

# Breaking Free From Dead-End Religion!

## I. What did we see in Romans 6 concerning sin and the Christian?

- A. We are no longer under the dominating control of sin! (Romans 6:6)
- B. We have been freed to give ourselves to God who will make us truly good! (Romans 6:19)
- C. We are empowered to cooperate with God to disable the "system" because we are free from the Law.

## II. Why does following Christ release us from a "keeping-the-rules religion"? Romans 7:1-6

- A. The only thing the rules did was make the "flesh" (our little "inner control freak") buck the system.
- B. There's a new and better way- serving in the Spirit!

**Bottom line: Guilt, resolutions, memorizing verses and even accountability partners—APART FROM THE POWER SOURCE—cannot help you!!! That's why Christ had to free us from a "keeping-the-rules" religion!!!**

## III. Does this make the rules bad? Romans 7:7-13

- If the commandment is like a traffic cop, then sin is like a psycho behind the wheel of an SUV.
  - A. What the Law CAN do:
    1. It can show you God's heart.
    2. It can establish civil order.
    3. It can antagonize the little control freak and show you how in control you really are.
    4. It can condemn you.
    5. It can guide you to the one place where there is freedom - Jesus Christ.
  - B. What the Law CANNOT do:
    1. It cannot restore you.
    2. It cannot make you obey.
    3. It cannot make you good.

## IV. How does a "keeping-all-the-rules-religion" (not Christianity) play out? Romans 7:14-25

- Three reasons why this passage is NOT describing the normative Christian life:

- A. It makes no sense in light of Paul's earlier statements about being "free in Christ".
- B. It makes no sense in light of this person being portrayed as under the Law and enslaved to sin!<sup>1</sup>
- C. It makes no sense in light of Paul's continuing arguments of freedom in the Spirit!

## V. A keeping-the-rules religion looks like this:

- A. It knows right from wrong, but is not able to behave that way.
- B. It looks like a religious placation to keep the "little control freak" at the steering wheel.

## *Placating the flesh with religion looks like this:*

- Makes a big deal about single acts of grace when our daily habits suggest we are not that kind of person.
- Re-evaluates sinful habits as occasional aberrations.
- Focuses on specific occurrences and ignores root causes.
- Offers a passive resolve with lots of excuses rather than an aggressive plan with lots of power.

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<sup>1</sup> Fee, Gordon D., God's Empowering Presence - The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul, pub. by Hendrickson, 1994, pp. 511-14

## **Study Questions for February 21**

1. Read Romans 7:7-8:4 → How does Paul's argument about the Law (without the Spirit's power) move once you get to chapter eight? How does this change the way you think about obeying Christ and our common struggles?
2. Read Romans 8:1-27 → Count how many times Paul brings up the Spirit in this passage. What does Paul contrast the Spirit with? How important is the Spirit in Paul's thinking, as it relates to salvation (see especially 8:9-11)?
3. Read Romans 8:12-17 → As people free from sin, what obligations do we yet have? What are the two alternatives presented in 8:13? What is our motivation according to this section?
4. Read Romans 8:18-27 → What do we have in common with creation in this passage? Why do you think Paul mentions suffering in this context? Why does he also mention hope (vv. 23-25)? How does the Spirit help us through these struggles according to this passage? How is this a new feature that the Law could never provide? Have you ever experienced this?