

Saturday, October 19, 2019—West Michigan Grace Bible Conference—The Battle for the Brain: The Enslavement of the Flesh/Brain (Rom. 7)

### **Romans 6:20-23**

- Romans 6:20—before we got saved, we “were the servants of sin.” We served sin because we had not spiritual capacity to do otherwise. Therefore, we were righteousness free i.e., we were devoid of righteousness because all our old man knew how to do was sin.
  - Romans 6:18—now by virtue of our identification with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection what used to be true of us is no longer the case. Instead of being “servants of sin” we have been “made free from” sin and “become servants of righteousness.”
  - Our new identity is as a servant of righteousness.
- Romans 6:21—when you were “servants of sin” (verse 20) “what fruit had ye in those things” i.e., the things of sin? The “fruit” or “end” of all those things is death.
- Romans 6:22—“but now” because we have been made free from sin we are capable of bring forth fruit unto holiness. We now, in Christ, have to capacity to bring about a different outcome and manifesting holiness by the life of Christ being made manifest in our mortal flesh.
- Romans 6:23—is summative of the entire chapter. The wage that sin pays is death. The gift of God is eternal life. For believers, yielding our members as servants to sin does not bring about death but it does frustrate that manifestation of the life of Christ in our mortal flesh. Why because you are seeking to function based on an operating system that is contrary to who God has made us in Christ. The result is frustration.

### **Romans 7:1-6**

- Romans 7:1—it is my understanding that at the beginning of Chapter 7 Paul brings up the next logical question. Is the way one yields their “members as servants of righteous” (Rom. 6:19) by keeping the law?
  - Romans 5:20—“where sin abounded, grace did much more abound”
  - Romans 6:1—is the next logical question, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?”
  - Romans 6:2—Paul’s answer, “God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”
- Romans 7:1—is the next logical question. Think about what Paul was said about the law thus far in the book of Romans.

- Romans 3:19-21—the law demonstrates that “all the world” is guilty before God. Therefore, the law cannot justify the sinner.
- Romans 6:14-15—we are not under law but under grace.
- Romans 7:1—keeping the law will not lead to the walking in newness of life spoken in Chapter 6.
- The statement in the parenthesis is one key to understanding the chapter. Paul is speaking to them that know the law. This is important to bear in mind when reading verses 7-20 where Paul is speaking about his experience as one who knew the law.
- Romans 7:2-3—is a practical demonstration of how the law has “dominion over a man as long as he liveth.” In other words, these verses demonstrate the truth of Paul’s question from verse 1.
- Romans 7:4—not only is the believer’s old man dead (Rom. 6:6) by identification with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection but we “are become dead to the law by the body of Christ.” Therefore, fruit in the believer’s life and walk is not going to be produced by keeping the law.
- Romans 7:5—is a key verse in Chapter 7. Believers are no longer in the flesh. Our “old man” is crucified and dead (Rom. 6:6) and we have made new creatures in Christ where all things have been made new (II Cor. 5:17) i.e., we are not “in the flesh” anymore.
  - Romans 6:19—before salvation when we were in the flesh, we “yielded” our “members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity.” It was this yielding to the flesh and course of this world that established brain pathways that led to habits, addictions, and coping mechanisms that believers still struggle with.
- Romans 7:6—“but now we are delivered from the law” is a statement about believers in the present. Believers are delivered from the law thereby allow us to serve God in “newness of spirit” (Rom. 6:4).
- In summation, our ability to walk in newness of life is brought about via three spiritual realities: 1) our “old man” is dead via identification with Christ in his crucifixion, 2) we are therefore no longer “in the flesh,” and 3) we are delivered from the law.

### **Romans 7:7-12**

- Romans 7:7—Paul’s asks the next logical question. If the law can’t save or cause one to walk in newness of life, then is the law sin? Put another way, is the law itself the embodiment of sin? Or, is the law itself evil? This section is devoted to answering this question.
- Paul’s answer is “God forbid.” The law is not sin. Rather, the purpose of the law is to manifest sin.
  - Romans 3:20—“for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

- Romans 7:8-9—“the commandment” i.e., the law brought “sin” to life in Paul’s life. In other words, it fertilized his sinful flesh and brought forth or manifested more sin in his life.
- Romans 7:10-11—Paul found that “sin” in his life latched onto the commandment thinking that it was the answer when it wasn’t. The commandment deceived Paul into improper thinking and only manifested how sinful he was and that he had no power to keep the law.
- Romans 7:12—therefore the problem was not with the “law” or the “commandment” but with the “sin” that resided in Paul by nature.

### **Romans 7:13-20**

- Romans 7:13—presents the next logical question. The law, which is good, amplified and manifested the sin that was already in Paul. Put another way, God’s righteous standards extracted or drew sin to the surface in Paul’s life thereby making it clear how exceedingly sinful sin is.
- Romans 7:14—Paul says “for we know” i.e. those “who know the law” from verse 1 that “the law is spiritual.” But that Paul concludes that he (“I”) is “carnal sold under sin.” How is Paul carnal?
  - Romans 6:6—is “old man” i.e., his old nature dead. This was already established in chapter 6.
- He is carnal in that he still possesses a body of flesh that is still sold under sin.
- Romans 7:17—the Paul that is Paul in his new identity in Jesus Christ isn’t doing it rather it’s the residual wiring of his sinful flesh that is doing it.
- This verse is not a license to sin. Rather there it is a distinction between sin and who I am in Christ. Sin dwells in me, but it is not me or define who I have been made in Jesus Christ.
  - While we are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, until the day of redemption we reside in a carnal physical body, controlled by physical processes and impulses in our physical brain. The physical, carnal, part of us has been sold to the master of sin, the sinful condition. Upon salvation we have been given an undefiled spirit that can relate to God. The Holy Spirit within us understands and desires obedience to “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:2).
- Romans 7:18—Paul’s flesh as well as ours possess nothing good. The Paul that is Paul as a believer “wills” to do “good,” but he lacks the ability in flesh to perform it. In other words, he possesses no mechanism in his sinful flesh to do “good.” If the law which is “holy,” “just,” and “good” couldn’t extract life from Paul’s sinful flesh what chance does he have.
- Romans 7:19-20—it is the sin that dwells in Paul’s flesh that causes him to do what he doesn’t want to do. Sin is the operating system of our flesh, especially our brains. Sins are of the law. The law uses the operating system of sin to create more sin. The law makes apparent, realizes, gives opportunity to, and animates the latent nature of sin. The law gives sin something to do in

your life. Sin is latent without the law, the fact that it is still present is evidenced by the fact we all still die physically.

### **Romans 7:21-25**

- Romans 7:21—Paul finds the existence of the following principle, “when I would do good, evil is present with me.” Why? Because until the “day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30) and the “redemption of the body” (Rom. 8:23) Paul is always going to be in body of flesh in which dwells no good thing.
  - Romans 8:23—one day the barrier of our flesh/brain will be removed, and we will experience the full totality of who we are in Christ in an unencumbered manner.
- Romans 7:22—the Paul that is Paul delights after the truth of God in his inward man. The part of Paul that has been redeemed and is renewed day by day delights and rejoices in the truth of God’s word.
  - II Corinthians 4:16
- Romans 7:23—the law of sin resides in our members which would include the brain. There are two laws or two principles competing for Paul’s attention.
  - *The Law of His Mind*—which resides in Paul’s inner man and delights after the law of God.
  - *The Law of Sin*—resides and Paul’s members i.e., his flesh and keeps him from doing good.
    - Galatians 5:16-18—the struggle is not between the old nature and the new nature. We are not schizophrenic saints. Rather our struggle is between the flesh and the Spirit. The Spirit of God resides in the believer’s inner man and delights after the law of God. The flesh contains that sin nature that was programed to think, feel, and cope by the course of the world.
    - Galatians 5:19—God the Holy Spirit leads no man today to follow the law. Why because of what we learned about the law in Romans 7.
    - Galatians 5:13-14—when believers cease trying to follow the law and use their liberty to “by love serve one another” they fulfill the righteous requirements of the law.
  - Romans 12:1-2—the renewed mind is to be the new master of the carnal brain and transform it into a servant of righteousness.
- Romans 7:24—Paul desires to be physically delivered from this body of death and put on a new body which is fashioned after the glorious resurrected body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Romans 7:25—the Paul that is Paul serves the law of God whereas his flesh serves the law of sin. Day by day, second by second, we have a choice which law/principle we are going to follow.