

Musing #56 — Romans 7:1-6

We learned in Romans Chapter 6 that we are to:

"**know**" in our mind — for understanding

"**reckon**" it so — by believing and trusting

"**yield**" through obedience — for confirmation

Life in Christ helps us see that God's way was to deal with the cause rather than the effect. "Exterior" requires effort. "Interior" requires faith.

If you recall, Paul reminded us that God's way wasn't to fix our old man, but to get rid of the old man and **free** us from our slavery to **sin**. We still don't always act right, we still sin but...*we're released from the enslaving power of sin, death, and destruction.*

Romans 6:6-7knowing 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.

Romans 6 - deals with our freedom from sin through reconciliation with God.

Romans 7 - deals with our freedom from the law through justification by God.

Paul expands on the reality that freedom from sin is just part of the equation.

If we are not fully free from the law, we can never know our freedom from sin. They are two sides of the same coin. **Grace** means that God does something for me. **Law** meant that I do something for God. Many Christians are truly saved but still bound by sin and the law. In Romans Chapter 7 Paul shares his own struggles with these issues until he reached a point of desperation. He writes...

Romans 7:1-3 Now, dear brothers and sisters—you who are familiar with the law—don't you know that the law applies only while a person is living? For example, when a woman marries, the law binds her to her husband as long as he is alive. But if he dies, the laws of marriage no longer apply to her. So while her husband is alive, she would be committing adultery if she married another man. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law and does not commit adultery when she remarries.

So God identifies our "old man" as the husband in his example. Our spirit person was dead to God and had to be done away with. In Galatians Paul referred to the completion of that when he said: **I** (old man/old spirit) **was crucified** (identified) **with Christ's death... nevertheless I live** (new spirit),—**yet not I, but Christ dwelleth in me.** His Spirit and my spirit are now eternally one.

4 So, my dear brothers and sisters, this is the point: You died to the power of the law when you died with Christ. And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, we can produce a harvest of good deeds for God. 5 When we were controlled by our old man, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of sinful deeds, resulting in death. 6 But now we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no

longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit.

Paul wants us to understand that we are free from the condemnation of the law because we are one with Christ... who fulfilled the law. We are no longer bound to our failures as a person. We can admit our failures and set them aside. As I often tell my clients... **“Sooner or later, you have to give up your hope for a better past.”**

We don't have to believe anymore that God isn't happy with us. We are no longer under the demands of the law. God's plan to fix us was not to change the law, but to change us by making us a new creation. Let's look again at our passage in Chapter 7 at how Paul shows us what God has done for us

7:1-3 Now, dear brothers and sisters—you who are familiar with the law—don't you know that the law applies only while a person is living? 2 For example, when a woman marries, the law binds her to her husband (the old man) as long as he is alive. But if he (the old man) dies, the laws of marriage no longer apply to her. 3 So while her husband is alive, she would be committing adultery if she married another man. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law and does not commit adultery when she remarries (as Christ's bride).

Paul is telling us that death breaks the legal claim the law had on us. We were married to the law by our birth. God's law is holy and cannot die. So, we (the old man) had to die to free us (Romans 6:6). Only then can we become the bride of Christ.

Phillips translation: **4 There is, I think, a fair analogy here. The death of Christ on the cross made you “dead” to the claims of the Law, and you are free to give yourselves in marriage, so to speak, to another, the one who was raised from the dead, that you may be productive for God.**

Romans 6:6 (CEB) This is what we know: the person that we used to be (old man) was crucified with him in order to get rid of the corpse that had been controlled by sin. That way we wouldn't be slaves to sin anymore.

So God says.... I'll get rid of the old man and make you a new person. And I'll join my holy and righteous Spirit to the new person that you now are. His name has become our name—**We are Christians**. His Life is our Life—**We are Saints—righteous and holy!**

Living at the level of holy and righteous is now natural for us. It is the expression of who we are. As lost slaves to sin we had a natural instinct for rebellion, greed, lust, sin.

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.

At the fall man lost control—Mind, Emotions, Body and Will. Sin perverted all of our desires and needs. Then came the law, which fed the fire, exposing us.

This is why we believe that the only way to overcome sin in the world is through the gospel—becoming believers.

6 But now that we stand clear of the Law, the claims which existed are dissolved by our “death”, and we are free to serve God not in the old obedience to the letter of the Law, but in a new way of living in the Spirit (by faith).

We "delight" in God instead of duty to the law. Our Life is in the Spirit now. We're under a new covenant. Now, here is the million dollar question. What then do we do? What is the key to pleasing God? When Jesus was asked, "What should we do to do the works of God?" His answer was—**Believe!** (John 6:28-29). We must learn to rest in who we are, trusting the indwelling Spirit of God to guide us. "For me to live, IS CHRIST!"

When we are faced with choices... Listen. Rest. Trust in Him. He will tell you, and move you, in the direction of His will. Trust His inner guidance. If you "sense" it is not correct, then as Oswald Chambers noted: "When in doubt, don't!"

Romans 13:8-10 Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law. For the commandments say, "You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet." These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to others, so love is the fulfillment of God's law.

Many Christians in churches today are not at peace with God, resting in His life. When I became a Christian, the light went on. I was 36 years old, I was seeing and learning things I had never even heard before. I was on fire to become a "good" Christian. I set out to become who I believed God wanted me to be.

I read books. I read the Bible through in a matter of a few months. I went to conferences. I was going to change the world. I applied to a Bible College and Seminary in another state and made arrangements for a fellowship at the school to give us needed income. Then... a simple telephone call and I was informed by the seminary that something in my past required that they could not accept me in their graduate programs. The door slammed shut. I was miserable and disappointed. I became angry at God for "closing the door" that I assumed He had opened. I determined to show them and I went to work to become a larger-than-life, superior Christian.

I read I should have more patience—that failed. I just got more anxiety driven. I found I was to be a better husband, but "better" became "worse"—failure. I became good at finding verses for others to obey. The church told me I should tithe—strain and failure—we nearly lost our home. The church told me I should be a good witness. I studied Evangelism Explosion with my pastor—failure. As a deacon I ministered to everybody's family and kids, at the expense of my own family and kids—failure. I was told to have an early morning time with God—failure. God doesn't have visiting hours. I was living under law, and I had no concept of grace, mercy, and loving-kindness.

Here was the problem... I was free from God's law... but dying under man's laws, which had become my judge and jury—failure!

I was working hard, learning to "trust in myself." The world demands performance and I believed that God did too. I was a setup... to become the carnal Christian, the

church hypocrite, the future backslider. I understood Christ as Savior and Christ as Lord. But I didn't know Him as my very Life and I was powerless to be Christ-like by drawing on my own resources.

Finally, a couple of mature friends took me under their wings, exposed me to the fulness of God's marvelous grace, mercy, and ways. I was soon under the tutelage of men and women who had been where I now was—*Peter Lord, DeVerne Fromke, Jack Taylor, Dr. Victor Matthews, a Mrs. Johnson* (Fla). I was given books by each of them plus numerous books by *Watchman Nee, Miles Stanford, J.I. Packer, and Charles Solomon*.

I began to experience **Christ as Life**—to let Him do what comes naturally to Him. How to let Him live His life through me, as He guided. He doesn't need me to live His life for Him. He just needs me to be His earth suit, and let Him naturally manifest His life in me, and quit working to be a better failure. I had to learn to **Let** Him, be Him!

“Let” the peace of God rule in your heart

“Let” not your heart be troubled

“Let” this mind be in you

What should people see in my life? One thing—the fruit of the Spirit. We're all a bunch of grapes straining to be better grapes and forgetting it's the vine that produces the fruit.

It's like reverse psychology with a child... when they know they don't have to—they want to. Paul clearly noted how God was at work to the Philippian believers...

"It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Hebrews 4:1-11 (Selected) God's promise of entering his rest still stands, so we ought to tremble with fear that some of you might fail to experience it. It is only as a result of our faith and trust that we experience that rest. For all who have entered into God's rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world. Let us then be eager to know this rest for ourselves, and let us beware that no one misses it through falling into the same kind of unbelief as those we have mentioned.

2 Corinthians 3:5-6our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Conclusion:

Romans 14:23whatever is not from faith is sin.

Galatians 3:12the law is not of faith.

Next: We'll see the struggles Paul went through to get his "rest."