

Romans 7:7–13

⁷ What 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.”

⁸ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.

⁹ I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, 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.

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

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.

"Our Struggle With Sin" Romans 7:7-13

INTRO:

Last time we learned God has given us the ability with His help, to obey Him from the heart and in the spirit of the Law. We will learn how heinous sin is. Sin is so exceedingly evil that it uses the righteous Law of God as a motive to make us sin all the more. All of this then begs an important question. If sin is aroused and inflamed by the Law of God, is God's Law somehow evil and sinful? The Apostle's answer may surprise us. He asks in **verse 7**, ***"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not!"***

How is it impossible Paul?

I. WHAT THE LAW DID

II. WHAT SIN DID

I. WHAT THE LAW DID

v.7 "What 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.'"

A. Why is the idea that the Law is evil or sinful so unthinkable? It is because the law exposed sin for what it is! What God's righteous Law did was to expose the

sinfulness of sin to Paul. This statement is in effect a restatement of something the Apostle said in **Romans 3:20**

“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

The Law was never given to make men righteous. The Law could not make people righteous because all it could do is show them what sin was. So, Paul wrote,

v.7 ***“On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law.”***

1. Now what does Paul mean here? Did he say he became cognizant of sin because he read the Ten Commandments? The knowledge Paul wrote about was not so much intellectual knowledge as a knowledge which is much deeper.

2. Paul wrote later in this paragraph **verse 9**

“I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.”

Was Paul saying because he read in the Law a command that suddenly he died? No. He died when the command came alive to him and it turned the search light on his life. Then he began to see his sin for what it was. He understood how awful his sin was against the absolute holiness of God. This is when he died in that he knew of his spiritual death and need for the Lord to save Him.

B. Paul's second statement amplifies his first.

v.7 ***“For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet.’”***

Paul wrote from his own experience, which he knew was typical of the experience of most believers.

1. Remember what he wrote in **Philippians 3:6?**

“Concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”

Paul there talked about an external standard. If you followed Paul around all day with your little pad to document every time He violated the Ten Commandments, you would end the day with your pad blank.

2. Yet, there is one command we cannot see. ***“Thou shalt not covet!”*** When the Law exposed to Paul what that meant, He recognized he violated it. God's Law applied to the Apostle's heart made him understand the evil of desiring what someone else has. When Paul understood this, He knew that it was rebellion against God. Because only a holy and perfect reflection of God's character could do this. Therefore, the Law could not be sin!

II. WHAT SIN DID

vs.8-12 ***“But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking***

occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not!"

A. If sin takes opportunity to push us to more sin through the Law, how can the Law be holy and good? He shows us in the rest of this paragraph. Sin creates the problem not the law. He says in **verse 8**, that sin is culpable one in this process.

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

1. Sin here is not the acts of disobedience, but sin as a principle. Sin as a driving force in our lives without God. Paul personifies sin as a vigorous opponent to both our salvation and our growth in grace after we are saved.

2. Sin took opportunity from the commandment. The word translated ***opportunity*** means a ***"starting point."*** It used the statement of God's holy will for us to produce all kinds of sin. How did it do this? Paul recognized that indeed the foundation of all sin is desire of some kind. We do not worship God as we should is because in essence we do not want God to be over us. We want to be over Him. We enjoy the idea of God somehow being dependent upon us. God needing us is a real ego trip! We don't like to keep the rest of the law is because we want to be able to hurt our neighbor, if he gets in our way. Our golden rule is **NOT** ***"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."*** Rather it is "Do unto others before they can do it unto you!" Suddenly, everywhere Paul looked in his heart Paul saw evil desire. Then he recognized that everyone else has it too.

B. In **verse 8**, we read, ***"For apart from the law sin was dead."*** This was before he understood what the Law actually said. Paul thought he was all right. He did not see his lust and desire as sin. He cut himself slack. Then God turned the x-ray machine of His Word, the Law, upon Paul's soul and something happened. He states it vividly in **verses 9-11**.

"I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me."

Did you know the Puritans in sixteenth and seventeenth century England and the men of the Great Awakening in eighteenth century America practiced something which has fallen out of fashion today? Before they would preach the blessings of the Gospel, they would expound the righteous demands of the Law. They called this process, "law work." They recognized we have to get to where Paul was, understanding that we are dead, before we can be resurrected by the grace of God.

C. With this Paul came full circle. He repeated in **verse 12** what he asserted at the beginning of this paragraph.

"Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."

The problem is our own sin, our own depravity.

v.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.”*

It wasn't the Law's fault. It was sin's fault. It was my fault.

Hymn *My Sins Are Blotted Out I Know*