

## PRAYER

- Intercede for each person in your group to continue to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit in following God.

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- Ask God for your relationship with Him to be strengthened and be prepared to allot more time for the study of the Word and prayer.

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- Pray for family and friends to experience freedom in God. Ask for opportunity to share to them this Good News.

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## NOTES

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## CONNECT

- What is one rule that your family strictly followed at home? How did you find it?
- Tell of a time when your teacher or the school principal called you to his or her office. How did you feel and what did you learn from the experience?
- If you were to write a law that the whole nation gets to follow, what would it be and why?

## WORD

<sup>5</sup>For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. <sup>6</sup>But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

Romans 7:5,6

## WHAT What does the Bible say?

We usually feel stifled when faced with rules. We don't really like laws, do we? But even if laws seem rigid, most of them actually exist for our own good and most of the time, we have no choice but to follow them else we suffer the consequences. However, God made a better way for us to live life or a better law, which is through the Spirit. Let us take time to know the difference between the two.

- **The law guides; the Spirit empowers.**

<sup>26</sup>I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup>And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Ezekiel 36:26,27

The law is not evil nor is it an opposite of the ways of the Spirit. God Himself gave us the law (Exodus 20) to guide us on how we ought to live (Galatians 3:24). But we should realize that it is impossible to follow the law on your own. We need the power to follow the law which can only be found in God who gave us the Spirit through Jesus (Romans 7:6; Galatians 5:1-18). How has your view on the law changed when you received God's free gift of salvation?

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- **The law operates only in authority; the Spirit moves in relationship.**

*This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

Hebrews 8:10

People still follow the law mostly for fear of the consequences if they don't. Yet most of us follow the law grudgingly. How will that change if we have genuine love for the Lord and if we understand why He gave us the law?

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- **The law restrains; the Spirit sets us free.**

*But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.*

Romans 7:6

The law is like a fence that defines the boundaries to restrain us from our destructive tendencies. However, it is limited because it cannot save, transform, or give us freedom—only Jesus can (Romans 7:24,25)! What does this freedom of the Spirit mean? It does not give us the right to sin all the more, but it lifts from us the weight of living a righteous life on our own (Galatians 2:20,21). How did you see this freedom work in your life?

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## SO WHAT What is the relevance of the Word to my life?

- How does the Holy Spirit empower His people to obey God's laws?
- What is your motivation in following God's commands?
- How do people usually abuse the freedom that God gives them? What should be the right response to this freedom?

## NOW WHAT How do I apply the Word to my life?

- How can you allow the Holy Spirit to empower you more in overcoming some areas of struggle you may have?
- How can you increase your love for God's law? How can your relationship with God be even more strengthened? What help do you need?
- What particular things do you feel you are still trying to do on your own strength?