

Married To Christ

Romans 7:4-6

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FOCAL Read Responsively **Romans 7:4-6** Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. **(5) For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.** **(6) But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.** ¹

Throughout our Bible God often uses the *visible* to explain the *invisible*, the *natural* to explain the *supernatural*, the *common* to explain the *uncommon*. Our Lord Jesus Christ often did this when He walked and talked among us. To the woman drawing water at the well He said “... **whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.**” (John 4:14). To those who asked Him for bread Jesus said “**I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst**”. (John 6:35) Jesus spoke of the woman who, having ten pieces of silver, lost one, and how she looked diligently for that piece until it was found. He spoke of the shepherd who had one hundred sheep. When one sheep wandered off the shepherd left the ninety-nine and looked for that one. In His telling of the looking woman and the grieving shepherd Jesus wanted to impress on His listeners how much God loves the sinner, and how hard God works to draw that sinner to Himself. Jesus moved from the natural and the seen to the supernatural and the unseen

¹ all texts are King James Version (Authorized) unless otherwise noted

so that we, poor mortal that we are, could understand the immense and loving heart that is in God our Creator. Never did our Savior give the impression that God has no care for fallen man. Every person has value. The leper was not to be shunned, but to be touched and healed. The blind were not to be ignored, but were to be given sight if they called upon the Name of the Lord. Even children were of value, and the Master often gathered these little ones to Himself to love them and teach them of God's love. **“Allow the little children to come unto Me, for only those with the heart of the little child shall see the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 19:14; Luke 18:16).** Our minds comprehend best what we are most acquainted with. God can – and does - use that which is seen to describe the unseen.

Of all the illustrations God uses to describe the Christian Way of Life, **marriage** is certainly at the top of the list. When God created Adam, it wasn't long before He created Eve and joined them in marriage in the Garden of Eden. Marriage among humanity is always between one man and one woman, according to the pattern God established at the beginning. It is significant that the *very first miracle* Jesus ever did while on this earth was at a marriage in Cana of Galilee when He turned *water into wine*. Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of Heaven being **“like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.” (Matthew 22:2).** The King sent out invitations to the marriage but none would come. Finally the King said to His servants, **“Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage”.** (Matthew 22:9) You who are Christians heard the call of God, repented of your old way of life and have come unto Jesus Christ that you might have

life, and have it more abundantly. You are now wed to Jesus, spiritually bound to Him.

1. Those In The Flesh Die Under The Law

Before we look at our focal text, let's look at our context. In the first part of this text the Apostle says

Romans 7:1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion² over a man as long as he liveth?

We are all under the **dominion or lordship** of God's Law as long as we live. This is true for me, and this is true for you. It is true whether you are a Christian or a pagan, a believer or an atheist, a worshiper or a skeptic. God's Laws rule you whether you like it or not! If you climb up on the roof of this Church building and jump off, then His *Law of Gravity* takes over. Flap your arms if you want to but you'll not fly. His law will take you, kicking and screaming, all the way to the ground. Build a fire, and then put your hand in it, and God's Laws of Thermodynamics takes over. You can wish yourselves to be like *Superman* and hold your hand in that flame believing yourselves to be impervious, but His law will rule. Take off your clothes and spend the night outside in the dead of winter sleeping on the ground. You will never get comfortable no matter how hard you wish it. God's Laws dictate what you will do if you want to survive. You must clothe yourself, must find shelter and warmth, or you will die under the heel of the Law.

² Strong's: G2961, 2961 kurieuo ko-ree-yoo'-o, from 2962; to rule:--have dominion over, lord, be lord of, exercise lordship over., see GREEK for 2962, Morphology: V-PAI-3S, Tense: Present, Voice: Active Mood: Indicative Person: third Number: Singular

The Law has dominion over a man as long as he lives. God's Natural Laws are in place to help us, not to hurt us. The same Law that carries the fool from the roof of the Church building to the ground below also keeps your feet on planet earth. Without gravity we would all float away into outer space. Without gravity we could not eat, for our fried chicken would leave the skillet and the plate before we could ever cook it. God's Law exercises dominion over us all for our own good. It is His natural Laws that enable our cars to go forward on a tank of gas. His natural Laws bring

Acts 14:17 ... rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Thank God for His natural Laws. By these Laws He takes the seed sown and turns it into food to bless us. His Laws of Cohesion allow things to be bound together so that we can worship Him in this place in relative comfort. His Laws of replenishment allow plants to cycle our waste into oxygen that we can abundantly enjoy. Even the discomfort of bodily heat and sweat are His natural Laws that maintain a proper temperature in our frames. God's Laws are always good.

God's Spiritual Laws are also good. The very last verse of the previous chapter in Romans states:

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When God's Law tells us to *flee from a thing*, then it is

with great Love that God warns us. His Law does not exist to spoil our pleasure. God is not some Cosmic Killjoy, intent on robbing us of the good while mandating law after law upon us. No, dear ones. When God warns us to avoid a thing it is because our Loving Father has looked at it, looked at its end results and has determined **“only death shall come from doing this thing. The wages of sin is death. I love you – FLEE from this, RUN my Child into My Arms”**. To us the thing forbidden may look like a beautiful serpent. To God Who knows all things this brightly colored pet has within its mouth the venom of the coral snake. The Law is good.

Yet there is within each and every person a resident sin nature. What is **sin**? “Sin”, properly defined, means **“missing the mark of God's righteousness”**. Who is a sinner? The Bible says:

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

All are sinners, all come **short of the glory of God**. Sin is a **coming short of the glory of God**. The sinner – unsaved and unbelieving – has *no desire to glorify or magnify God*. The sinner focuses on what pleases his or her own life. “What's in it for me” is the question foremost in the minds of those who are unsaved.

Sin within the unregenerate makes him prideful, self-willed, self-serving. Sin within the unregenerate makes man *refuse to glorify God*. Sin in the unregenerate also does another thing. Look at our focal text:

FOCAL Romans 7:5 For **when we were in the flesh, the motions³ of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.**

When we were in the flesh. The phrase “**in the flesh**” does not mean to “**be in this body**”, for we are all in this body right now. The Apostle, as he writes this text under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, is “**in this body**”. No, dear ones. “**In the flesh**” means to be in an *unsaved, unregenerate state*. The unbeliever is “**in the flesh**”, for he or she looks to please only the flesh or their present bodies and not the Lord. The Bible tells us in the next chapter:

Romans 8:8-9 So then **they that are in the flesh cannot please God. (9) But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.**

Hear me, Christian. You are **not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you**. The Christian is not **in the flesh**. We are spiritual Children of God, indwelt and controlled by the Spirit of God. We have changed addresses from where we were to “777 Pearly Gates”. We belong to God.

The unbeliever **in the flesh cannot please God**. Though subject to the Laws of God, the unbeliever fights against those same Laws. The Law of God is good, and right, and for our protection. Yet the unbeliever **in the flesh** has within him **the motions or influence of sins**, that old sin nature. When God's Law says “no” the sin nature looks

at that Law and says, “do it anyway”. As a young parent I could tell my children “Don't eat the cookies” and I might as well had put a sign on the cookies that said, “You must eat the cookies”. That sin nature stands *against Law, against the commandment*. Those **influences of the old sin nature increased when the Law was given**. Our text continues by saying “**(sin) worked in our members (in our bodies) to bring forth fruit unto death**”.

What does the Law do for those who are unsaved, who are **in the flesh**? It **brings forth fruit unto death**. Because the Old Sin Nature is unchecked in the unbeliever, the Old Sin Nature leads the unbeliever *to reject the Law more*. Since the Law is rejected more, life is rejected. The Law points to life. The Lord says:

Proverbs 7:2 **Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.**

but the Sin Nature within the unbeliever rejects that Law. Look at your immediate context:

Romans 7:7-13 **What shall we say then? [Is] the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. (8) But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin [was] dead. (9) For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. (10) And the commandment, which [was ordained] to life, I found [to be] unto death. (11) For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew**

3 pathema, path a mah = the influence

[me]. (12) Wherefore the law [is] holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. (13) Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

The Law of God is not sin, but the **sin nature in the unbeliever drives and strives against the Law of God.** The Law is good, given by a loving and caring Father. But man, like the prodigal (**Luke 15:12-13**), says “**Give me the portion of goods that are mine, and I will please myself with riotous living**”. The Law says “no” and “danger”, but the unsaved do it anyway. “**Sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful**”. What a terrible loop this is! What is God's solution for foolish man? Look at our first focal verse.

2. Jesus Christ Took The Law Out Of The Christian's Way

FOCAL Romans 7:4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead⁴ to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

You who are Christians are **dead to the Law by the body of Christ.** The word **dead** is the Greek **thanatoo**, which

⁴ Strong's: G2289, 2289 thanatoo than-at-o'-o, from 2288 to kill (literally or figuratively):--become dead, (cause to be) put to death, kill, mortify. see GREEK for 2288 Morphology: V-API-2P Tense: Aorist Voice: Passive Mood: Indicative Person: second Number: Plural

means **you have been put to death.** Because Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law of God for you, dear Christian, you are now *dead to the Law*. Does that mean you are lawless? No. The Bible uses the illustration of marriage here to explain how your relationship has changed. Before you believed in Jesus you were **wed to the Law of God.** Whether you liked it or not the Law stood over you. We've discussed this, so I'll not go into it in any more detail. Jesus Christ went to the Cross, fulfilling the Law of God on your behalf. The Bible says that Jesus Christ took the curse of the Law on Himself:

Galatians 3:10-13 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. (11) But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, [it is] evident: for, The just shall live by faith. (12) And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. (13) Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree:

What we could not do because of our old Sin Nature Jesus Christ did for us. We could not keep the Law. He kept the Law. We were dead in trespasses and sins, wed to the very Law that was killing us. Christ took that Law on Himself and, **redeeming us from that Law, was made a curse for us.** The sacrifice of His Body on the tree:

Ephesians 2:14-16 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of

partition [between us]; (15) Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, [even] the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, [so] making peace; (16) And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

brought peace between the believer and God. No longer are we wed to the Law of God. We are **wed to God Himself**, wed to Jesus Christ, married to Him by faith. As our text says, **we who believe are dead to the Law by the body of Christ**. The Law fulfilled died to us when Jesus Christ died on that Cross *for us*.

Now dead to the Law by the body of Christ, we are

FOCAL Romans 7:4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead⁵ to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be **married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.**

now **married to Him Who is raised from the dead**. The Christian is married to Christ. Our lives are bound to Him. Just as Adam looked at Eve and said:

Genesis 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Jesus Christ looks at every believer and says “**cleave to**

5 Strong's: G2289, 2289 thanatoo than-at-o'-o, from 2288 to kill (literally or figuratively)--become dead, (cause to be) put to death, kill, mortify. see GREEK for 2288 Morphology: V-API-2P Tense: Aorist Voice: Passive Mood: Indicative Person: second Number: Plural

Me. We are now One, united for all eternity. As man and wife leave their old homes to make a new home, I bid you to leave your old fleshly ways and bind to Me. I have taken you from the world, taken you from the Law, taken you from sin and death. Bind to Me in love and live!”

The Law has been taken out of the way, but the Christian is not lawless. We now live to please God and to please our Savior. What does the Christian strive to do? **Since we are married to Jesus, we should bring forth fruit unto God.** Let's examine this last point.

3. The Christian Lives To Bring Forth Fruit Unto God

FOCAL Romans 7:4, 6 ... we should bring forth fruit unto God. ... (6) But now we are delivered⁶ from the law, that **being dead**⁷ wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

The Christian is not freed from the Law so that we can be lawless. The Christian is freed from the Law but *bound to Jesus*. The Law which once held us is now abolished so that we can live under a *new Law, the Law of Christ*. The old Law of God that we were bound to was a thing that we strove against. The new Law of Christ, the *New Testament in His Blood*, is a Law of

6 Strong's: G2673, 2673 katargeo kat-arg-eh'-o, from 2596 and 691; to be (render) entirely idle (useless), literally or figuratively--abolish, cease, cumber, deliver, destroy, do away, become (make) of no (none, without) effect, fail, loose, bring (come) to nought, put away (down), vanish away, make void.

7 Strong's: G599, 599 apothnesko ap-oth-nace'-ko, from 575 and 2348; to die off (literally or figuratively)--be dead, death, die, lie a-dying, be slain (X with). see GREEK for 575, see GREEK for 2348, Morphology: V-2AAP-NPM, Tense: second Aorist Voice: Active Mood: Participle Case: Nominative, Number: Plural Gender: Masculine

sacrificial love. We love Him for He first loved us. We serve Him because He saved us from eternal punishment. We love Jesus Christ because He released us from an eternal cycle of Law (which we could not fulfill) and sin (which we reveled in).

Consider the effects of the Law of God in the Apostle Paul before he met the Savior – and compare these effects to your life. Prior to Christ Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the foremost teachers of the Law in his day. Paul was, according to his own account:

Philippians 3:4-5 **Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: (5) Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, [of] the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;**

Here was a man who kept the Law of God. He was a **Pharisee**, trained by the Chief Pharisee of his day. When Paul prayed he prayed like all Pharisees,

Luke 18:11-12 ... **God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men [are], extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. (12) I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.**

Surely such a one would be all that God wanted him to be. Yet this is never the case with the Pharisee, with the person wed to Law and not to Christ. Paul's Old Sin Nature took the Law – which is good – and turned it to *black pride*. In the words of **C.H. Spurgeon**:⁸

“his security brought him pride; he looked down upon all others. If by chance a Publican met him in the street, he gave him all the room he could. If he ever passed by a woman that was a sinner, he took care to look quite another way, or to let her see how scornfully he thought of her. If, perchance, he mentioned a Gentile, he called him a dog; for this great one, Saul of Tarsus, had so kept the law, and felt so quiet and peaceful within, that he could afford to stand on the very pinnacle of eminence and look down with derision on those poorer mortals who were not so good as he.”

Believing that his adherence to the Law gave him a special place with God, pride led him to go about hunting down Christians. When you become a judge, the next step is to carry out the sentence. God did not call you or I into this loving relationship with Christ to become judges. Wed to Christ we should want what He wants, do what He says, seek what He says seek, and love fervently where He commands love. We who believe are **married to another, that we should bring forth fruit unto God**. God is at work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. If you belong to Him, you are called to serve Him.

FOCAL **Romans 7:6** ... **we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.**

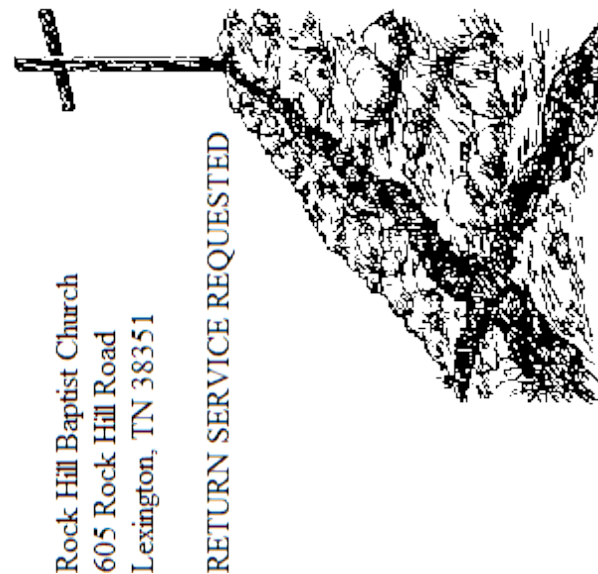
What is **newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter**. The Christian is a new creature, Spirit indwelt, Christ led, and Scripture taught. We are possessors of a *new and living way*.

⁸ from his sermon, *The Soul's Great Crisis*

Hebrews 10:20-25 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; (21) And [having] an high priest over the house of God; (22) Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. (23) Let us hold fast the profession of [our] faith without wavering; (for he [is] faithful that promised;) (24) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: (25) Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some [is]; but exhorting [one another]: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

If you belong to Jesus you are married to Him, bound to Him, united with Him. Live for Him, dear one. If you will live with Him in glory, live for Him now.

May God touch your hearts with these words.



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