

PAUL'S MARRIAGE ILLUSTRATION | ROMANS 7:1-3

- Verse 1 –
 - **know ye not** - This is one of 12 **know ye not** questions of Paul. See also Rom. 6:3, 6:16, 1 Cor 3:16, 5:6, 6:3, 6:9, 6:15, 6:16, 6:19, 9:24 and 2 Cor. 13:5.
 - **I speak to them that know the law** - This stands as further evidence that the book of Romans is written to Jewish believers living in Rome.
 - **the law hath domino...** -
 - Paul is not arguing this in a manner that says the Torah is in effect for those living in that day (nor this).
 - He is rather laying the groundwork for an illustration. This is to say, all legal claims on an individual are null and void upon the death of the individual.
 - Concerning the death of the Law, which is the context of this chapter, see Eph. 2:15, Col 2:14, etc. For an interesting typology of the death of the Law, compare Genesis 50:26 to Exodus 25:16.
- Verses 2-3 –
 - Paul suddenly switches from a man (v. 1) to **the woman** because he will argue in v. 4 that *the Christian* is married to Christ, who is the head of the household (that is, in the age of grace, Christ is in the role of the husband).
 - In chapter 6 the Law was a master, in chapter 7 it is illustrated as a **husband**.

THE CONDITION OF THE FIRST CENTURY JEWISH BELIEVER | ROMANS 7:4-6

- Verse 4 –
 - **dead to the law** - In v. 1, the Law dies, in vv. 2-3 the woman is declared free, and in v. 4 the woman is **dead to the law**.
 - The Christian must declare himself dead because he has been crucified in Christ.
 - The attempt to encourage Christians to live under the law is a misguided attempt to get them to be *alive* to that which they should be *dead* to.
 - **by the body of Christ** - Notice that this tells the means of liberation from the Law, but not the timing (which remained a mystery until Paul).
 - **married to another** –
 - Anyone and everyone who is **dead to the law** through **the body of Christ** is now **married to another** and thus has the legal obligations to the new *head of the house*.
 - Does this prove that the church is the Bride of Christ? Not at all, rather, it is an illustration that Paul is using to show the legal nature of our freedom from the Law. To make more of it goes beyond what the illustration sets out to prove.
 - **bring forth fruit unto God** - Consistent with previous arguments in Romans, Paul uses the subjunctive tense to communicate that the **fruit unto God** is a potential and an spiritual obligation, but is separated from the reality of being **dead to the law** and alive in Christ.
- Verses 5-6 –
 - **when we were in the flesh...but now we are delivered** –
 - Care should be taken here in application. Paul speaks to Jews who had lived under the law, **but now...are delivered from the law**.
 - He is not describing the condition of every saved person, because the general population is not under the Law, even being unsaved.
 - This message is to the first century Jewish audience, to convince them that the Law should now be abandoned.

- There is a general application for believers today, namely that the Law should not become our guide for living.
- **motions** - The Greek word is παθήματα [pathemata], from the root *pathos*, which is a word for "inordinate emotions." The suffix *mata* is "the result of ___ (the word to which it is attached). Thus, *pathemata* is *the result of inordinate emotions*. Note the use of the term in Rom 8:15 and 2 Cor 1:5. (Supplementary note, in English the *mata* suffix has been retained in a number of words, such as *traumatic*, *thematic*, *problematic*, etc.)
- **that we should serve in newness of spirit** - This application for the first century Jewish audience equally applies to Christians today. To serve in **the oldness of the letter** is the equivalent of being a Judaizer.

WHAT THE LAW ACCOMPLISHED | ROMANS 7:7-13

- Verse 7 –
 - **is the law sin?**
 - In this third **God forbid** statement, he guards Jewish believers from despising their *holy history* or from erasing the dispensation of the Law from God's revelation with man and man's relationship with God.
 - There is a tendency to read the age of Grace back to the Law (and vice versa). This practice makes the Law *sinful during the age of the Law* and make Grace *sinful during the age of Grace*.
 - An illustration: in the desert we have untilled ground that has no growth on it. But when tilled and watered, noxious weeds will begin to grow. Is the tiller at fault?
 - **I had not known sin** - Paul teaches *one* purpose of the Law, and that was to clarify and define sin so that it could be easily recognized. While the Law today can also be used (to a degree) to clarify sinful behavior, one should not assume that the Law continues to serve the purpose of enabling recognition of sin. To do so would require two things. First, putting a person under sin, and Second, teaching that failure to observe Sabbath or kosher laws is sinful.
- Verse 8 –
 - **occasion** - The Greek ἀφορμή [aphorme] comes from the prefix *apo* (from) and the root *horme*. The root is "to set in motion" and even "to rush forth violently." Our English word *hormone* comes from this root. Paul says, therefore, that **the commandment** was the *hormone* that caused sin to rush to action. But, be not mistaken, though the commandment gave the **occasion**, the commandment is not at fault (see v. 11).
 - **concupiscence** - The Greek word ἐπιθυμία could be interpreted *desire upon desire*. The same word is used in v. 7 and translated **lust**.
- Verse 9 – By theological necessity, Paul speaks in general theological terms. Having been **circumcised the eighth day** (Phil 3:5), Paul never personally experienced life **without the law**. Furthermore, **the commandment came** 1500 years before he was born.
- Verse 10 - Because Paul could not live to the standard of the Law, he could not find life in the law (Rom 10:5). The Law, therefore, became **the ministration of death** and the **ministration of condemnation** (2 Cor. 3:7, 9).
- Verse 11 - This verse clarifies v. 8 and shows how the commandment was *abused* by sin itself, in a deceptive manner, to introduce lust into Paul's life.
- Verse 12 - Note that there is no verb in the original, so the insertion of *is* is interpretive, and *was* could be just as easily employed. Furthermore, make note that a **holy, and just, and good** commandment does not make it directly applicable to believers today.
- Verse 13 – **working death in me** - This is such a clear concept of what sin does and how it operates.