

**Welcome - (~2 min)****Opening prayer – (~1 min)****Opening Comments – (~4 min)**

- You ever watch people in a public place where painters have just finished painting something?
- They put up signs “DO NOT TOUCH – WET PAINT” and invariably, some people have to touch it to see if it is really wet!
- Another example we can all relate to are those signs along the side of the road that say “SPEED LIMIT”
- Some creep over the speed limit and some blast past it as if saying “I’m above that law!”
- People do these things because they are tendencies which come from, using Paul’s words, the *flesh*
- Our *natural* tendency is to “*rebel against rules/laws.*”
- Something in human nature makes us want to go to extremes, a *natural* weakness that even Christians experience.
- Some argue, “Since we are saved by grace, we are free to live as we please,” which is the extreme of *license*.
- Others argue, “But we cannot ignore God’s Law. Yes we are saved by grace, to be sure; but we must live under Law if we are to please God.” This is the extreme expression of *legalism*.
- In chapter 6 Paul answered the first argument and now he is about to answer the second this chapter.
- The word *law* is used 23 times in this chapter.
- Paul has already demonstrated that the law cannot *justify* anyone.
- We will see in this chapter that the law cannot *sanctify* us either.
- Warren Wiersbe says, “Every growing believer understands the experience of Romans 6 and 7.
- Once we learn how to “know, reckon, and yield,” we start to getting victory over the habits of the flesh, and we feel we are becoming more spiritual. We set high standards and ideals for ourselves and for a while seem to attain them. *Then everything collapses!* Without realizing it, we have moved into *legalism* and have learned the truth about sin, the Law, and ourselves.”¹
- So what are we supposed to do?
- That is the purpose of chapter 7, Paul wants the believers in Rome to understand the relationships of the believer to sin, the Law, and Jesus Christ!
- He shares personally how some of these understandings were revealed in his own life!
- Hopefully, his experiences have been an encouragement to you as you did the study.
- As another encouragement, we might think about Luther’s phrase, “*simul justus et peccater*” meaning, “*at the same time just and sinner.*”
- It is to our advantage to remember that *in Christ* we are declared, counted or reckoned to be *righteous*.
- God imputes the *righteousness* of Christ to our account.
- At the same time we remain sinners who have *the sure hope* that God is working in us for our *sanctification*.
- We could spend days on this chapter but time is short so we will look at four major thoughts:
- 1) That believers have freedom from the Law – **7:1-6**

- 2) That the Law is holy, righteous, and good – **7:7-12**
- 3) That the Law shows us that *sin* is *utterly sinful* – **7:13-20**
- 4) Lastly, that being freed from the Law allows the believer to be *a slave to God, not sin!* – **7:21-25**
- Let's go over the lesson and share with one another, what has been revealed to us this week:

Discussion of the Study Lesson – (~50 min)

Week's Aim: *The Gospel's Power to Free the Found:* Freedom To Live

(Start time: _____)

Topic for Day 1: Overview – Read 7:1-25

1. From a cursory read, what did you see as Paul's primary subject and what was his struggle?

(His primary subject is the triumph of God's grace relating to the Law and the gospel – his struggle seems to be similar to our struggle – he kept sinning)

2. (+2 min) How does this chapter compare to chapters 5 and 6?

(It seems at times as though Paul is contradicting things he said in 5 and 6 but in reality he is not! We will see that in going through the study lesson (hopefully!))

3. (+2 min) What truth stood out to you as you did the cursory read of chapter 7?

(This is a personal question so let a couple of people share – everyone probably gained a different truth)

(+2 min) Application 1: What will you apply to your life from the sermon this week and how will you do that?

(Spend some time listening to responses – if little response, again encourage them to take notes of sermon)

Topic for Day 2: Freedom from the authority of the law. – 7:1-6

1. (+2 min) How long does the law have authority over a person?

- Paul is saying as long as we live, we are bound by laws – laws of our community, state, government, and God's Law.
- However, should we die, we are freed from the law's authority!
- This isn't real difficult to understand but Paul is preparing to become a bit more challenging.
- Paul uses an illustration or allegory since he is not teaching on marriage but using it to emphasize a point.
- Some people have used these verses to say that Paul was against marriage but they are taking it out of context.
- **Read 7:2-3** – if the husband dies, the woman is free to marry again, if he is not, her remarriage would be adultery – the same is true for the husband if he leaves his wife
- The point is that by the husband dying, the wife is free from the law!
- Death is the only escape from the authority of the law/Law!
- What shall believers do then regarding the Law – can they be freed from it?

2. (+2 min) How does person escape the authority of the law?

- **Read 7:4a** – “*So, my brothers (believers), you also died to the Law through the body of Christ,*”
- The only escape from the authority of the Law and be alive, is to die to it *through the body of Christ!*

- William Barclay makes a couple of interesting observations, he says, “Paul could have said that we were married to sin; that sin was slain by Christ; and that, therefore, we are now free to be married to God.
- Paul could have said that we were married to the law; that the law was killed by the work of Christ; and that now we are free to be married to God. But... he says it is *us* who die to the law.”²
- Following Paul’s argument, we die to the law by accepting the death of Christ in our place and our obedience is no longer an external obedience of some written code of laws, but an inner allegiance of the spirit to Jesus Christ!

3. (+1 min) **What are believers to bear as a result of their dying to the law?**

- **Read 7:4b** – “to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.”
- Remember Paul is always concerned about *righteousness* which is the fruit of God
- He has made the point that being married to the law prevents anyone from bearing fruit to God
- Paul is saying the old husband is impotent, the Law never engendered *righteousness* to anyone!
- We can conclude from this verse that Paul is saying only death to self through Christ can end our old relationship to the Law and free us to bear fruit to God.
- **We died to the Law when we were joined with Christ!**
- A principle you might want to remember is: **The fruit of our lives must be righteousness!**

4. (+1 min) **What is the blessing that comes from being freed from the law?**

- Paul says prior to being saved through Christ that “*the sinful passions aroused by the Law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death.*”
- **Read 7:5-6** – Our sinful nature wanted to do the opposite of what the Law required
- We can all relate to this in one way or another – like the illustration at the opening – we don’t like rules, laws, constraints, borders or anything which seems restrictive in any way
- In **7:6** Paul uses the words “**But now**” indicating a change has taken place – we are not what we once were – we are new in Christ!
- In Philippians 3:4-8, Paul gives a great personal testimony for reasons he had for putting confidence in the *flesh*
- **Philippians 3:4-8** – “*though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. ⁷ But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ*”
- Paul knew when he became a Christian, he was a new creature.
- He had been producing *fruit to death* (7:5b) but, after becoming a Christian, he began to produce *fruit to God* (7:4b)
- And how did Paul do these things and how are we to do them?
- Our answer is found in **7:6b** – our blessing is that “*we serve in the new way of the Spirit (Holy Spirit)* (7:6b)!”
- Paul had died to the Law through Christ and lived in freedom! We do the same thing.
- This experience has not changed, we must die to the Law through Christ to have the freedom to live!

(+2 min) **Application 2: What fruit will others see in you today? How will you produce that fruit?**

(Listen to people's responses and try to link them to the passage if you can. This will encourage the others to see the connection between Paul's letter and today)

Topic for Day 3: The law is holy, righteous, and good. – 7:7-12

1. (+2 min) **What happened to Paul as a result of learning about the commandment “Do not covet?”**
 - This is a great and most moving passage because Paul gives his own spiritual autobiography and lays bare his very heart and soul.
 - Many of us wrestle with the paradox of the Law
 - In itself the Law seems to be a wonderful thing but it has a unique effect on people.
 - We see the effect it had on Paul because he was *fine* until he read the commandment.
 - Without the law saying “Do not covet” Paul said he wouldn't have known about coveting
 - However once he learned about it, *sin seized the opportunity* (7:8) and produced in him all kinds of desires to *covet*!
 - Paul must have been thinking of some of his earlier words: like **Romans 3:20**, “*through the law we become conscious of sin*” and **Romans 4:15**, “*Where there is no law there is no transgression.*”
 - The Law is a mirror that reveals the inner man/woman and shows us how dirty we are (**James 1:22-25**).
 - Why did Paul avoid using other commandments but instead used *do not covet*?
 - This is the last of the Ten Commandments and it is different because *coveting* is an inward attitude.
 - It is not an outward action to which most of the commandments speak.
 - *Covetousness* leads to the breaking of the other commandments!
 - A good story to read when you have time is the rich ruler found in **Mark 10:17-27**.
 - The man was moral outwardly, but he had never faced his need for a Savior – he *coveted* his money!

2. (+2 min) **Read Exodus 20:1-17. Identify one or more laws that “sin has seized the opportunity” with you. What are you doing, or will you do, about it?**
 - Paul's words that *sin seized the opportunity* are very interesting.
 - An interesting verse is **1 Cor. 15:56** “*The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law”*
 - Since we have a sinful nature, the Law is bound to arouse that nature the way a magnet draws steel.
 - Something in human nature wants to rebel as we have stated before.
 - Why? The reason is found in **Romans 8:7** “*the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so*”
 - Believers who try to live by rules and regulations discover that their legalistic system only arouses more sin and creates more problems
 - The Law is a magnet for our fallen human nature to sin!

3. (+2 min) **Three things happened to Paul in verses 10-11, what are they? Do you think they happen to people today? Explain:**
 - You could say *the Law is a ministry of condemnation* – all it can do is condemn us!
 - Paul had periods in his life like we do – one period for Paul was when he was *blissfully ignorant!* (7:7)
 - He had been self deceived and self righteous because he felt he kept the laws and was proud of that
 - If we continue studying Scripture we come to Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount* – then our wheels come off
 - We realize we don't put God first, we have other gods, we don't love people the way we should, etc..
 - We sometimes say “Oh yes, I sin,” or “I probably sin but so does everyone else”

- Friends, that is an intellectual understanding of sins – it is not what Paul is talking about here
- The bottom line is this, when we have a heartfelt realization of the truth of our sin morally, it kills us!
- We are devastated! That is what happened to Paul in these verses!
- **It is so important for Christians to come to the point where they are devastated by their own sinfulness!**
- If we don't get to that place, we are skirting around it, and that is a detriment to our Christian life
- So Paul shares three devastating realizations in verses 10 and 11:
- 1) Every commandment intended to bring life brought death (10)
- 2) Sin deceived me (11)
- 3) Sin through the commandment put me to death (11)
- There is always deception in sin.
- Vaughan says that sin's deception works in three directions:
- 1) We are *deceived* regarding the *satisfaction* to be found in sin.
- 2) We are *deceived* regarding the *excuse* that can be made for it. Everyone thinks he/she can put up a defense for doing the wrong thing.
- 3) We are *deceived* regarding the *probability of escaping the consequences of it*. No person sins without the hope of getting away with it. But the truth is that sooner or later our sin will find us out.
- Paul must have experienced some of these thoughts in his life just as we do.
- Paul is certain that there is wisdom in the whole sequence.
- 1) He is convinced that whatever the consequence, sin had to be defined.
- 2) The process demonstrates the terrible nature of sin because sin took something, the law which is holy just as good, and twisted it into something which served the ends of evil.
- Carlyle called this "the infinite damnability of sin"
- The whole terrible process is not accidental; it is all designed to show us how awful a thing sin is, because it can take the loveliest things and defile them with its polluting touch.

(+4 min) **Application 3: Write the steps you would use to explain that the law is holy, righteous, and good:**

(Great time to hear ways people will witness to others – these types of questions are to train us to be ready for the unexpected and sometimes the unexpected will be a difficult question/situation)

Topic for Day 4: Free to see that sin is utterly sinful. - 7:13-20

1. (+2 min) **In your own words, paraphrase what Paul says in 7:13. How does that affect your view of sin?**

- Did that which is good – the law – then, become death to me? Paul asks and immediately answers
- "By no means!"
- Rather for sin to be recognized for what it is, sin produced a death in Paul via the good law
- The purpose of all this was to demonstrate to Paul and others that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.
- Think about this – if sin uses the holy, righteous, and good law to bring death
- That should show us how utterly sinful/wicked sin really is
- We sometimes hear "Oh that's just a little *white lie*" or "I need to lie some or I'd lose business, everyone does it"
- Please understand that is exactly what sin wants you to believe

- But Paul says God's law is holy, righteous, and good and it exposes the fact that any sin is wicked in God's eyes!
- God sees all our sins for what they really are to Him!
- We need to do the same thing and quite down playing them!

2.(+2 min) **Why do you think Paul says the law is spiritual and he is not, but he is a slave to sin? Who sold Paul as a slave to sin (see Genesis 3:1-7)?**

- The law is spiritual in that the law deals with the inner man, the spiritual part of man, as well as with the outer actions.
- Paul is saying that his nature is carnal (fleshly)
- This explains why the old nature responds as it does to the law.
- The old nature knows no law, the new nature need no law.
- The law cannot transform the old nature; it can only reveal how sinful the old nature is.
- The believer who tries to live under the law will only *activate* the old nature; he/she will not eradicate it
- Adam sold Paul as a slave to sin when he fell!

3. (+1 min) **What is the struggle Paul is speaking of in 7:13-20? We all experience similar struggles, but what do believers have according to these verses: Romans 5:20-21; 2 Corinthians 9:8; and Colossians 1:9-11?**

- We can see three stages in Paul's life – a proud Pharisee, thinking he was in good standing with God
- Then a period when he came to Christ on the road to Damascus – he was still proud, going to do it on his own
- Finally, we see Paul has had the victory and has learned to yield himself completely to Christ and letting the Spirit of God live through him!
- **Romans 5:20-21** - "*grace increased all the more* "
- **2 Corinthians 9:8** - "*And God is able to make all grace abound in you so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work*"
- **Colossians 1:9-11** - "*asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding... that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience*"
- See what people say "believers have" from these verses:

4. (+2 min) **How would you explain the struggling Paul has described, to someone you wanted to influence for Christ?**

- **Read 7:16** – when Paul's old nature broke a commandment, his new nature agreed with the law
- **Read 7:17** – Paul has realized it wasn't his new nature doing wrong but the old nature living in him
- **Read 7:18** – Paul learned two important truths in his struggle that all Christians need to learn
- 1) There was no good living in his old nature
- 2) He learned that his new nature had limitations he allowed because of his old nature
- It is our old nature that often causes us the most trouble because it desires to be utterly sinful!

(+2 min) **Application 4: How would you explain the *utterly sinful*ness of sin (7:13) to someone who thinks being a good person is enough to get to heaven?**

Topic for Day 5: Freed to be a slave to God's law. – 7:21-25

1. (+2 min) **Using verses 7:21-23, describe the type of law Paul is speaking of in each instance:**

- **Verse 21** - Paul is making a statement, or principle, regarding the law (God's Law) - when the law is at work, we are supposed to do good, but sin's (*fleshly*) desires are right there too!
- **Verse 22** - Here Paul is referring to the goodness of (God's) Law (7:12) and he finds no fault in it - he is talking about the Mosaic Law or God's *general law*.
- **Verse 23** - He speaks of another force/principle at work within, the law of the *flesh* - his words speak volumes - "waging war" against the "*law of my mind!*"
- The law of his mind is his "*new self*" that desires to obey God's Law
- The law of sin is a force which tries to prevent him from obeying God's Law - it is the law of the *flesh!*
- Paul doesn't use the word *flesh* here but it can be implied from what he has already said in his letter.
- By *flesh* Paul does not mean simply the body, but there is something within a person which responds to the seduction of sin; and it is that part of a person which provides the opening for sin to entice and deceive.
- The *flesh* as Paul uses the term, is our human nature apart from, and unaided by, God.
- Paul has said that when our human nature was unaided by God (Romans 1:18-32), the law actually moved our passions to sin.
- We see that Paul continues to share his personal experiences with those in Rome

2. (+3 min) **How would you describe Paul as he wrote verse 24: How do Paul's words encourage you?**

- As one might expect, there are varying views of who this man Paul is speaking this way.
- Some say he is speaking of a time before he was regenerated
- Some say he is speaking of the time he came under conviction by the Holy Spirit
- Others say Paul is speaking of a carnal Christian
- But none of these views seem to support what Paul has been saying for a couple of reasons:
- 1) Rather, Paul's statements (**7:24-25a**) demonstrate his spiritual maturity - how's so you might ask?
- Referring back to **7:13b** where Paul says "*sin might become utterly sinful*"
- A sign of a Christian's maturity is his/her view of sin - is it *utterly sinful*?
- Maybe you have picked up on the fact that Paul does not make excuses for the sin's he has committed!
- In fact, he doesn't even say what they are!
- Rather he is aware of their *utterly sinfulness!* He speaks to the deeper problem, that what he did/does is sinful!
- 2) By calling his actions for what they are - sinful - that truly distresses him!
- That is what sinfulness does to a mature Christian
- There is no making excuses, giving reasons it couldn't be helped, "the devil made me do it!"
- Paul is distressed because he sees sin for what it is - *utterly sinful* - and we should too!
- Paul isn't implying here that we should take on a guilt trip - he doesn't!
- In fact he shows us exactly what we should do once we come to the realization of how *utterly sinful* our *sins* are in God's sight!
- Next is the good news that gives us **freedom to live!**

3. (+5 min) **What is the relief Paul gains in verse 25? What is the relief you gain from verse 25?**

- So Paul has brought us two points of fact: 1) that we are sinners in our old natures which lives within us;

- 2) As believers, we can be **free to live** as Paul says "*Thanks be to God - through Jesus Christ our Lord*"
- Our guilt is defeated (if we let it be) and we are *have the righteousness of Christ as God sees us!*"
- Now that is good news!
- Paul makes a summary statement which is probably the reason the translators ended the chapter here:
- He says there is warring going on within - his new regenerated self which is a *slave to God* and his sinful nature which is a slave to the *law of sin!*
- Christians must be aware of what's going on inside themselves if they are to mature and know how to deal with it!
- We need to share this good news with others - both believers and unbelievers!
- It's not a suggestion by God but a command!

4. (+2 min) **Has Paul described experiences you have had in your Christian walk? Explain:**

- Share some experiences and how people have dealt with them or are dealing with them.
- One thing to remember is after we realize our sins and see them for what they are, we must then come to the realization that Paul did - "Thanks be to God - through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

(+2 min) **Application 5: How are you a slave to God's law in your mind (refer to Psalms 15:10-12)? What will you do to maintain that freedom?**

(+2 min)

Closing Comments – (~2 min)

- The old nature acts as if there is no law and the new nature needs no law!
- Beware of legalism because it grieves the new nature and aggravates the old nature!
- The legalists becomes a Pharisee whose outward actions are acceptable, but whose inward attitudes are despicable to God
- No wonder Jesus called them "*whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean.*" (Matthew 23:27)
- How wretched can we get!
- Folks, the best is yet to come! Romans 8 explains the work of the Holy Spirit in overcoming the bad and producing the good!
- Remember, believers are **free to live** through Jesus Christ our Lord! PTL!

Closing Prayers – (~1 min)

¹ Warren W. Wiesbe, "*The Bible Exposition Commentary – New Testament Volume 1,*" – p.534

² William Barclay, "*The Letter to the Romans – revised edition*", p. 93