

# ROMANS BIBLE STUDY

Romans 7:01-06

Lesson #15

## Introduction

This is our Romans Bible study lesson 15. It covers chapter 7, verses 1-6. In the preceding chapters Paul has explained in detail the particulars of our justification by faith alone and our death to sin and transfer of ownership to God through the death of Jesus Christ. In the beginning of chapter 7 he goes on to use an example of this transfer of ownership that he described in chapter 6, verses 17 & 18. I've titled this lesson:

### Serving in Newness of the Spirit

*1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? 2 For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. 3 So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man.*

*4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. 5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.*

Romans 7:1-6 (NASB)

### Verses 1-3:

*1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? 2 For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. 3 So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man.*

First and foremost, let's make it clear that these verses are not intended to be a prescriptive teaching on marriage, they're being given as an example, taken from well known contemporary law, that Paul is using to make a higher spiritual point. Now, having said that, at the same time they are entirely true, otherwise they couldn't be used as an example as Paul is doing here. So, let's make sure we focus on the spiritual intent, and not get side tracked by the example. The whole point that Paul is making is that the law's jurisdiction over us has certain limitations. Dead people are not subject to criminal prosecution, at least by earthly authorities, and death has the capability of terminating legal contracts and other obligations between two or more parties, which is the point being made here. When one is bound by a legal contract, like marriage for instance, they are not free to bind themselves to another, this is against the law. But, if one of the parties dies, then the other is free from their obligation to the spouse and can be legally married to another. In this case the death of the one has freed the other to be remarried if they so desire, without any breach of law or ethics or morality.

This is a very good example of what Paul has been telling us for the whole last chapter. That the death of Jesus Christ has been applied toward us, in as much as it has freed us from the legal obligation that we formerly had to sin and death. We were the property, the legal slaves of sin, and as such we were not free to be joined to another owner. That would amount to adultery, or thievery. So, Jesus Christ gave His life in our place, to set us free from our legally binding ownership and obligation to sin and to death. Our own death would have also settled this debt, but then we would have been irretrievably lost to death and hell forever. So, this is at the heart of Paul's earlier statement that we have been baptized into Christ's death, meaning that we have been made partakers of the benefits that it accomplished on our behalf. And much more still, it frees us from our prior legal obligations to our previous owner, (sin and death) and makes it perfectly legal and ethical to be joined to, and made to be the property of another.

The idea of our actually being slaves to sin, and being the property of Satan is one that meets vigorous opposition, even among much of the professing Christian community. But this is precisely what the scriptures describe. God created the

universe free from sin and in perfect working order, everything was His, and Adam and Eve could walk together with Him, without fear or shame, in the Garden of Eden. Man belonged to God, and sin and death (being personified by Satan) held no power over him or any ownership interest in him whatsoever. God owned everything and Satan owned nothing. Sin had corrupted the angels, and a full one-third had been cast out along with Satan, but the tangible creation of God was still sinless.

But then came what we call the fall of man. And by that term we don't just mean "a" man, but the whole species of man. God had set man (specifically Adam) as the attendant over His creation, and Adam had been granted the responsibility and authority to look out for it. Adam had been given the authority to make decisions concerning whatever things that he understood. This is the position that God had put him into, as the prototype human being. What humanity would eventually become, and all their future would be directly affected by his decisions and actions, as the official human species prototype. In terms of legality, Adam literally spoke for all humanity because of the position that God had assigned him. This is nothing different than what we do today, where we elect government officials and foreign ambassadors to speak for us collectively and make decisions that affect our lives and futures. Adam was just such an official by the designated authority of God.

When Adam knowingly disobeyed the direct commandment of God, after having been sternly warned of the consequences in advance, he made a decision that affected not just himself, but every human creature that would eventually descend from him. As our human representative the consequences of Adam's decision to disobey God, and by doing so to introduce both sin and death into the creation of God, every descendent of himself and Eve are born, from our very conception, with the consequences of that decision. The consequences are that we are spiritually dead from our very conception, and our flesh and blood bodies will all die in just a few decades. God has given our species over to sin and death, and has assigned ownership of this domain to Satan. For this reason it is written that we are born slaves to sin, (Rm 6:6,17) because that's exactly the situation. It isn't just because of what we ourselves have done, but because of a decision made by Adam while he was the duly authorized representative of humanity. God told Adam that on the day that he disobeyed that commandment that he would surely die, spiritually and bodily, and with that death of innocence, for all humanity came the transfer of ownership to the domain of Satan. Sin was the cause of death that released humanity from our ownership by God, and allowed our transfer to the ownership of Satan. Do you see now why we have to die to sin to be legally transferred back into the ownership of God? It was death to innocence that released us from God's ownership, and it is death to sin that releases us from Satan's ownership. Both of these were done for us by someone that we've never even met. It was Adam that performed the former, and it was Jesus Christ that performed the latter.

I've said all of this so that we understand just *when* and *how* it is that we became the legal property of Satan, and made slaves of sin, which is both his nature and his domain. We might object to this situation, or argue the fairness, but the fact remains that duly authorized representatives have made decisions that now affect us, and those decisions are legal and binding upon us regardless of our agreement with them or not. Every law that our country passes has supporters and objectors, but when duly enacted by our Congress, they become legally binding upon all of us. We don't always like it, but we do understand it, and we realize that it has to be this way.

In spite of all that we've just said, I suspect that many still don't really believe that they themselves ever were, or still are really slaves of sin. This is considered hyperbole, intentional exaggeration for effect. But in fact, it's nothing of the sort, it's a statement of absolute fact. Children born of slaves are the property of their master from the moment of birth. The offspring of Adam and Eve are the property of Satan from the instant of their conception, and when they emerge from the womb they are Satan's property, and slaves of sin. They are spiritually dead to righteousness and to God. Jesus said to a man named Nicodemus that: "*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" (Jn 3:3) And then He went on to say: "*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."*" (Jn 3:5-6) According to Jesus, mankind is born into this world with flesh and blood that is temporarily living, but with a spirit that is already dead. And this is exactly what God told Adam that He would do if Adam disobeyed Him. (Gen 2:17) Like it or not, believe it or not, the scriptures teach us that, by God's decree, we are born slaves of sin, and our owner is Satan. (Mat 4:8-9) And unless we're born again, by water and the Spirit, we cannot ever see, nor ever enter the kingdom of God.

We hear many discussions as to what the water here symbolizes, but in the context that we're now speaking, it seems most likely that the water is speaking of the necessary death to sin that the law requires for a transfer of ownership. The water meant baptism, and baptism was symbolic of two distinct elements. One, it represents washing away of sin, and second it represents death to an old way of life and resurrection to a new way of life, under new ownership, the Spirit of God. Our baptism represents cleansing from sin, death to an old owner and an old way of life, and resurrection as slaves of righteousness, which is our new legal owner. (Rm 6:17-18)

This is the meaning of the example that Paul is giving of how death releases one from legally binding obligations, and opens the door of opportunity to a new relationship that would have otherwise been unlawful. Some contractual obligations can be settled with monetary compensation or other provisions, but some are binding until death. And such is the case of humanity, we are under an obligation of death by the decree of God himself, a decree which we incurred by the sin of disobedience. And so it is that the death of Jesus Christ on that cross made God's acquisition of what was formerly Satan's legal property, both legal and proper. Jesus paid in full the legal price of redemption of those whom the Father has chosen, by His own death on that cross. And thus He declared at His end, "Paid In Full" making the transfer of ownership of His redeemed both proper and legal. It is absolutely mandatory, by the divine law and justice of God, to die to sin before we can be made alive to God. Just as a wife can have only one husband at a time, we can only be the property of one owner at a time. This can't be settled by money or other provisions, and no sharing is permitted. With this lets move on to the next verse:

#### **Verse 4:**

*4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.*

Now, following up on his example of marriage, Paul says that we also have been made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that we might be joined to another. There are 3 important terms in the first half of this sentence. There is "die to the Law, and "body of Christ" and "joined to another." Lets look at them one at a time.

We've already established that a death to our previous owner, and our legal obligations to him (our own death) is a mandatory prerequisite to any legal transfer of ownership. The Law of God is what we've disobeyed, and that's what got us into this situation. (speaking of humanity) The only legally prescribed release from our situation is death, and neither money nor good works can ever buy our redemption. So, what do we do now, since death is our only remedy? Paul has already answered that for us in chapter 5, verse 6 where he said: *For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.* The body of Christ, freely offered up unto death, at the right time, meaning God's predetermined time, paid the mandatory obligation of death that was required of every lost sinner whom God has chosen as His elect. We died to the obligation of the Law (death) through the substitute body of Jesus Christ. But the sentence goes on:

Point number 2. *so that you might be joined to another.* Where there's an action, especially a very drastic action, there's usually a good reason, or reasons, for that action. And such is the case here. Paul says that Jesus Christ offered up His body unto death, on our behalf, **so that** we might be released from our ownership to sin and be forever joined unto another. And who is that other, it is none other than - *to Him who was raised from the dead.* Just like the example of marriage that Paul started out using, the scriptures many times refer to those whom Jesus Christ redeemed as being His bride. (Rev 19:7; 21:2 & 9; 22:17)

Point number 3. Jesus Christ gave His life (*the body of Christ*) so that those whom He loves, with an everlasting love, could be legally bound to Himself forever. They were the legal property of sin and Satan, but He paid that legal price of redemption so that they would be His own, forevermore. Jesus purchased His eternal bride at the price of His own body, but the sentence doesn't stop there, it goes on to give us a further reason for this action, which is: *in order that we might bear fruit for God.* This phrase clearly establishes an expectation on the parts of Christ and the Father from those whom He's redeemed. Yes, He loves them, but at the same time He expects an appropriate response from those whom He loves and has redeemed. Jesus said: *If you love Me you will keep my commandments* (Jn 14:15) The fruit that this sentence is describing is keeping the commandments of God in our daily lives. It's abstaining from the old way of life and following Jesus Christ in newness of life. There's many who believe this is speaking of evangelism, but that's not the fruit

being discussed here in these chapters, these chapters are about sin and repentance. And the fruit that we're expected to bear for God is holiness of life, in spite of our bodily limitations and frustrating failures. Again, the fruit that we are expected to bear to God is the fruit of repentance from sin and loving obedience to His commandments. This isn't easy to do, in fact Jesus himself said that it was an agonizing venture, even though it's our heart's desire. (Lk 13:24)

I can't help but suspect that many people who want to make the fruit out to be "souls won to Jesus" have an ulterior motive to their position. Repentance from sin and obedience to God is an impossible task to perfect, and an agonizing effort to pursue, but evangelizing doesn't necessarily involve any of that. No matter what manner of life one is living they can be an evangelist. Whether living in sin or in holiness, whether really believing or just pretending, either way one might win converts to their cause if they're clever enough. Do we remember what Jesus said to the hypocritical Pharisees:

*15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.* (Mat 23:15) Jesus said this right to their faces, to those scribes and Pharisees who were the very elite, of the elite, in the religious world of that day. So, do we see what He was saying? That unless those proselytes (converts) that they were producing were actually bearing the fruits that God desires, those of repentance and obedience, then they were just sons of hell being called by another name. The very same situation exists in Christianity today. It is filled with those who go to every extreme to gain a convert, and fill up a church, but they do so at the expense of holiness. Unless there is the fruit for God, meaning self-denial and following after Jesus Christ, then those so called Christian converts are really just sons of hell being called by another name. Jesus did not mince His words, so should we pretend that we don't see what's really going on in our churches?

There is no substitute for obedience, this is the fruit for which He gave His Son, and for which He has redeemed all of us and made us His own people. From God's point of view, it's not at all about how many of us there are, it's about how fruitful are the lives of those who are chosen. Unless our churches are **teaching and practicing** obedience to God, then our evangelists are only producing more and more sons of hell to fill those useless churches. Unless we are bearing true fruit for God we are useless and self-deceived, regardless of what title we claim. (meaning Christian) Now I understand that you may not like what's just been said, but if you're willing to be honest, then you cannot deny that this is the absolute truth of these verses. So, he who has an ear, let him hear. Now, our next verses serve to further substantiate everything we've just said:

#### **Verses 5-6:**

*5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.*

The opening words of this sentence says *For while we were in the flesh*. What exactly is "in the flesh?" If we don't know what that means then we don't know what we've been released from, do we? Since the context of the last two chapters is the principle of having died to the sinful passions of the flesh and being made alive to God, then that has to be the point of discussion. While we were in the flesh is referring to the time before our regeneration by the Spirit of God when our whole nature, our entire mindset, meaning our heart's desires, loved disobedience to God and the pursuit of lustful passions. This was our innate nature, our innate mindset. We were "in the flesh" in so much as our whole life and our entire line of affections and desires were contrary to God. That is "in the flesh." The next part of the sentence verifies this because Paul goes on to say that *the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death*. When we were in the flesh our sinful passions, which were defined by the Law of God, were at work in our bodily actions and activities, which was only bearing fruit for death, for the wages of sin is death.

And what does the Law do? It clearly defines what God has approved and what He has forbidden, and by this knowledge humanity becomes legally accountable for our actions. God defines righteousness, but man rejects that because in his fallen condition his mind is corrupt, as God spoke in Genesis 6: 5 *Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*. But that was Old Testament, and pre-flood, maybe we got better afterwards? What did Jesus say about the heart of mankind, did He have a more favorable analysis? Well lets see what He said, quoting: *17 "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. 18 "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been*

*judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. (Jn 3:17-19)*

It's very common to hear someone say that they choose to believe in the fundamental good of mankind. Now this may be a kind gesture, but the facts simply don't support such a conclusion (or should we say illusion), and both God the Father (Gen 6:5) and Jesus the Son (Jn 3:17-19) have gone on public record that the innate nature, the love and desire of the fallen human heart is evil. So, we can choose to believe whatever we wish, but the word of God gives clear testimony as to the desires and passions of the fallen human heart. And pronounces it to be *only evil continually*. If you choose to believe otherwise then be my guest, hey, maybe God and Christ were wrong? You decide. Now, I've said all this so that we thoroughly understand what the scriptures mean when they say that someone is "in the flesh."

And we've already discussed that the Law isn't the problem, the problem is our aversion to it and unwillingness to keep it. The Law only condemns us when we disobey it, not when we keep it. If we (humanity) could and would keep it we would be blessed beyond our wildest expectations. But we (meaning fallen mankind) don't want to keep the Law, so we don't even try, and this is what condemns us. Just look at the endless stream of things that God has strictly forbidden that are being made legal and protected in this once at least semi-moral country. Mankind does not want to obey God's commandments, nor pay attention to His prohibitions; his heart is contrary because his mind is "in the flesh." Paul says that we were "*bound*" to this situation. Meaning it is something more than just a free choice, it's a mindset to which humanity is inescapably *bound* by forces greater and beyond his own perception or control. This also is mandatory information, because one only appreciates as much as they can understand. For instance, if someone pushes you out from in front of a speeding bus, but you never saw the bus, then you might just be angry at them for pushing you. But if you saw the bus, and realized the imminent mortal danger, and your inability to escape on your own, then your appreciation of that push is entirely different isn't it?

When Paul says *having died to that by which we were bound*, we have to see and understand the mortal danger that we were in, and our own inability to escape the consequences by our own resources. Otherwise we'll probably just resent the efforts. Preaching the gospel to those who don't accept that they are sinners, on their way to hell, is more likely than not to arouse anger than appreciation, and this is why the scriptures teach that there is an act of God, a calling by God (Jn 6:44) on the heart and mind of His chosen. This effectual calling prepares their heart to really receive and appreciate the gift of God, that breaks that bond of sin that holds them captive to love and perform its works. Mankind is not capable of even wanting to repent of sin and follow Jesus unless something outside of himself initiates that desire. Jesus said: "*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.*" (Jn 6:44) This is exactly what He meant by that statement. The event of first cause in the breaking of the bond of sin is one that begins from a source outside of ourselves, not from within us. It does subsequently get within us, but it doesn't originate there. The push to get us out from in front of the bus of sin comes from someone else. And if we know that, then we can be properly grateful to the One who did it. God wants us to know and understand the mortal danger that we were in from the depravity of our own minds, and Who it is who came to our rescue, as well as why He did so and what He expects in return. And Paul is telling us all of this in these chapters of this epistle that he wrote to the Romans. His sentence goes on with the following words:

*so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.*

We note that Paul's conclusion as to the point of our dying to sin and being transferred into ownership and service of righteousness isn't (is not) so that we can escape the fires of hell, but rather so that we might bear fruit unto God. And how do we do that? How do we bear fruit unto God? Paul tells us that right here in these few words. We have received a new set of priorities, and we have been bound to another owner who both desires that we live righteously sensibly and godly in this present age, (Tit 2:12) and has given us the ability and the desire to do so. The desire and the ability were both part of the gift that was promised by Ezekiel and Jeremiah of the New Covenant, that Jesus announced at His last supper. In spite of the sin that still lives within us, the clear and distinct direction of our lives must be inclined toward righteousness, toward obedience to God, or we are not bearing the fruit unto God for which we were redeemed. And are we so foolish as to expect rewards for slothfulness? It's putting forth great effort against a very difficult task that earns rewards, and gains the praise "well done" from our Master. Paul says *so that serve in newness of the Spirit*.

There's two very important points here. **We serve** is one, **and newness of the Spirit** is the other. After all has been explained and discussed, the result is that **we serve**. Yes, we were redeemed to serve, not to be served. And not just to be rescued from hell, in fact that's more of a by product. And, so that we could do that, (serve) we were given, as a gift of God, this new heart attitude, which is the effect of the new Spirit. God said He would put His Spirit into us, and cause us to obey His statutes and His commandments. (Eze 36:26-27) Cause us how? Not by threat, but by innate desire, because we share His Spirit, meaning His desires and affections, His likes and his dislikes, which have been put into us (into our mind's) so that what we want is what He wants. And this causes us to obey from the heart, that body of teaching to which we were committed. (Rm 6:17-18)

We can all understand this, at least those who've experienced this spiritual rebirth for ourselves. The Old Testament was a period of time that a particular people, who were chosen by God, were then given His Commandments, and told that those commandments could either be a blessing or a curse to them, based on whether they obeyed them or disobeyed them. Everyone prefers blessing over cursing, so they all said they would keep the commandments, because they wanted the blessings that God had promised. But time proved that they could not bring themselves to live in compliance to those commandments, because the desires of their heart were contrary. They very quickly grew tired of having to do what they didn't want to do, and not being allowed to do what they did want to do. So, irregardless of the loss of blessings, and even the incursion of the curses, they began to move farther and farther away from those commandments that God had given them. To those who read the Old Testament there's the initial question, how could they have been so foolish? Didn't they see what they were doing, and realize the inevitable consequences? Well, the answer is, probably yes, at least many of them did, but the problem wasn't that they didn't know what they were doing, it was that they couldn't prevent themselves from doing it anyway.

We hear many people argue that alcoholics, and drug addicts, and various others just need more information and better education so that they will cease from these practices. But this completely misses the whole problem and deflects the thrust off in the wrong direction. Their problem is not that they don't understand the consequences of what they're doing, they most certainly do, it's that they're powerless to stop it with their own force of will. They don't need better education, they need a change of desire and will inside their own minds. And it's exactly the same with humanity and sin. Unregenerate (meaning fallen) human beings are totally capable of understanding the benefits and consequences of their way of life, but they are powerless to change what they love and desire in the depth of their hearts. There's no human remedy for this situation, because the power to change these things lies outside of ourselves. We might choose to resist them and try to follow some perceived higher calling, but in every human religion and philosophy, that remedy is limited by our own willpower and level of conviction, and it never can change the heart, only the behaviors, and that's usually temporary. This was the situation of the Jews under the Old Covenant, and it's the reason that they could not keep that covenant, because they really didn't want to. Concerning this very issue the prophet Isaiah gave the people a message from God that said:

*13 Then the Lord said, "Because this people draws near with their words, And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote. (Isa 29:13)*

Unless a work of God has been performed upon a human being, that human being cannot love and honor God with the damaged heart that mankind inherited from the fall of Adam. The very best we can offer is lip service that we've learned by meaningless repetition. Jesus said that unless a man (person) is born again they could not see nor enter the kingdom of God. That rebirth does not come by our random decision, or by our diligent effort, but by the grace of God, in the form of saving faith, imparted by a work of the Holy Spirit inside the very heart and mind of a human being. (Eph 2:8-9) This popular teaching that anybody can be saved anytime they wish simply by deciding they want to is nowhere found in the holy scriptures, it is an oversimplification of the complexity of the sovereign workings of God.

Because the act does involve a change of heart, and therefore our own willing desire is to cooperate, we think we made that happen by our own decision. But in fact, our decision followed the actual happening, it didn't cause it. Do we remember what Jesus told His disciples: *"You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. (Jn 15:16)* Therefore, we can't just make it happen whenever we choose. If the Father is (effectually) calling, (Jn 6:44)

then we will respond willingly, but if not, then any response is simply of the flesh, and not the working of the Holy Spirit. Sadly I, and many other respected preachers and theologians throughout history think that about 90 percent of the professions of Christ ever made are of that sort. Simply human emotion or lip service learned by rote. (Obviously in times and places of extreme persecution this number goes up substantially, perhaps even reverses.)

Now, it's impossible to really speak meaningfully on the intent of the phrase *newness of the Spirit* unless we understand what's meant by the *oldness of the letter*. Therefore, the *oldness of the letter* is what we've just been describing. The situation where we have laws and rules to govern our lives, but in our hearts we don't like those rules and laws, in our hearts we want something different. This is how we used to be, and this is how all unregenerate humanity still is, so we understand their plight, having shared it ourselves, and can sympathize with their situation, even while disapproving of their actions. This is why we can pray for our enemies, because we ourselves were also that same enemy before we received the gift of God, the gift that freed our hearts from sin and enslaved us to righteousness.

Newness of life is newness of heart and mind and spirit. It's a whole new attitude toward life and everything it involves. When Jesus said "*For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*" (Mat 11:30) this is what He was talking about. He didn't mean that resisting the temptations of sin was easy, but that the requirements He was placing on humanity were easy because His Father had given them a new heart that desired to do those very things that He was demanding. It's not hard to do those things that we love to do. It's hard to resist the sin that lives within us temporarily, but it's not at all hard to obey God, in fact we love it. Nothing else that we've ever experienced gives us the pleasure, in the depths of our hearts, that we get from obeying God and knowing that we're pleasing Him with our actions. It's very hard to resist sin, but it's wonderful and fulfilling and completely natural to obey God and we love it when we do.

The truth is, that if it weren't for the residual effects of sin that still reside in our flesh, this would be the easiest thing in the world to understand. Everyone would know without reservations if they were or were not born again of the Spirit of God. Either the desires of the heart would be solely for the things God has commanded, or they would be for the other things that He's forbidden. It actually will be this simple one day, but before we get there the plan of God involves a time of struggle, caught in the middle between two opposing internal forces. And what we do, and what we learn, during this period of time is crucial to our preparation for eventual service in His eternal kingdom. It's that difficult road that leads to eternal life. Difficult only because sin has not yet been eradicated from the entirety of our being. And because of this many of us, at various times, might have doubts as to the authenticity of our faith. And we sometimes don't understand why the scriptures say that we've been freed from sin and yet we're constantly being assailed and even defeated by it still. If we don't understand the various aspects, the legal and the experiential, and the spiritual verses the flesh, then we're just plan stymied as to how to understand these verses. But, If we've been following these lessons then we should not be ignorant nor mystified as to what they mean nor how to rightly understand them.

### **Conclusion:**

We serve in newness of the Spirit because we have been given a new spirit that agrees with God, and we have been justified by the death of Jesus Christ and set free from the legal consequences of the Law, so that we might be joined to another Owner, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our former inability to obey God because of our contrary innate nature has been forever repaired by a gift of God. And the residual sin that still resides in our flesh, and makes us sin, is only temporary. Its been left there for a purpose, but when the time is complete, it will be entirely removed, and we will get new incorruptible bodies (1Co 15:52-53; 1Ths 4:13-18) that are just like His glorious body (1Jn 3:2) by the power that Christ has to instantly conform all things to His desire. (Phi 3:21) To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Narrow Gate Baptist Church, Miami  
Robert Andrews, Pastor  
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