

Easy As 1-2-3



Romans 7¹

It's As Easy As 1-2-3

Select where you would like to begin and enjoy!

[1-Overall Understanding \(below\)](#)

[2- Detailed Study Notes](#)

[3-Listen and Learn](#)

Overall Understanding

Chapter Seven²

Chapter 7 of Romans has sometimes been used as instruction about marriage when actually, marriage is used to illustrate a more important point altogether.

This chapter is also often taught to show that Christians struggle to do what is right and struggle not to do what is wrong. This is also incorrect.

The proper perspective is that chapter 7 is a continuation of what Paul has been saying from the beginning of his letter; namely, that Christians are NOT under the law but under grace, and that this is precisely why we are NOT under sin's dominion.

Chapter 7 also serves as a bridge to chapter 8, which is one of the most beloved chapters in Paul's writings. If one does not understand chapter 7, he/she will miss the glories of what is written in chapter 8.

¹ © C. D. Hildebrand

² Scripture taken from KJV, Public Domain, by the time I realized this was in KJV, it would have been too difficult to change it, so I kept it.

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? 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. 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.

“Those who know the law” are the Jews and perhaps also Gentiles who studied it. At first, it seems he is discussing marriage by pointing out that a wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives, but is free to remarry if he dies. But he isn’t instructing about marriage. He is giving an example of what he will say next.

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.

It is an interesting twist to his illustration. He tells them that they have become dead to the law through Christ’s death. The law still lives. It didn’t die. But we died to the law through Christ. Why? It was so that we could be married to another—to Jesus. This union brings forth good fruit.

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.

“When we were in the flesh” means when we were under the law. Notice here that instead of the law producing good fruits, it produces fruit to death. Paul writes that the law arouses sinful passions.

In the movie “Chocolat,” a woman moves to an old town with her daughter and opens up a Chocolate store during Lent. The less religious people freely eat the chocolate, but the local spiritual authority forbids everyone else because it is Lent. Chocolate becomes a sign of evil, and the local spiritual authority increasingly sets his sights against it until finally the prohibition gets the best of him and he breaks into the store to consume chocolate until he passes out and is found the next day in the display window covered in chocolate. This perfectly illustrates the power of making a law. Forbidding chocolate made it even more desirable, even to the point that the most holy person cannot stop himself.

This is the power of law. “Do not eat chocolate” makes most anyone want to go to the store, load up on it, and then eat it until it is almost painful to do so. The law arouses sinful passion.

⁶But 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.

Praise God. We are delivered from the law. We died to it. It is no longer our tutor. We are no longer under its curse.

The newness of the Spirit refers to the New Covenant of grace. The oldness of the letter refers to the entire law of Moses.

⁷What 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.”

Paul knew the Christian Jews then would be defensive of the law, just as many Christians are today. If the law arouses sinful passions, is it sinful? No. Rather, the law teaches the world what sin is.

Notice, Paul quotes one of the commandments, clear evidence that when he wrote “law,” he included the Ten Commandments.

⁸But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire.

The law produces evil desire.

For apart from the law sin *was* dead. ⁹I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

Paul was circumcised on the 8th day. There was no time when he was alive without the law, except for when he came to Jesus.

When he says “When the commandment came,” he is referring to after he was made righteous by faith, not law. There must have been a time when Paul came back under the law. When that happened, “sin revived, and I died.”

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*.

Paul cherished the law. He thought it would bring life, but he discovered it brought death to him as a Christian.

¹² Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

The law's purpose was to bring us to Christ, but after we believed, we would no longer be under a tutor. So the law had a purpose, to speak to the ungodly, dead sinners that they needed Jesus.

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.

Paul is not losing his mind here. He is trying to defend the just purpose of the law while pointing out that we are not under it. We died to the law, he just said. When we reintroduce law into our Christian experience, we experience a type of death.

¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. ¹⁶ If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that *it is* good. ¹⁷ But now, *it is* no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. ¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find. ¹⁹ For the good that I will to *do*, I do not do; but the evil I will not to *do*, that I practice. ²⁰ Now if I do what I will not to *do*, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

This is not the normal Christian experience. This is the experience of an unsaved person or a Christian who has come back under law as a means of righteousness.

New American Bible Commentary for verses 13-25 reads: "Far from improving the sinner, law encourages sin to expose itself in transgressions or violations of specific commandments (see Romans 1:24 ; 5:20). **Thus persons who do not experience the justifying grace of God, and Christians who revert to dependence on law as**

the criterion for their relationship with God, will recognize a rift between their reasoned desire for the goodness of the law and their actual performance that is contrary to the law. Unable to free themselves from the slavery of sin and the power of death, they can only be rescued from defeat in the conflict by the power of God's grace working through Jesus Christ.

²¹I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. ²²For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. ²³But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

The cry for help is not to be free from sin, but to be free from sin that arouses sinful passions.

²⁵I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Jesus is the answer.

Let us look at the very next sentence, which begins chapter 8.

Romans 8:11

There is **therefore** now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

We will show in Romans 8 that those “who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit” are not Christians who live fleshly lives but godly lives, but rather those who live under grace versus law.

You don't want to miss the next lesson.

Coming Up in Chapter 8:1-14

Chapter 8 is so full that we have divided it into three lessons.

We will see strong evidence that these verses do not discuss the obedient life versus the disobedient life as is often taught.

We will discuss how it is that we are truly free from sin as Paul described in chapter 6.