

Breaking Free From Feeling Trapped

I. Why does the Bible need to clarify "grace" for us? (Romans 1-5)

- Romans 1-2 → All humanity knows they stand guilty before God, either by conviction of their conscience or by comparison to God's standard - the Law.
- Romans 3 → What had NOT been revealed until now is that God has sent His Son to absorb every ounce of wrath by dying in our place on the cross.
- Romans 4 → Acquiring this "not guilty" verdict comes through faith in Christ apart from any personal contribution of good deeds or by being a generally nice person.
- Romans 5 → Though one human being plunged us all into The Matrix, another came to free us, and grace outshone our sin.

II. "What is 'the matrix'; what is the slavery all humans experience?"

- A. How does our mind operate?
- B. Is the soul defective?
- C. What is "the flesh" / "body of sin" / "body of death"?

The "flesh" –

"The body of sin" –

- D. What is "the world"?

III. But, what about breaking free?

- A. Breaking free from deception! (Romans 6:1-14)
- B. Breaking free from vicious cycles! (Romans 6:15-23)
 - 1. RECOGNIZE the current state you are in as a follower of Christ (6:11-14)!
 - 2. AGREE with God when He confronts something in your life that doesn't conform to the character of Christ.
 - 3. GIVE YOURSELF to God in a continual and conscious effort to obey and to be transformed (6:19).
 - 4. To do this will require time, reflection, community and the empowerment of the Spirit!!

Study Questions for February 14

1. Read Romans 7:1-8:4 all the way through five times this week.
2. Read Romans 7:1-6. What does Paul say about "dying to the Law"? Why are we dying to the Law? What negative result occurs in our normal state when our sinful tendencies combine with the Law (according to verse five)? Is that surprising to you? Why or why not?
3. Read Romans 7:7-13. Try to trace Paul's argument about sin, the Law and spiritual death. If the Law is "holy, righteous and good", then what does Paul say is the problem?
4. Read Romans 7:14-24. Compare verse 14 with Romans 6:6, 11-12, 14, 18, 22 (the freedom from sin passages). Describe the state that Paul portrays for this person. Are there incongruities? How would you solve those seeming contradictions?
5. Read Romans 7:25-8:4. What is put in contrast to the Law and its enslavement? Do you think that this rules out applying the Law as Christians? Why or why not?