

Transformed, Part 5, Romans 7:1-13 “Freedom From Legalism”

Philosopher, social critic, and writer for *The London Daily Observer*, G. K. Chesterton received a letter from a woman asking him to write a series of articles explaining what was wrong with the world. The following day, Chesterton penned this classic reply: **“Madam, I will tell you what is wrong with the world in two words: I am.”** G. K. Chesterton

What’s wrong with the world? I am.

A)Not a **political problem**, or an **economic** situation, the real reason for the problems of the world is you and me personally.

B)And what is responsible for the problems within us? Sin.

1)Sin *in* us causes problems to come pouring out *from* us, which affects the world *around* us.

C)Sin is the problem. Sin is the issue.

In our culture, people don’t want to talk about sin.

A)When he was nearing the end of his illustrious career, the brilliant psychiatrist and prolific author Dr. Karl Meninger, wrote one final book in which he appraised the psychiatric health of the nation.

B)In this book, entitled *Whatever Happened To Sin?*

1) he concluded that the problem with our culture is that we have forgotten the word “sin.” Dr. Karl Meninger

C)We call people “dysfunctional” or “victims,” but Meninger maintained the real issue is just plain sin.

D)That is why In Romans 6:20, 21. Paul wrote “The power of sin brings destruction,”

1)It’s true.

Everything I’m ashamed of in my life is always directly linked to sin.

A)Yet the preoccupation with sin only brings depression and exhaustion.

B)It’s like two guys riding a tandem bike uphill. After what seems like an eternity, they finally reach the top and the guy in front says,

“Man, I didn’t think we would ever make it to the top. I thought we’d end up rolling back down.”

the guy in back answers “Me too,”. **“That’s why I kept the brakes on the whole time.”**

C)The same thing happens to a lot of Christians especially early on in their faith.

1)They are so concerned with not falling back into sin, that they don’t really enjoy the Christian life. –

I was a Christian in High School, I went to a public school, my whole high school experience was living on the defensive, trying not to fall into sin.

A) Trying not to have premarital sex, trying not to do something wrong, instead of merely enjoying living for Jesus.

B) I would often eat lunch by myself with just my one other Christian friend because – I didn't want to be **influenced by the "world" around me.**

C) Consequently – Didn't really enjoy going to HS- in fact if it wasn't for sports I would have hated it altogether

1) Even sadder- I made very little impact for Jesus as a Christian in High School.

See I didn't really understand the truths that we looked at in Romans ch.6 – Something radical happened to me when I gave my heart to Christ.

A) I was united v.5 with Christ in His death as well as His Resurrection

B) United with him in His death meant that when I gave my heart to Christ that I was released **from the penalty** of sin. Christ paid it for me.

1) I was released from **Sin's claim** on me – no longer in Adam – old nature –

2) Now I was in Christ – I received a new nature.

C) And I was released from Sins power over me –

1) Resurrected Christ was now living in my heart by his HS – empowering me to live for God.

D) I didn't really understand that – so for a long time – my Christianity was **about Performance-**

1) Could I do the right things proving I belonged to God.

In Ch. 6 we noted that Paul said – since you have been freed from sin – Present your members – your body.....instruments of righteousness

A) Rather than like you used to do – presenting them as instruments of Sin and unrighteousness

B) Now to Many Believers especially Jewish believers the exhortation to present themselves to righteousness would naturally mean – **follow the law**

C) Problem with that is their Christianity turns into a legalistic endeavor –

1) A series of **DO's and Don'ts** and everything is measured on how well we are performing

D) So Paul wrote Ch. 6 to lay out how we have been freed from Sin.

1) He writes Ch. 7 to show us that we have been **freed from the law.**

E) Ch. 7 is about the believers **relationship to the law of God!**

Rom 7:1

Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?

A)The brothers Paul is referring to are his Jewish brothers, the people of Israel.

B)When Jewish boys turn twelve years-old **they're bar mitzvah(ed)**, which is Hebrew for "*son of the law*".

1)A Jewish child cuts his teeth on the Law of Moses and at age twelve is held accountable to obey.

C)Of course the Law didn't just consist of the two stone tablets, and the Ten Commandments.

1)No, the Law of Moses consisted of six-hundred-and-thirteen different commands –

2)and the Jews measured their status with God by how well they stacked up to the rules and rituals of the Law.

D)The Jews in Rome to whom Paul is writing this letter had come to faith in Christ after a **lifetime of legalism**.

Legalism is like a rollercoaster.

A) It is a constant succession of ups and downs and you're always ending up where you started.

B)You never make any real progress.

1)Up when you are performing – Down when you are not!

B)The Law produced a *syndrome* - I mean a real *syndrome*. When I did well I got puffed up.

1)I set up rules and regulations, disciplines and expectations.

C)When I kept them, I would look down on other Christians who didn't, {**Cosby – camp / laughing**

1)Pride set in – “In my 3hrs of Devos today – read this great verse

D)I was praying for 2 hrs – the Lord put on my heart.

1)I went witnessing –

So when I was doing well – heart was filled with Pride and when – I wasn't performing

A)Over sleep and not have devos – or when I fell asleep trying to pray.

B)When I chickened out on an opportunity to witness

1)I felt like such a failure – sure that God was upset with me

C)At times questioning if I was really saved!

1)What's the use of trying – watch tv all day

D)Many believers – go through this struggle.

1)Performance treadmill –

Paul writes Romans seven to help the Jews and us get off the rollercoaster - to free us from the treadmill of legalism.

A) Paul is going to give a very interesting analogy to make his point – Liken it to Marriage.

the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?

A) Now that is something that all of us here would agree w/ especially in a natural sense that as long as a person is living / under law.

B) Speeding, get a ticket – speeding crash and die – not going to get a ticket, right

1) but watch how Paul ties this into marriage

2 For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.

A) According to the Law a man could divorce his wife but a wife could not divorce her husband .

B) She was stuck in that marriage as long as he lived

1) Likewise Our obligation under the Law is like a marital contract - its until death do us part!

3 So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.

C) The Problem is the law doesn't die!

Ladies pretend you were married to the perfect guy (She is) I mean really perfect - flawless in character / looks / Health / totally perfect

A) Ladies, imagine waking up in the morning - you roll over and there he is - not a single hair out of place,

B) he opens his eyes with a smile on his face, he kisses you good morning,

1) and leaps out of bed to do his one-hundred push-ups and two hundred sit-ups.

C) He serves you breakfast in bed, then waits for you to get up so he can make the bed. {Yea BABY –preach it

For Breakfast - no sweet rolls and coffee for this guy.

A) Its a perfect breakfast: skim milk, tomato juice, some fresh fruit, and a bowl of granola!

B) Never leaves tooth paste cap off / Never dirty socks on floor

C) Granted, this would be great for awhile, but in time Mr. Perfect might expect a little perfection out of you.

1) He starts to point out you need to shed a few pounds.

D) He notices the dust on the bottom of the coffee table, the spot on a glass, the napkin that is not folded perfectly.

**Before long Mr. Perfect turns into Mr. PAIN!!!!!!!
Mr. Pest He is so perfect that he drives you crazy –**

A) because he never does anything wrong -/ His perfectness only magnifies your short comings

B) Life with Mr. Perfect becomes so frustrating you go to court seeking a divorce, but the Judge says **"forget it, you have no grounds, your hubby is perfect."**

C) So you try to kill'm. You put arsenic in his tomato juice, but he's so healthy nothing happens.

D) So the guy is not going away –

1) Can't divorce / can't leave him can't kill him - what are you going to do ?

E) Now that was our situation under the law/ the law was perfect - nothing we could do to get away from it

1) like the woman who is bound as long as her husband lives / we were bound to the law / and the law was not going to die !

The only way to be free is for you to die!

A) That is precisely what Paul says here: The law doesn't die – it can't be killed –

B) The Law is perfect, it stands forever! The only way to be free from the Law is for *you* to die to it!

1) The law doesn't die – but you died.

4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another; to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

A) Remember we talked about this in Ch. 5,6 that everything that happened to Christ Literally - happened to us spiritually

B) He died we died - He was raised / we have been raised !

C) Colossians 2:13-15

“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”

D) Jesus fulfilled the requirement of the law.....

1) So because we died with Christ - we are free from the Jurisdiction of the Law /

The Law is no longer binding on a dead man.

A) If I robbed a bank - and while escaping had a heart attack and died –

B) the policeman wouldn't bother cuffing me and booking me. **Corpses don't stand trials or serve time.**

1) They are free - and you are too if you're in Christ.

So since we are free from the Law – we are now free to marry another – Not Mr. Law / Mr. Love – Jesus

A)What a difference that makes

B)Mr. Love doesn't expect you to be perfect. "LOVE COVERS A MULTITUDE OF SINS"

C)Mr Love doesn't race around the house looking for dust or things that are out of place.

1)He helps clean up.

D)Mr. Love understands when you wake up grumpy. He doesn't condemn you because you don't like granola.

E)Mr. Love is even patient when you put on a few pounds.

1)There's no *pressure to perform* with Mr. Love like there was with Mr. Law!

LOVE MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD!

I read a true story of a woman who lived with an unreasonable, demanding, domineering husband. She hated her life and was glad when he died suddenly of a heart attack.

A few years later she met a much different man. The fellow loved her, and adored her, and made her extremely happy.

One day she was thumbing through some old paperwork and stumbled over a to-do she had kept from her days with her ex-husband.

She was hesitant to look at it, thinking it would conjure up memories of the grueling tasks he used to make her do - but to her astonishment all the tasks her former husband made her do **begrudgingly** she was now doing **willingly** for her new husband.

Guys, under legalism you obey because you've got to, but with Jesus you obey because you get to!

A)Your marriage to Jesus *brings* far more blessing, *breeds* far more obedience and *bears* far more fruit than your former marriage to the Law.

B)Precisely Paul's point in v. 5,6

Rom 7:5-6

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. 6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

A)When I was growing up – one of my chore jobs usually on Saturdays was to wash the cars

B)Death to my Saturdays – I thought –

C)Then girlfriend – dating – Saturday night

1)I wanted to wash the car – different spirit

Not a have to but a get to!

A) That is what Paul is saying here - , **having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.**

B) **Newness of the spirit** speaks of the New Cov. A completely new way of living

Ezekiel 36:26 the Lord declares *I am no longer giving you tables of stone - but now the Lord says I will take my statues & write them upon your heart And I will place my spirit within you and He will cause you to walk in my ways & keep my statues and do them.*

D) There is a huge difference

Under the Law we worked at holiness and purity from the outside in, and we worked in vain - but in Christ the Holy Spirit works at holiness from the inside out.

A) The Spirit can do what we can't. He produces lasting fruit!

B) See We have been **set free** to serve a higher law - Leading of the Spirit

C) **Life in the Spirit is wonderfully free!** life of being able to totally devote ourselves to the Lord - not out of Legalistic trip {But out of Love

See when you really grasp what Jesus Christ did for you and how much He cares about you, it's no longer, "I gotta have devotions,"—but, "I get to talk with You today, Lord."

A) And you end up doing much more than you ever did with your rules, regulations, and tradition-based Christianity.

B) Under the law we want to see how far we can push the limit – how close to the edge can we get and still be saved – or not get in trouble.

C) But under grace – when we are walking in the Spirit – realizing how greatly we are loved

D) We are sensitive to that voice of the spirit speaking to our hearts

"You don't want to be with those kids. They're walking in a way that will be damaging to you."

"Okay, Lord," you say. "Thanks for the tip."

"You don't want to go into that place. There's a bunch of stuff coming down there that's really ugly."

"Okay, thanks, Lord."

Folks, the law says, "Responsibility!"

A) Love says, "Just respond to Me."

B) It's wonderful. Day to day being led by God's spirit – Fun freeing –

C) So we can put off legalistic trips / rules & regulations / and be led by the Spirit as He speaks to our hearts

1) And through His word

So the question then is this – Does the Law have a place? Purpose? Absolutely V.7-13

A) Paul tells us 4 things about the Law Rd v.7-13

#1 The Law revealed his sin nature : 7 *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."*

A) The Purpose of the Law - was to reveal our sin & to drive us to grace - need of a savior !

B) Paul says I didn't know coveting was wrong until I began to study the law & I read *You shall not Covet*

1) What was Paul coveting? Power & Prestige

C) Paul was a young scholar being trained to be a Pharisee / and he was desiring position - Power Prominence -

1) perhaps wanting people to know how brilliant he was

D) But the more he studied the law - the more he realized how far he was from it ! **The law said – Do not covet – suddenly realized – coveting**

Story of the gardener - A gardener who worked for a rich man was out one day pulling weeds when the rich man over heard him say curse you Adam .

What mean by that comment? / If Adam had not of sinned I wouldn't be ou here pulling weeds / Rich man answered you wouldn't have done better? / Yes I would have the gardener insisted /

Well, a few nights later the rich man invited the gardener to his home for dinner - great feast - phone call - start w/ out me / just don't touch that bowl in the middle w/ the lid on it !

Curiosity set in - finally after further delay - opened the lid feathers everywhere

Just then the rich man walked back in & said Curse Adam - got ya

So Paul says the Law exposed me it revealed that I was a sinner /that I missed the mark

#2 The law aroused the sin nature : v. 8,9 **But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. 9 I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.**

A) The Law *revealed sin*, but it also *aroused sin*. Let me explain with an experiment.

B) Close your eyes for thirty seconds - but whatever you do - do not imagine a pink rhinoceros wearing a straw hat. Don't do it! No pink rhinos –

C) yet if you're like me the moment it's mentioned a picture of a pink rhino pops into my mind.

1) If you didn't want me to imagine it you should've never brought it up.

The Flagship Hotel in Houston, Texas is built right on the waterfront. The Hotel encountered problems with people fishing off the top floors.

Some of the fishermen didn't use long enough line and would cast their metal lures into the glass windows of the first floor restaurant.

The Hotel hired an engineer to solve the problem.

After a quick survey he made a simple suggestion, "remove the signs that say, ***"NO FISHING FROM THE BALCONY"***", and as soon as they did the fishing stopped.

Rules are meant to be Broken {Something in us

#3 *legalism is lethal* V.10,11, 10 And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.

A) Commandment which was to bring life brought death – It slew Him why ?

B) Because he couldn't keep it !

B) Paul said in 2Cor. 3:6 that the Letter kills

C) Paul says the Law wiped me out !

Paul says in verse 11, *legalism is lethal*,

#4 The law brings a recognition of the magnitude of sin v.12,13 12 Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. 13 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

The ten commandments reveal just how prone I am to sin

Under the Law the issue is *the sin in my life*, but under grace the issue is *the Son in my life*.

I progress in the Christian life by believing my sin has been dealt with on the cross of Christ and preoccupying myself with *following the Son*, not *fighting the sin*.

Learning to listen to the voice of His Spirit

Learning to be dependent upon the power of His Spirit

Such a Joy – Life instead of death -