

WARM-UP

- What's the first rule you remember learning as a child?
- Tell us about something you did for someone you love even when it wasn't required of you. What happened?
- In which situation would you be more fruitful: doing something you are required to do, or doing something you really love (i.e., hobby, passion)?

WORD *⁴Likewise, 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. . . . ⁶But 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. **ROMANS 7:4,6***

(Read also **ROMANS 7:1-20**.)

In Romans 6, Paul said that humans are slaves to sin. This means we cannot help but give in to our sinful desires. In Romans 7, Paul describes the inner conflict every human has of wanting to do good, but also having the inner compulsion to do evil. So how can we be free? Paul had previously talked about how we are *not under law but under grace*. But can we still serve God even if we don't live by the law? Paul uses the picture of marriage, death, and remarriage to explain how God's grace enables us to bear fruit and avoid sin apart from the law.

1 | Through Christ, we have died to the law.

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ . . . **ROMANS 7:4**

God's law is holy and good (Romans 7:12). It shows us what having a right relationship with God and other people looks like. But the law also brings to light our sinful nature (Romans 7:5,8). We need to die to the law so sin will no longer have power over us. Paul uses the picture of marriage: the "law" of marriage is no longer binding if one spouse dies. The other can remarry without guilt. So how can we die to the law and to sin? By putting our faith in Christ's sacrificial death in our place. How are we transformed by Christ's death according to Galatians 2:20?

2 | We now belong to Christ.

. . . so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead . . . **ROMANS 7:4**

Dying to the law doesn't mean we can do anything we want. We now belong to Christ. In a marriage relationship, a spouse's actions are guided by his or her love and commitment to the spouse. In the same way, we as believers will not live licentious or lawless lives when we realize we now belong to Christ. We are no longer motivated by the dos and don'ts of the law, but by our faith and love in Christ, who loved us and gave Himself up for us. Have you avoided doing something, not because it was illegal, but because it would hurt the feelings of your loved ones? How does this apply to our lives with Christ?

3 | In Christ, we can bear fruit for God.

... in order that we may bear fruit for God. **ROMANS 7:4**

In marriage, fruitfulness can be seen in one's children, character development, and maturity. We can also produce fruit for God now that we belong to Christ and not the law. Some examples of the fruit we can bear in Christ are Christian character, sanctification, and spiritual children. What is the fruit of the Spirit according to Galatians 5:22? What does Ephesians 5:25–27 say about sanctification? How have you seen spiritual fruit in your own life after you came to Christ?

APPLICATION

- Have you experienced freedom from sin through faith in Christ Jesus? Would you like to experience it today? Have someone pray with you to receive the freedom Jesus gives freely.
- Is there something you would like to do out of God's love for you and your love for Him? What practical steps could you take to do it this week?
- Is there someone God has put into your heart to pray for? What is one thing you can do to reach out to him or her in the next few days?

