

1. **Introduction to Romans** 7: Correctly distinguishing between two terms that are both aspects of divine forgiveness helps in understanding this chapter. The two terms are “justification” and “Fatherly forgiveness.”
 - Justification is the Father’s once for all, unshakable, eternal, gift of right-standing before the throne of divine judgment. This forgiveness to a sinning believer is not pardon from an angry Judge but mercy from a grieved Father.
 - Fatherly forgiveness is ongoing and deals with here-and-now sins enabling a believer to continue in the process of their sanctification.
 - Sins committed after justification are free from the eternal penalty due sin but continue to grieve the Father and have temporal consequences.
 - When a believer sins, they are to confess the sin and repent. God grants “Fatherly forgiveness” (the second aspect of divine forgiveness). Justification eliminated sin’s eternal penalty. Fatherly forgiveness deals with temporal issues of sin and may include chastening (Heb 12:5-11).
2. **Three Intervals of a Believer’s Life**: (1.) The interval between physical birth and justification. (2.) The interval between justification and glorification. (3.) The interval after glorification.
 - The sin-nature is active in intervals (1.) and (2.), but in interval (2.) it is opposed by the new spiritual nature of salvation. Our righteous Judge pardons the penalties due sins in interval (2.) when He declares believers legally righteous before Him based on faith in Jesus.
 - In the third interval after glorification, believers are sinless and holy like Christ.
 - When believers are justified, the new nature they receive loosens their sin nature’s grip on them but does not eliminate it.
 - The new redeemed nature is inclined toward righteousness and enables a believer to “not sin.” The residual sin nature battles with the new redeemed nature. Believers can sin and do. Sin originates within themselves (Mk 7:21-22), triggered by our own desires (James 11:13-15).
 - Consider the question: Who is most aware sin’s burden – justified or unjustified?
 - John MacArthur says think of it this way. A burden of hundreds of pounds placed on dead person cannot be felt. No matter how heavy the burden of sin, an unregenerated person will not feel it because they are spiritually dead, but the spiritually alive redeemed will know their sin.
 - Awareness of the significance of their sin is a likely sign a person is regenerated.
 - Sin must be battled throughout a believer’s mortal life. Believers live in tension between extremes – the new and the old – becoming holy and continuing to sin.

- Physically, believers are Adam's progeny, but spiritually are "in Christ" sharing in His death, burial, and resurrection. "In Christ" they can become holy (glorified).
3. **Sin's Dominion**: In 6:14 Paul says, "*For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*" What does he mean?
- Sin's dominion over people under the Law was due to their inability to meet the requirement of perfect obedience to the Law all the time.
 - Because of Jesus' perfect life under the Law and His atoning death, sin lost the supreme authority it had gained over believers because of Adam's sin.
 - Believers are declared legally righteous (justified) apart from the Law based on Jesus' life and death. Therefore, they are not under the Law in the sense that they no longer required to perfectly obey the Law to earn righteousness.
 - Because of the necessity of perfection all the time, obedience to the Law was never an achievable way for anyone to achieve salvation.
 - The Law of Moses reveals sin (3:20), condemns sinners (3:19), identifies transgressing the Law as sin (4:15), brings wrath for disobedience (4:15), increases awareness of trespass (5:20), but it does not and cannot bring about righteousness.
 - The Gospel proclaims a righteousness apart from the Law which does not violate God's Law because all the actions enabling salvation were consistent with the Law. God is a Law-keeper as well as the Law-giver. How was righteousness apart from the Law enabled without violating it.
4. **Righteousness Apart From the Law**: God made "righteousness apart from the Law" possible through the atoning life and death of the incarnate God-Man, Jesus. Without the requirement for perfect obedience, God "justifies" or declares legally righteous, all who in faith believe in Christ the One who vicariously satisfied the Law as their legal substitute.
- Jesus is the God-approved legal substitute for all who will believe in Him. As their substitute, Jesus earned righteousness by perfectly obeying the Law during His incarnate life. The Father credits that earned righteousness to those who believe.
 - The righteousness, earned by Jesus and credited to each one who believes, was "apart from the Law" in the sense that recipients were not personally required to perfectly obey the Law. Jesus obeyed the Law on their behalf.
 - Believer's do not bypass or violate the Law. Jesus vicariously satisfied every nuance of the Law on behalf of those who would in faith believe in Him.
 - Paul follows up his "*not under law but under grace*" statement by answering the question, "Does God's Law apply to believers, and if so, how?" He begins with an analogy to marriage.

- The marriage analogy is not perfect, but the point is that though formerly “married” to the Law, believers were freed from that marriage by death “in Christ” and are now “married” to Christ.

5. **Romans 7:1-6:** *Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? ² For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. ³ Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man, she is not an adulteress. ⁴ Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. ⁵ For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. ⁶ But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.*

- In 7:1, Paul cites the legal principle that the Law is binding on a person only in mortal life. In 7:2-3, he gives the illustration that a marriage contract is valid only as long as both parties live. The death of one party invalidates the marriage contract. In 7:4, he speaks of God’s Law, pointing out that it is binding only on the living. In 7:5-6, he draws an important conclusion.
- In Adam, all people were physically present “in Adam” as his future progeny. Believers are spiritually present “in Christ” (spiritual union with Christ). Spiritual union with Christ means believers were spiritually present in Christ as He died.
- In the death of Christ, believers (who are in “union with Christ”) died to their obligations to the Law making it possible for them to be slaves to righteousness through the Holy Spirit.
- Being spiritually “in Christ,” during the vicarious death of Jesus’ human nature, ended believers’ obligation of perfect obedience to the old way of the written Law because Jesus’ incarnate life and death provided a new way to obtain righteousness, a way that was “apart from the law.”

6. **Paul’s Defense Against the Claim “the Law is Useless to Believers:”** The claim is that, since believers are dead to the Law (7:4), and not under the Law but under grace (6:4), the Law is of no value to believers and should be ignored. This notion ignores the truth that God’s moral law is an expression of His eternal character. The Law of Moses is a portion of the eternal moral law.

- Portions of God's eternal moral law are revealed in God's interactions with people (like dealing with Adam and Eve's sin, like dealing with the wicked during Noah's flood, like dealing with Pharaoh through Moses, like dealing with David after his sin with Bathsheba, etc.
- After God brought Israel out of Egyptian slavery, He gave them the Law through Moses. The Law given through Moses was more complete than anything previously revealed but remains a limited expression of God's eternal moral law.
- In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus surprised His listeners by significantly by giving a more complete meaning of various parts of the Law of Moses. A full expression of God's moral Law would require a full revealing of God's infinite moral character.
- Paul's defense of the Law of Moses has two objectives: (1.) To show that the critics are wrong, and (2.) To show that the Law has a proper place in a believer's life.
- When Paul says believers died to the Law, he means that "in Christ" they died to the requirement of perfect obedience to the Law as the way to obtain justification (legal righteousness). He does not mean a believer is no longer required to obey God's moral law.
- Human inability (not deficiencies in the Law) always made it impossible for people to achieve salvation through perfect obedience to the Law. For that reason, at the right time, God graciously provided a way to achieve righteousness apart from perfect obedience to the Law.
- God's new way to obtain righteousness shifts the burden of perfect obedience from everyone to the one person, Jesus of Nazareth, the God-Man. As the God-Man, He could accomplish what no mere man could do. He made it possible to gain righteousness apart from perfect obedience.

7. **One Person but Two Natures:** A being, who is "one person," implies a single "I" that controls and utilizes one or more natures. Humans have one nature controlled and utilized by one "I."

- The one person, Jesus, the God-Man, has two natures, one human the other divine, both controlled and utilized by His divine "I." What are implications of that truth?
- His "I" controls a nature (one at a time) so that the impetus for what is thought, said, or done originates in His "I" and is accomplished by one of His natures.
- Jesus' two natures were distinct, did not conflict or mix. Since both were controlled by the one divine "I," He could switch between His human and His divine nature as seen in several episodes recorded in Scripture. For example: Once in a boat, He was asleep in His human nature. A violent storm arose and frightened the disciples who

feared they were about to sink. They woke Jesus from His human-nature sleep. Hearing the problem, Jesus used His divine nature to calm the storm. He said to the storm, “*peace be still*” and the wind and water became still and quiet.

- Using His human nature, Jesus sympathized with Mary & Martha. Using His divine nature, He, in the presence of many people, raised their brother, Lazarus, from the dead by calling him from the grave with the command “**Lazarus, come out!**”
- As the God-Man, Jesus could and did make it possible for people to be redeemed.

8. **The Law for Believers:** God’s Law was given through Moses for the purpose of revealing and controlling the effects of people’s sin nature.

- How, then, does the Law apply to regenerated, justified believers who, though they continue to have a sin-nature, have been given a new spiritual nature, and are being sanctified?
- When the Law was given to Israel, it consisted of three categories – civil, ceremonial, and moral. The first two categories applied to physical Israel and are not applicable to believers.
- Every believer is to obey the moral Law, not because salvation depends on it, but in cooperation with the Holy Spirit’s work of sanctification. Paul says the Law is holy, righteous, and good.
- Everyone’s sin-nature can be stirred into rebellion when the Law says, “do this,” “don’t do that.”
- A person’s “sin-nature” and their “redeemed spiritual nature” constantly battle for supremacy within the believer.

9. **Next:** A bit more on “In What Sense are Believers Not Under the Law?”