



Romans

Right With God

New Life, New Service

Lesson Twenty-Eight

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum

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New Life, New Service

Today, we are going to study a pretty difficult lesson. It is difficult because our writer, the Apostle Paul, uses an illustration that can be misunderstood. One Bible commentator, C. H. Dodd, says that “when we are studying it we should try to forget what Paul says and try to find out what he means.” Well, let’s not forget what he says, but we do need to look carefully for his true meaning. Read Romans 7:1-6.

The problem illustration is from marriage. He says that so long as a woman’s husband is alive, she is not free to remarry. However, if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wants, because the original marriage contract is broken. The woman is released from the former husband. Her status as a wife has been completely done away with...abolished. The husband’s death means that she is not obligated at all, in any way, to her previous husband. She is totally free of the law that bound her to her husband.

We could understand this as humans being married to sin and that sin suffered death by the cross of Jesus and thus humans are no longer bound by sin and are free to be “married” to Jesus. Simple, don’t you think? But no, Paul thinks back to what he has just been talking about (in previous chapters) and brings the Law into the discussion. His illustration would have been clearer if he had said that we were married to the law and the law was killed by Jesus’ death on the cross, so humans are now free to marry Christ. But wait, that is not what he said. Instead of the law dying, humans die to the law.

What can we say that makes sense here? How about: We share in the death of Christ. (Romans 6:8ff) That means that since we died, in the spiritual sense, we are free from all duty to the law and we can “marry” again. (Marry means make a commitment.) So we, who choose to do so, “marry” Christ (Salvation “in Christ”). We must be true to other Scripture and understand that dying to the Law, with Christ, and “marrying” Christ take place at exactly the same time. Salvation is by God’s grace, and only grace can free humans from the Law.

What we come down to is that Paul is drawing a contrast between two human possibilities: Our life without Christ and our life with Him. In the flesh, we were doomed to try to live up to the Law and by keeping every law, please God. Paul is talking about that part of us (flesh) that is susceptible to sin. It is that part of us that provides opening to the temptation of sin.

The Law showed humans what was wrong, and humans, being what we are, saw forbidden as tempting and were led into sin. The Law aroused sinful passions in us. We don’t consciously work up passions, they are of our human nature and lead to sin.

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Verse six begins with “But now...” There is a sharp contrast. That was then; this is now. Paul goes back to the imagery of slavery. He reminds us that we were bound, but now, we are free; and free to a new kind of service. This service is now in the newness of God’s Spirit in us. Paul is saying that our service is to God, and it is guided by His Spirit. God frees us to do Christian service unlimited by any set of human directions. It is the freedom for God’s Spirit to work in us and through us.

We come to Christ and “in Christ” we have a new life. In our spirit and in our heart of hearts, we want to do the right thing. The Law no longer rules. Jesus, in our hearts, creates a love relationship which encourages us to be what He wants us to be. Now true love empowers us to do what the limits of the Law could not help us to do. And, in this new life, God allows us the privilege of Christian service. See Galatians 5:22, 23

Scripture Memory: “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.” Romans 7:4

*Underlined statements in this Teacher’s Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher’s Guide.

For the Teacher:

Lesson Goal: To teach students the truth of life guided by the Law and life “in Christ.”

1. William Barclay says, “Seldom did Paul write so difficult and so complicated a passage as this.”
2. Verse one begins with the conjunction “or,” not present in some translations. He is saying that they must agree with what he has said in the previous chapter *or* disagree, continuing in their ignorance. Then he says, “do you not know...” We have pointed out in previous occurrences of this phrase, that the reader does know what Paul is talking about and will agree with the argument he is about to present.
3. Paul has just argued, in chapter six, that the believer is not under the rule of sin. Now he goes on to further point out that he is not under the rule of law. There are many points of similarity in the two arguments. The believer has died to sin (6:3) and to the Law (7:4). He is free from sin (6:18) and from the Law (7:3) He is justified from sin (6:7) and set free from Law (7:6) He walks in newness of life (6:4) and serves in newness of Spirit (7:6).
4. One caution: Paul is not creating a theology, or belief system, related to marriage here. He is simply using the marriage relationship as an illustration. Dwelling on marriage here is not fair to the text.
5. Paul uses the phrase “my brothers” at this point for the third time in this letter. It is an affectionate term speaking to relationship which Paul is forging with this letter. He is not speaking from the lectern of a teacher, he is speaking to them as a fellow Christian encouraging them to admit the whole truth. The whole truth is that they have died to the rigid demands of the Law. They are not dead to the righteousness that keeping the Law brings. They died to the control of the Law and the sin it encouraged in them. The Law is not dead, the believer is dead.
6. According to Galatians 4:4, Jesus was born under the Law and lived under the Law right up to His crucifixion. But, His resurrection brought an end to that. And according to Galatians 2:19-21, our death with Christ and resurrection to new life with Him, brings an end to our captivity in the Law.

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Student Worksheet

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=We share in the death of Christ. (Romans 6:8ff) That means that since we _____, in the spiritual sense, we are _____ from all duty to the law and we can “marry” again. (Marry means make a commitment.) So we, who choose to do so, “marry” _____ (Salvation “in Christ”).

=Paul is drawing a contrast between two human possibilities: Our life _____ Christ and our life _____ Him.

=Paul is saying that our _____ is to God, and it is guided by His _____. God frees us to do Christian service unlimited by any set of human _____. It is the freedom for God’s Spirit to work in _____ and through _____.

=Jesus, in our _____, creates a love relationship which encourages us to be what _____ wants us to be.

=In this new life, God allows us the privilege of Christian _____. See Galatians 5:22, 23

Scripture Memory: “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.” Romans 7:4

A Roman Road to Salvation:

Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Everyone is a sinner and needs salvation.

Romans 6:23a “For the wages of sin is death.” The law of God is unchangeable. If someone sins the penalty must be paid, the payment is death.

Romans 5:8 “But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ died for us.” God loves us so much, according to John 3:16, that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins.

Romans 6:23b “But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The penalty for sin is spiritual death, but God, through the death of Jesus on the cross, took the penalty for the sins of all people, and now everyone can have eternal life. See also, II Corinthians 5:21

Romans 10:9, 10 “That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.” To personally receive the gift of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus, you trust God to be what He says He is. Believing that “God raised Him (Jesus) from the dead” is to accept all that the Bible says about God and His Son, Jesus. Then you speak (confess) the words, “Jesus is Lord,” as a statement of faith. Believing “with your heart” means that you believe with your mind and with everything that you are.

Romans 10:13 “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” You have the promise of God Himself that if you do what Romans 10:9, 10 says, you will become God’s child and have eternal life.

Romans 12:1, 2 “I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.” Becoming a Christian is a life-long act of faith and worship.