of Jesus, but we also share in His resurrection power and new life.

Verse 11, “*Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” Here’s proof Paul came from the Deep South. He uses a good ole down-home word, “*reckon.*”

But he doesn’t use it Southern style. If you ask me, “*Is it going to rain tomorrow?*,” and I reply, “*I reckon so!*,” here’s what I’m saying... “*It probably will,*” or “*It might,*” or “*I hope*

so," but if I just said, "*Well, I reckon it'll rain...*" I doubt I'd even take an umbrella with me.

But that's not what Paul means when he uses this word. The Greek word translated "**reckon**" means "**to consider it so**" - "**to treat it as if it's really true.**"

When Paul tells us to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God, He's saying we should consider it a *done deal*. Learn to see yourself in light of this truth!

God's goal is to get us to change the way we view ourselves. He wants us to alter our identity.

Rather than see yourself as a *struggling sinner* - you should learn to see yourself as a *victorious saint*. Don't just know the truth - take it a step further, and let the truth that's in Christ shape in you a new frame of mind!

And understand, this isn't mental gymnastics, or the power of positive thinking. **Considering it so doesn't make it so. We consider it so because it is so!**

Once a sportswriter asked baseball's greatest shortstop, Honus Wagner, if baseball was a tough job.

His reply was classic, "**Ain't much to being a ballplayer, if you are a ballplayer.**" And the same is true with being a Christian... The real you *died to sin* and *lives to God*. Now it's time for you to live what you are!

I love what John Wayne said, "**When I take a role I play John Wayne regardless of the character I happen to be portraying!**" Dress him as a cowboy, soldier, firefighter, or detective and *John Wayne always played John Wayne*. He knew who he was and refused to be anyone else. This is how

you live as a Christian. Know the truth, then develop a strong identity around it.

Verse 12, “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

And do not present your members as instruments (or tools) of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” Three words stand out in Romans 6 - **know**, and **reckon**, and **present**.

**Know** that you’re dead to sin and alive to God...

Then **reckon** it so, form a new identity in Christ...

And last, **present** your members as “*instruments of righteousness*” - in short, get behind your new identity with your *mind*, and *words*, and *memory*, and *eyes*, and *hands*, and *feet* - *your members*. Use them as a **tool** to promote your new life in Christ. Start *speaking*, and *doing*, and *going* in ways that fortify your faith.

Understand how this works... **Identity determines behavior** - how we see ourselves determines how we live our lives. **But then subsequent actions reinforce our identity**. If I see myself as a speed skater, but never get out on the ice I won’t be a very good speed skater.

And you can see yourself as a Christian, but if you never read your Bible, or fellowship, or worship, or witness it’ll be hard to hang on to that identity when the pressure gets



applied. The idea is to get into a new groove. **Off with the old and on with the new.**

Paul writes, “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!”

Here he addresses another false assumption. A skeptic might say God has freed you from the Law, to live lawlessly. But just the opposite it true... Under the Law it was **up to us** to obey, but under grace **God does the work** in us. Thus, God ended our obligation to the Law, not because it's okay for us to break it, but because through grace, we're more inclined to obey.

Verse 16, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?”

In other words, **everybody serves somebody!**

**And you choose!** Think evil, chase after evil. Let your members - your mind, hands, and feet - pursue evil, and you'll become a slave to evil, and the devil. And once his, he'll chew you up and spit you out.

Whereas, if you direct your members Godward: *read godly, watch godly, do godly, and think godly* - you'll be the happy servant of a generous and gracious King.

Verse 17, “But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” We're all slaves -

you're either a slave to God and purity, or a slave to the devil and evil.

"I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness." In other words, to the degree you pursued sin in the past - now pursue God!

*And who but Paul would be the ultimate example...*

Before he was saved, he murdered the Church, and tried stamp out the Gospel... After he was saved, he was as zealous for Jesus as he'd been against Him.

Some of us should take the energy we once spent raising hell, and use it to populate heaven. If you *partied hearty* then, I hope you *worship hearty* now!

Verse 21, "What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death." Looking back, isn't it sad, we put so much energy into a lifestyle that brought only shame and hurt. We were driving fast down a dead end street.

But now that our car is turned around and we're headed up the right road, don't brake or slow down. Keep the pedal to the medal. Keep living your life *all out*, just make sure it's *all out* in the right direction.

"But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end,

everlasting life.” Here’s the life worth living - “*holiness*” now, and “*everlasting life*” in the end.

Verse 23, “For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Let’s admit the obvious - sin is pleasurable. If it wasn’t it wouldn’t be a temptation. But there’s a price to be paid. The cost of sin is steep - its wages are *death*.

And what is death, but separation from God. Sin cuts you off from God in both this life and in the next.

Sin extracts a heavy price, but God’s grace provides heavy benefits - **life** both in this world and in the next.

**Romans 6** teaches us that we’re **free from sin!**

Now in **Romans 7** we learn we are also **free from the Law**. When you come to Jesus you *die to sin*, and *die to the Law*. And both realizations are *vital to victory*.

Jewish children were reared on the Law of Moses. They read it, studied it, memorized it, and when a boy turned 12 he was “*bar mitzvah(ed)*.” He became a “*son of the law*.” He was no longer accountable to his earthly father, now He was accountable to God’s Law.

Of course the Law didn’t just consist of the two tablets, or Ten Commandments. It was made up of 613 commandments - and the Jews measured their status before God by how they stacked up to all those rules.

A legend has it, when God gave the Law to Moses He sounded like a doctor. “*Take these two tablets, then call me in a few days to tell me if you’re doing better.*”

Paul's conclusion was after 1500 years they were doing worse, not better. Rather than righteous, all the Law of Moses did was make the Jews self-righteous.

Legalism is a rollercoaster. Up one minute, down the next. It's inflate, deflate - inflate, deflate. Legalism is worse than beach toys... One minute, you're doing good - you're loud and proud - look at how righteous I am! Then suddenly you blow it, and the air goes out.

The Law created a vicious cycle - puffed up, shot down, puffed up, show down. The OT Law produced a chronic *syndrome* - it was a real "sin-drome."

And Paul writes to Romans living under the Law. He wants to get them off the rollercoaster. Moses *laid down the law* in a way that bound us to it, but in Christ we can *lay down the law* in a way that frees us from it.

The two tablets God gave to Moses didn't make His people any better, so Paul went back to the doctor and the Great Physician prescribed us a dose of grace!

Chapter 7:1, "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?"

For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband as long as he lives..." Paul compares our relationship to the Law with a marriage.

You'd think that since the Law didn't make a man right with God, he could just walk away - but it's not that easy. It's like a

marriage. You can't just bail out. Mankind is bound to the Law until death does us part!

“But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband. 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.” This is Marriage 101. But Paul applies these protocols to our relationship with the Law

Before we come to Jesus we were married to **Mr. Law - the perfect mate!** The Law was perfect!

Ladies, imagine being married to the perfect husband... He wakes up in the morning - not a hair out of place. He smiles and prays, before he drops out of bed and does a 100 push-ups and 200 set-ups. That's before he serves you a hot, delicious breakfast in bed!

Granted, this might be nice for a while... Until Mr. Perfect starts pointing out ways that you're not... *you could lose a few pounds... why is he running a white glove over the mantle?...* Mr. Perfect is now Mr. Pest!

In fact, life with Mr. Perfect could get so bad you go to court to file for divorce. But the Judge asks, **“On what grounds? Forget it, your hubby is perfect?”**

So you try to *kill him*. You spike his juice with a few spoonfuls of arsenic. But Mr. Perfect is so healthy all he gets is a stomach ache. Finally, you conclude the only way to really get free from him is *to kill yourself*.

And living under the roof with legalism is the same as being married to Mr. Perfect - it's frustrating and condemning - and there's no way out! The Law is perfect. It stands forever! Your only way out is to die!

And God took care of that, *"we died with Christ!"*

Verse 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."*

Notice we're not only *dead to sin*, but *"dead to the law."* The Law has no jurisdiction over a dead man.

What if I was robbing a bank, and had a heart attack. I died... Would the cops still cuff me and book me? *No way.* The Law doesn't care about a corpse. I'm free from the Law, and so are you if you died with Christ.

And when you die to the Law, you can marry another, that is Jesus! Notice this, we go from *Perfect Mr. Law* to *Gracious Mr. Love* - and what a difference that makes! Mr. Love doesn't always expect perfection.

1 John tells us, *"Love covers a multitude of sins..."*

Mr. Love doesn't check the house with a white glove. He helps you clean up... He's even patient when you put on a few pounds... There's no *pressure to perform* with Mr. Love, like there was with Mr. Law!

With Law you obey because you've *got to*. With Love you obey because you *get to*. Let's walk in love.



Verse 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.” Married to Mr. Love bears *fruit*, but married to Law yields *frustration*.

Law tells me what to do, but it doesn't give me the power to do it. In verse 5 Paul uses the word “*flesh*.”

And let me define this word. The “*flesh*” is me apart from Christ - it's me and my efforts. The Law causes me to trust in the flesh which inevitable fails.

In fact, rather than provide us the *power to overcome*, the Law creates a *propensity to succumb*. Paul says, “*sinful passions are aroused by the law*.”

There's an old saying, “There are two ways to get something done... Do it yourself or tell your kids not to.”

If we posted a sign in front of the church lawn that read, “Do not throw beer cans on the church lawn,” *what do you think we'd find the next morning?*

We'd look like a frat house after a Georgia game.

You've heard it said, “Rules are made to be broken.” All rules do is provide a sinner with a target. To follow God we need more than an *outward standard*, we need an *inward Holy Spirit*... which leads us to verse 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*.” The Law held up God's standard, His target for righteousness. But it gave no one the ability to hit the bulls-eye. Whereas God's Spirit straightens our aim, so we hit the target consistently.

“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not!”  
There's nothing wrong with Mr. Law - he's perfect.

And he's helped us in a vital way. Verse 7, “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.*”

Before I come out to teach God's Word on a Sunday or Wednesday, my last bit of preparation is to look in the mirror. It's not vanity. I'm just on guard against a piece of food getting stuck in between my teeth, or a hair sticking out of my nose - something unsightly.

And the folks of Calvary Chapel are so nice you probably wouldn't tell me. That's why I need a mirror.

And the Law was a mirror to show us our flaws and our ugliness. Without seeing God's standard, Paul would've never known how far short he'd fallen. **Paul learned from the Law, but he didn't live by the Law.**

Verse 8, “But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.”

The Law was a double-edged sword. It *revealed my sin*, but in doing so it also *aroused my sin*.

Let me explain how this works... Close your eyes for 30 seconds... *go ahead...* but whatever you do, don't imagine a rhinoceros in a tuxedo playing a pink guitar. Don't do it! *No rhinos - in tuxedos - no pink guitars!*

Of course, the moment I mentioned a rhino in a tuxedo with a pink guitar, guess what image popped into your mind. The mere suggestion produced the temptation. If I didn't want you

to imagine it, I should've never brought it up. And this was the effect of the Law. *It's condemnation of sin became my suggestion to sin.*

It reminds me of a hotel in Houston, Texas. It's on the waterfront, and hotel management have had problems with people fishing off the top floors. Some of the high-rise fishermen don't use long enough line.

When they cast their metal lures, the bait hits and break the glass windows of the first floor restaurant.

The Hotel hired an engineer to solve their problem. After surveying the situation he suggested, *"Remove your "NO FISHING FROM THE BALCONY" signs."*

As soon as they did, the fishing stopped. Often, the Law stirs up the very action its intended to suppress!

Verse 9, *"I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me."*

Paul recalls a little of his early Christian experience.

When He first came to Jesus, he was alive with new vitality - enthusiasm for God. He was reveling in God's grace. He was free from the Law. He was out from under the awful pressure that use to weigh him down.

Serving God was fun... *Until the Law with its myriad of demands slipped back into his approach to life.*

If you want to take the fun out of reading your Bible, adopt a rigid reading plan... To lose the joy of giving, just make it mandatory... Want to turn coming to church into a drag, make it an *obligation*, not an *opportunity*... Paul says in verse 11 *legalism is lethal*. It's a joy killer.

For fun my kids use to take my rakes off into the woods. They would clear out paths and build forts. They spent hours on their forts... *raking pine straw*.

But ask those same kids to rake the leaves in my backyard, and it was like pulling teeth... Likewise, **when the Law demands us to serve, serving loses its joy!**

Verse 12, **"Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."** The Law isn't the problem. We're the problem. To save us God in His wisdom developed a righteousness *apart from the Law*.

**"Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful."** Under the Law **my sin** is the issue in my life. The Law exposes my sin. It casts a spotlight on my sin. It heightens my awareness of my sinfulness.

But under God's grace **the Son** is the issue in my life. It's all about Jesus! I progress as a Christian not *by fighting with my sin*, but *by following the Son of God*.