ROMANS 7

The Law, the Flesh, and the Deliverer

Dead to the Law, Married to Christ, and the War Within

> *"Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"*
> ROMANS 7:24–25A

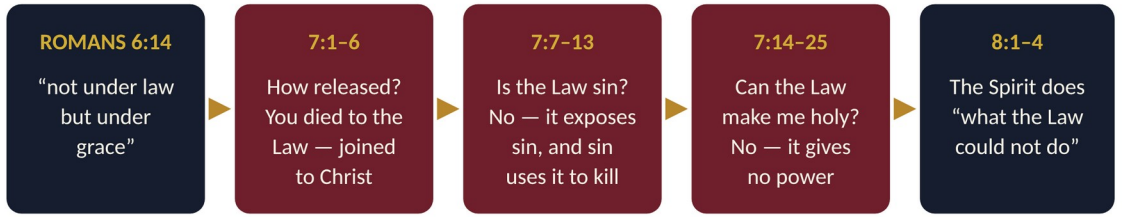
A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where Paul has brought us

1. Romans 6 ended with a sentence that raised two hard questions: “sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace” (6:14).

2. Paul writes “to those who know the law” (7:1) — Jewish believers in Rome and the Gentile God-fearers who had learned Moses in the synagogue.

3. The Old Testament is underneath every line.



Two questions (7:7, 7:13), one answer both times: “May it never be!”

Dead to the Law, Joined to Another

A marriage ended by a death — and a new marriage that bears fruit for God

ROMANS 7:4

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.

DAVID GUZIK

Dead to law as a way of justification or growth; free to be "married" to Jesus and bear fruit.

R.C. SPROUL

The Law did not die — you did, in Christ, who fulfilled it; freedom is no license.

C.H. SPURGEON

"Jesus is our husband, grace is the ruling principle of his house."

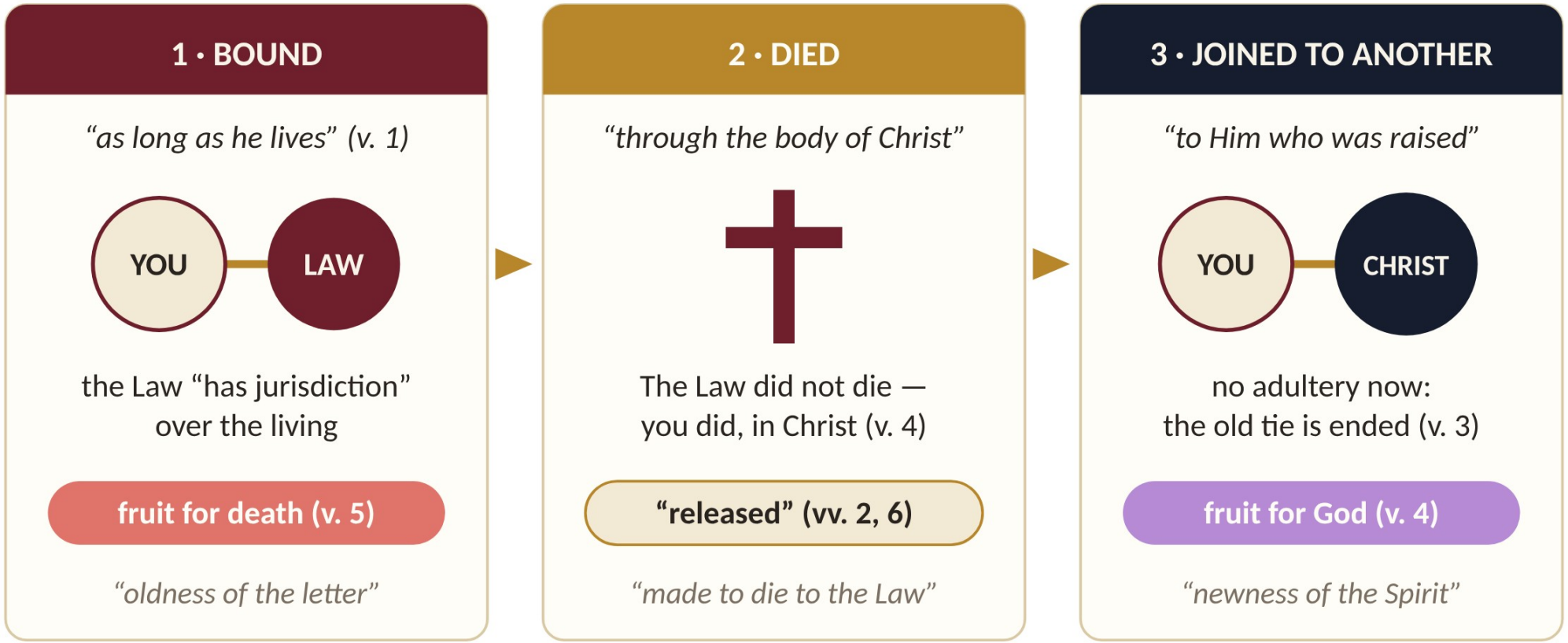
MATTHEW HENRY

Our first marriage was to the law; it bound us only during its life.

κυριεύει … ἐθανατώθητε τῷ νόμῳ
KYRIEUEI · ETHANATŌTHĒTE

Kyrieuō (G2961) is to rule as lord — the same verb as 6:9 ("death no longer is master over Him") and 6:14 ("sin shall not be master over you").

The Marriage Illustration (7:1–6)



Follow the three panels: the Law does not die — you die with Christ, and so are free to be joined to the risen Lord and bear a different fruit.

Is the Law Sin? May It Never Be!

The commandment exposes sin — and sin turns the commandment into a weapon

ROMANS 7:7

What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."

DAVID GUZIK

An x-ray that shows what is hidden; a boundary sin is enticed to cross.

R.C. SPROUL

The law makes known our sin; it woke the sleeping giant.

C.H. SPURGEON

"Sin kills men by that which was ordained to life."

MATTHEW HENRY

Holy, just and good — every commandment; it humbled Paul's good opinion of himself.

ἀφορμὴν δὲ λαβοῦσα ἡ ἁμαρτία
APHORMĒN · "TAKING OPPORTUNITY"

Aphormē (G874) is a starting point from which something is launched; Thayer gives its primary sense as "a base of operations," and the Greek world used it for a forward camp or staging harbor that…

What the Law Is — and What It Cannot Do

WHAT THE LAW IS	WHAT SIN DOES WITH IT	WHAT IT CANNOT DO
◆ **holy** — v. 12	**EXPOSED** by it — v. 7 *"I would not have come to know sin"*	**cannot supply the doing** *"the doing of the good is not" — v. 18*
◆ **righteous** — v. 12	**AROUSED** by it — vv. 5, 8 *"coveting of every kind"*	**cannot change the flesh** *"I am of flesh" — v. 14;* *"with my flesh" — v. 25*
◆ **good** — vv. 12, 13, 16	**USES** it as a base — vv. 8, 11 *"taking opportunity"*	**cannot set me free** *"Who will set me free …?" — v. 24*
◆ **spiritual** — v. 14	**KILLS** through it — vv. 9–11 *"deceived me … killed me"*	
◆ **"to result in life"** — v. 10	**UNMASKED** by it — v. 13 *"utterly sinful"*	

THE ANSWER IS A PERSON, NOT A RULE

"Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (7:25) — "For what the Law could not do … God did" (8:3)

Read the columns across: the fault is never in the Law (left); sin turns the good commandment into its weapon (middle); and the Law has no power to free or change (right) — so the answer comes from outside it.

The War Within

A spiritual Law, a man of flesh — the willing is present, the doing is not

ROMANS 7:14

For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

DAVID GUZIK

Awareness of carnality shows God's work; the question of who is secondary to the struggle.

R.C. SPROUL

Present tense, present struggle — the regenerate Paul; two jockeys on one horse.

C.H. SPURGEON

Paul the saint and apostle; the old nature unchanged, the new nature at war.

MATTHEW HENRY

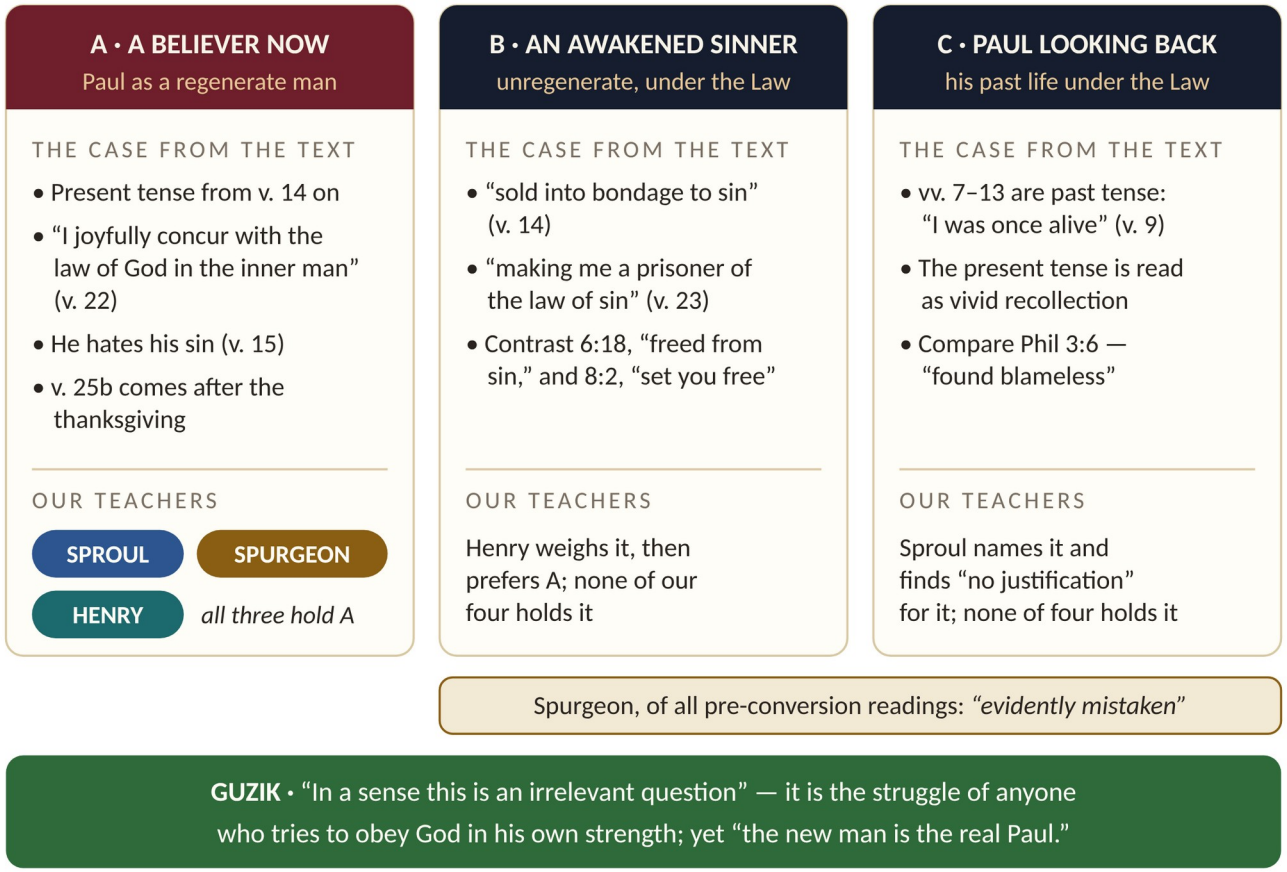
Struggles between grace and corruption in sanctified souls — he weighs the other view and declines it.

σάρκινός εἰμι, πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν

SARKINOS · PEPRAMENOS

Pneumatikos (spiritual) and sarkinos (G4560, "made of flesh, fleshly") face each other in one sentence: the Law belongs to the realm of the Spirit; "I" belong, still, to the realm of flesh.

Who Is the "I" of 7:14–25?



The three main readings side by side, with the case each one makes from the text and where our four teachers stand — three hold reading A; Guzik calls the question secondary to the struggle itself.

Wretched Man — Thanks Be to God

Two laws at war, one cry for rescue, and the answer that is a Person

ROMANS 7:24

Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

DAVID GUZIK

Worn-out laborer chained to a corpse; you need a Savior, not a teacher.

R.C. SPROUL

Sin dwells in him; the answer to "who" is God; then no condemnation.

C.H. SPURGEON

Death incarnate tied back to back — yet he rises shouting thanks.

MATTHEW HENRY

As if a dead body were tied to him; praise is the remedy for drooping souls.

συνήδομαι … ἀντιστρατευόμενον … αἰχμαλωτίζοντά με
SYNĒDOMAI · ANTISTRATEUOMENON

Three rare words make the battlefield.

What to carry from this chapter

1

The Law did not die — you did.

Paul's illustration has the husband die, but his application has the wife die (v. 4).

2

Every marriage bears fruit.

The same verb, karpophoreō, names both harvests: "fruit for death" (v. 5) and "fruit for God" (v. 4).

3

The Law is an x-ray, not the disease.

It "reveals what is there but hidden."

4

Sin needs a base of operations.

Aphormē is a military staging point: sin seized the commandment and launched its attack from it (vv. 8, 11).

More to carry

5

Sin brings evil out of good.

“The Lord brings good out of evil, but sin brings evil out of good.”

6

Eden in one man’s story.

A command given for life, a deceiver who uses it (exapataō, the verb for the serpent and Eve), and death (vv. 10–11).

7

Delight in God’s law is a sign of new life.

“All that are savingly regenerate or born again do truly delight in the law of God.”

8

The struggle is real, whatever the label.

Guzik calls the identity question, in a sense, irrelevant: this is the struggle of anyone who tries to obey God in his own strength — and the cure is the same.

Talk it through

1. In Paul's picture, who dies — the Law or you? Why does that difference matter for how you see God's commands today?

2. Where has a "do not" stirred up the very desire it forbids in you? What does that show about the commandment, and about you?

3. Why does Paul insist the Law is "holy and righteous and good" right after saying it killed him?

4. Who do you think the "I" of verses 14–25 is? Which line in the text weighs most with you, and why?

5. What is the difference between "sin which dwells in me" as a diagnosis and as an excuse?

CLOSING

Romans 7 refuses two easy answers: that the Law is the enemy, and that a believer is beyond the fight. The commandment is holy and the struggle is real, and neither one is the end of the story. The last word belongs to the One who answers "Who will set me free?" — thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study, reflection journal and film: see the Romans study page.