

The Law of Christ

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

Romans 6:2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

Paul is a mature believer. He is also an apostle designated as such by Jesus Christ. As a mature believer with exquisite knowledge of the Christian life, he uses Romans chapters 6-8 to encourage you the reader to avoid sinning and walk by faith dependence on the Holy Spirit. He knows from personal experience the tremendous blessings available to the believer who is applying Bible answers to daily challenges. Robby Dean calls it the “abundant life.”

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

I hear from time to time, someone who says “I want to make a difference.” Or “I want to change the world.” That is not the stated purpose of the Christian. The purpose of a Christian is to glorify God. That is done by walking in faith dependence on the Holy Spirit. The operation of our individual spiritual gifts glorifies God. Teaching a spiritual lesson can change lives. Giving the gospel can change a life. Encouraging a fellow believer can change a life. Sometimes it can even save a life.

Again in chapter 6 Paul pleads the believer to not sin. As L. S. Chafer said there is a negative and a positive to the spiritual life. He starts his

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series on the spiritual life by emphasizing the negative. You have the power to overcome evil. That is what Paul is saying in chapter 6 and 7. It is possible for the believer to not sin. Then Dr. Chafer said the positive is that you have the power to do good. That is in chapter 8, faith on the Holy Spirit.

Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,

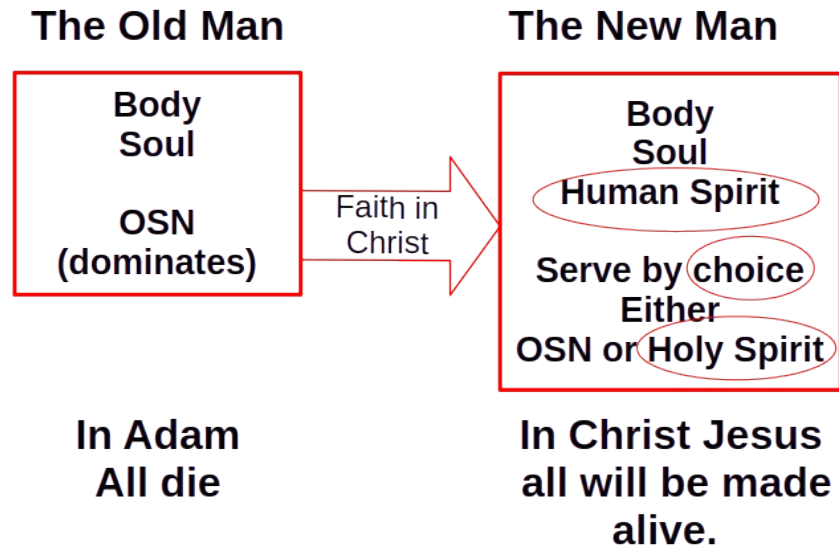
Romans 6:13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Paul is emphasizing the negative. Do not let sin reign over you. You have the ability to avoid sin. These words and illustrations are meant to be applied to the believer's life. It is a challenge from Paul to you, the reader.

Previously presented was an illustration of the Old Man versus the New Man that did not include the Mosaic Law. As we delve into Romans chapter 7, Paul adds the Mosaic Law as a factor in our spiritual lives. By attempting to include the Mosaic Law into our spiritual lives, we will end up in legalism. That is the issue in the book of Galatians, the “mini-Romans”).

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R. B. Thieme suggested that the parallel to the Mosaic Law in the Jewish unbelievers life had a parallel in the Christian life, the Holy Spirit. It seems more logical to have another law to contrast to the Mosaic Law. In fact, in Galatians, the “mini-Romans” Paul introduces us to the “Law of Christ.” In Romans chapter 8 he calls it the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus.

Whereas the Mosaic Law tells us that we are sinful and cannot escape the sin nature’s domination, the Law of Christ governs the believer with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Fulfilling the Law of Christ is possible by walking in faith dependence on the Holy Spirit.

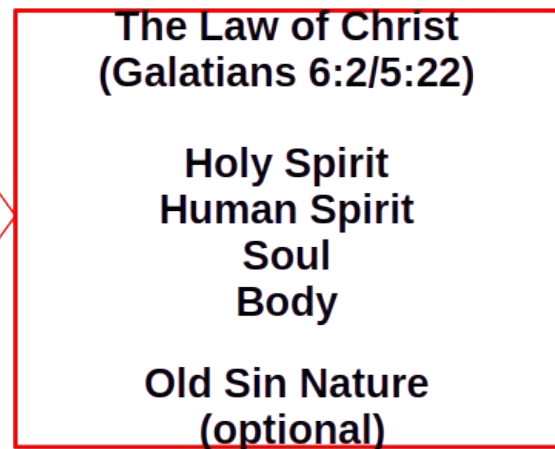
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The Old Man



Faith in
Christ

The New Man



**In Christ Jesus
all will be made alive.**
(fruit is fruit of the Holy Spirit)

The unbeliever is born with only a body and soul plus the Old Sin Nature (OSN). The unbeliever is spiritually dead and under condemnation due to the imputation of Adam's sin. For the Jew, the Mosaic Law clearly identifies sin. It forces the practitioner of the Law to understand that its fulfillment is not possible. It forces the unbeliever to consider faith.

The believer, at the point of salvation is provided with a human spirit. This makes the believer "trichotomous," body, soul and human spirit. The believer also has the indwelling Holy Spirit plus the potential of being filled by the Holy Spirit. It forces the believer to make a choice, either consciously or unconsciously, to depend on the sin nature resulting in sin and relative righteousness or depend on the Holy Spirit resulting in the fruit of the Spirit. We live under a more strict Law, the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, or just the Law of Christ for short.

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual,

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restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

Galatians 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

Paul uses a longer title in the book of Romans:

Romans 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

1 Corinthians 9:19 For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more.

1 Corinthians 9:20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under Law;

1 Corinthians 9:21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law.

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It is interesting to note that Jesus says that love of God and love of neighbor underpin the entire Mosaic Law.

Matthew 22:34 But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together.

Matthew 22:35 One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him,

Matthew 22:36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”

Matthew 22:37 And He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’

Matthew 22:38 This is the great and foremost commandment.

Matthew 22:39 The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

Matthew 22:40 On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

For Christians, Jesus gave us another commandment under the law of love.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

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John 13:35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

The point of this detour is so that you will understand the importance of love throughout the entire Bible. The “deficiency” of the Mosaic Law was that it didn’t provide a way to fulfill this command. It provided a standard which a human being cannot measure up to without the Holy Spirit.

The Mosaic Law was perfect for the purposes that it was designed for.

But, the Law of Christ in addition to being a “higher” standard than the Mosaic Law comes with the ability to fulfill it through the filling of the Holy Spirit.

The illustration started with Romans 6 to show that the sin nature domination over the believer is broken. The illustration is now expanded to show that the Mosaic Law is the law explaining the relationship between the believer and the sin nature. The New Man is under the Law of Christ (from Galatians 6:2/Romans 8:2/1 Corinthians 9:21). Here are some comments from Thomas Constable that helps with the Galatians 6:2 passage.

“Paul probably referred to the "law of Christ" (cf. 5:14; John 13:34; 1 Cor. 9:21) here in order to help his readers realize that freedom from the Mosaic Law does not mean freedom from all responsibility. The "law of Christ" encompasses the whole of Jesus' teaching in person, while He was on earth, and through His apostles and prophets from heaven following His ascension (cf. Acts 1:1-2). It boils down to the command to love God wholeheartedly and one's neighbor as oneself (Matt. 22:36-40; John 13:34-35; 15:12; 1 John 3:23).¹”

¹ Thomas Constable, Notes on Galatians 2025, p128

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“The "law of Christ" is the code of commandments under which Christians live. It is the same as New Covenant responsibility. Some of the commandments that Christ and His apostles gave are the same as those that Moses gave the Israelites. However this does not mean that Christians are under the Mosaic Code. Residents of the United States live under a code of laws that is similar to, but different from, the code of laws that govern residents of Great Britain. Some of our laws are the same as theirs, and others are different. Just because some laws are the same we should not conclude that the codes are the same. Christians no longer live under the Mosaic Law. We live under a new code: the law of Christ (cf. 5:1).²”

“At first this may sound as if we are under law as Christians after all. Paul contrasted law with grace because the primary characteristic of the Mosaic Law was its legal character whereas the primary characteristic of the law of Christ is its gracious character. He did not mean that there is no law under grace any more than he meant that there was no grace under the Mosaic Law. The motivation for keeping the Mosaic Law was external for the Old Testament believer (the Law itself), but the motivation and power for keeping the law of Christ is internal. Our motivation and power come from the indwelling Holy Spirit (Phil. 2:13), though Paul did not emphasize this in chapter 6.³”

As had been emphasized previously, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit places us in union with Jesus Christ. As a result, the Law that applied to Jesus Christ now applies to us, the Law of Christ.

² Thomas Constable, Notes on Galatians 2025, p129

³ Thomas Constable, Notes on Galatians 2025, p129

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Romans 7:1 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?

We commented on this verse last week. It is an affront to the believer who does not know spiritual information and who is looking to the commands of the Law as a spiritual imperative.

Romans 7:2 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.

Paul starts the analogy to marriage. Marriage is a legal contract between a man and a woman. People understand that. So Paul is using the laws at the time, specifically the Mosaic Law concerning marriage to explain the unbeliever and believer relationship to the two laws under consideration: the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ.

Romans 7:3 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.

This first part of the analogy says that a death separates married people from each other.

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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.

Therefore. Typically, this Greek word expresses consequence or result. Here, Paul is giving the second half of an analogy. It is built upon a common understanding of the legalities of marriage. If a husband dies, then the woman is free to marry another man. What Paul will do here is to say that the believer has died to sin, he or she has been divorced from the sin nature. As a result our new “husband” is Jesus Christ. In this analogy the believer did not die physically and neither the sin nature nor the Law died. What is at issue is the relationship between the believer and the sin nature and the believer and the Law. Those relationships are broken, “dead,” at the point of faith in Christ.

Joined to another, to Him. In the analogy, the believer is no longer “married” to the sin nature and dominated by it. Now the believer is “married” to or joined to Jesus Christ. This is the basis of our Christian lives.

Romans 7:5 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.

Fruit for death. Interesting that the sin nature produces “fruit.” In this case, the result of sin is death.

Romans 7:6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we

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were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

The Mosaic Law is perfect. Its “weakness” is in the human being. There is no innate ability to keep the Law. Only the Holy Spirit, the newness of the Spirit, provides the ability to keep the Law of Christ.

Romans 6:8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

Romans 6:9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

Romans 6:10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

Romans 6:11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Something of note here is that the Christian eternal life is different than the Old Testament eternal life. The Old Testament was prior to the cross. Believers today live after the cross. In the Christian dispensation, we are placed “in Christ” because of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. As a result, we have “eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” That is a profound statement worthy of considerable thought.