

Romans 7:1-6

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles and turn with me to the book of Romans, Romans chapter 7. Romans chapter 7. This morning we're going to be in verses 1 through 6. Romans 7, verses 1 through 6, just continuing to make our way through this great letter to the church at Rome.

I don't want to get into a lengthy introduction to it, but if you haven't been with us, I'll kind of get you caught up a little bit. What we find in the book of Romans are the foundational doctrines of the faith. That is, that which holds up what we claim to believe. Paul writing to a church who had never seen him face to face, who had heard of him. We know Paul in his missionary travels was starting and planning and growing a number of churches, which stay there for a short time, rise up other elders and leadership in the church, and then go to another one.

There's one of the most instrumental churches in the world at this time, the church at Rome, that was not just in one location, but meeting in various places throughout the city. Meeting in small groups of people coming together.

We have no idea who started the church. We believe that it probably came as a result of the message that Peter preached at Pentecost, more than likely because we know that there were people from all over the Roman Empire in Jerusalem, and they heard the message, they responded to the message, and one of those 3,000 who came to faith that day took the message back home to his hometown in Rome, which means you take it back to where you're from.

[1 : 28] And the church grew. God is so faithful to rise up his church. Paul bore a concern for every church he started. He bore a concern for every believer.

God put a burden for the gospel in Paul's heart. And part of that, he wanted to strengthen churches, and he writes this letter to the church at Rome, who he had never met, hoping to show them. They believe in Jesus Christ. They're trusting in Jesus Christ. And he wants to give them the foundational issues to what that means, which means this letter has application throughout the centuries.

The letter to the church at Rome, the book of Romans, has touched and transformed hearts. It was Martin Luther sitting in the monastery as a monk, studying the book of Romans, who came to the understanding of justification by faith and faith alone.

He was living in a world, I don't know if you know the story of Martin Luther, what is considered one of the founders of the Reformation. When Martin Luther was growing up, he was in a major thunderstorm, and lightning was striking above him.

[2 : 31] And he said, God, if you'll spare me and not let me die in this thunderstorm, I'll serve you all the days of my life. He came through the thunderstorm. He gave himself to the monastic faith, became a monk, lived a secluded life, tried through the disciplines of his body, through the efforts of his life.

He tried to work his way to please God, and realized through all of that, in the midst of that, that there is nothing he could do that would make him satisfied in the sight of God.

And through reading the book of Romans alone, he came to this understanding that a man is saved by faith and faith alone, called justification by faith. He sprung, he was, the Reformation was kind of already on the pinnacle, about to happen, but what happened is God found a man in Luther that would be strong enough to do it.

He was chastised, excommunicated, ridiculed, mocked, and all these things, but he said, here I stand. The Bible says, I'm saved by faith and faith alone, and I will not move.

Martin Luther done it. Martin Luther became one of the great pastors of church history, and he wrote a commentary on the book of Romans. And in the introduction to his commentary on the book of Romans, he spoke of this thing of justification by faith.

[3 : 41] A man you may or may not know of, named John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist church, had come to America, he'd come to Savannah, Georgia, to do missions work with orphans,

and to reach out.

At that time, Savannah wasn't a pretty southern charming town. Savannah was where they sent all the inmates and all the no-goods in America. Okay, it's amazing how his times have changed, right? They would send them there, and he thought, I'll come do some work, some missions work, with the rough people of the Americas.

He came near, and he utterly failed. Miserable. Did nothing. He went back home defeated. He went back home upset. And you need to understand, because the reason, and I'm not mocking it, but the reason they were referred to as Methodists is because John and his brother Charles had developed such a method of their faith.

They had strict disciplines. We will rise at this time every morning. We will pray this long. We will study this more. They had a method to their faith. And they thought their method was making them acceptable to God.

He came back defeated. He went into a church. He was sitting in this church. He opened up the book in the pew of this church, and he began to read Martin Luther's introduction to the book of Romans.

[4 : 51] And sitting in that church, John Wesley came to faith through the introduction of the book of Romans. And then he went back and started preaching justification by faith and faith alone.

History is strewn with the people who have been touched through this book. I myself came to faith. I came to true salvation, to the true knowledge of Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, from reading the book of Romans.

Just going through it in my daily reading time, I found just the other day the little spiral I used to carry with me when I first was reading it for the first time. And all the verses I was writing down, and I began to see again how God was working in my life.

And every one of the verses that I was writing down, by the way, I'm a big proponent that if you read your Bible, you read your Bible with a notebook and an ink pen. Because when God speaks to your heart, write it down.

And I would just write verses down. I wasn't a believer. I didn't know why I was writing them down. But now I look back this many years later, and every verse I was writing down had to do with how one was saved, how one was forgiven, how one was pleased in the sight of God.

[5 : 55] And it's no wonder that about halfway through the book of Romans, God used a dark time in my life to put me on my knees in my bedroom and to cry out to Him and say, You know what? I don't deserve it, but if you want to give it, I'll take it.

Here's my life, Lord. I'll give it to you. You do with it what you want to. And it's amazing to see the impact of the Word of God. So if you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you would join with me as we stand together and we read from the Word of God found in Romans chapter 7, starting in verse 1, just reading through verse 6 this morning.

Paul says, Or do you not know, brethren, for I am speaking to those who know the law, that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives. For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.

So then, if while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man.

Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who is raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

[7 : 10] For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. But now, we have been released from the law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank You so much for this day, and God, we rejoice in the impact Your Word has had throughout the ages. But God, we come right now with the expectation that You would take this same Word that has touched so many, and Lord, that You would touch each one of us.

We pray, God, as we have read Your Word, that we would take time now to see Your Word, and we pray that we would hear it from You. Oh God, that it would flow through me, not hindered, not in any

way diluted, but God, that it would come to us in all of its truth, in all of its glory, and Lord, that it would touch us to the innermost parts of our lives.

We thank You for the testimonies that have already been shared, and Lord, we pray as we look at Your Word, that You would speak to our hearts, and Lord, that when we leave here, we would have a testimony of truly meeting with You.

We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. Romans 7, verses 1 through 6, I dare say, when I began to read that, that some of you all of a sudden may have kind of stepped up and said, oh, well, he's about to talk about marriage and all this other things, and I want you to understand, we need to take the passage as it comes to us, because this passage really isn't about marriage.

[8 : 37] Sure, Paul uses an example of marriage, and we will see that in just a moment, but this passage is not a passage as it pertains to marriage. We don't ever want to twist the Bible to say something that we would like for it to say when it really doesn't say that, that is, taking it out of context.

The reason I always try to introduce the sermons, and I always try to put them into proper context at the time of its writing, to the people of its writing, is so that we are sure to get the truth that is revealed. One thing we need to understand about Scripture, okay?

The Bible teaches but one great truth. Every passage of Scripture that you come to, every verse that you come to, has one truth.

I am a full believer. I know it is not popular today. I know it is not a great theme today, but I am a full believer in the reality of absolute truth, that there is a such thing as truth, that what God says is true and what man makes up is false.

And I believe that when God moved men by the Spirit to write the Word of God, He was moving them in such a way to reveal a truth. So when we come to the Bible and we're reading a section of the Bible, we don't want to see what truths it contains.

[9 : 47] We want to see what truth it teaches. And with that, though, that truth has thousands of applications. The application is so much different than the truth.

So we need to kind of differentiate ourselves when we're talking about these two things. But I want you to see this morning, as Paul has been talking to us about this thing called justification by faith, and he has spent the greater part of the sixth chapter telling us that we don't have to live like we used to live anymore, that we can consider ourselves dead, that we have died in Christ.

It's really this great spiritual thing that is so hard to grasp, that when Jesus died on the cross, those who have put their faith and trust and hope in Him died with Him. I mean, it is an amazing concept, really, if you think about it, that His death is our death.

And since we have died, His life is now our life, and now we live. It is no longer us, as he would write in Galatians 2.20. You know, I have died, and it is no longer I who lives, but it is Christ who lives inside of me.

And because of all these truths that are revealed throughout Scripture, it stays consistent that we don't have to be who we used to be. We don't have to live like we used to live.

[10 : 58] He has got into the application of your salvation. You are saved by faith. And your works will look different because you have been saved, not in order to attain or to gain faith, but because you are saved.

But this morning, he wants to bring this application a little bit more real. And he uses an illustration of marriage, which we will use, too, as we go through it.

But I want you to see this morning our legal separation from our natural union. I don't know if you realize it or not. We looked at it in the end of the fifth chapter and getting into the sixth chapter.

But when you were born, you were born into an arranged union. You were already given to someone. The moment you were born, you were born and you were already dedicated.

Actually, before you were born, when you were being knit together in your mother's womb, there was already a union arranged for you. And that is the union of the flesh.

[12 : 02] You could not help but be married to yourself. You could not help but be married to the flesh. You were married to the very thing that Adam struggled with, and that is the flesh, the temptation to do wrong.

You were born with what we call a sin nature. You do things, sins, because you are married to sin. You cannot help it. That is who you naturally are. One of the great truths that we need to understand throughout Scripture is that we don't have to try to sin.

We just sin. It is not that we do bad things. It's that we are a bad person, and therefore bad things come out of us. It doesn't say to be surprised when you go up to a thorn bush and see thorns, right? A bad tree produces bad fruit, and a good tree produces good fruit. It's one of the great laws of nature. We find that in the book of Matthew. And it says, don't be surprised. We ought to be surprised to go to a bad tree and expect to find good fruit.

That doesn't happen. Rather, we are known by our fruit. And the fruit of our lives, if we are to be honest, is that we are bad. That there is essentially something wrong with us.

[13:02] That the moment we were born, we were joined together with one, that is ourselves, the flesh, the natural person, who will lead us to do bad. You say, no, I'm a pretty good person.

By what standard? Who are you judging yourself by? Are you judging yourself by a fellow man? Are you judging yourself by someone throughout history who you know to be desperately wicked? Or are you judging yourself by the holy standard that God has laid out?

I dare say that if we go to the book of Leviticus, that it would not take us very long through that great Old Testament book of Leviticus before each one of us would have to say, who can live by this standard?

Because that book is all about the holiness of God. And we realize through the Old Testament that each one of us were joined to the natural self, which has led us to sinful actions.

But Paul comes with good news, is that you can legally break that union. And the illustration he uses is an illustration of marriage. And he is writing to one.

[14:02] He, a lot of times in illustrations, they are limited a little bit, but we have to use them. Someone once said that a good illustration is a window into the truth. It helps us to see that thing which we know is true.

And that is exactly what Paul is doing. And he shows us the only legal way, by the standard of life, to be separated from that which we are naturally bound to.

Number one, there is a needed death. There is a needed death. I don't know if you've heard the story of Jack Barsky.

Jack Barsky is not his legal name. Well, it is his legal name, but not his God-given name. I'm going to run the book for you if you've never read it. If you want to read it, there's a lot of details in there, and I'll give it to you. But I don't mind telling you if it's a spoiler for you, because it's too good of a story not to spoil.

Jack Barsky wrote a book called Deep Undercover. He was born right at the close of World War II, and he was born in East Germany. That's why I don't know his legal name.

[15:04] Even if I knew it, I would not dare to pronounce it up here, okay? It's one of those great, great names that the pastors, we tend to kind of shorten a lot. But anyway, Jack Barsky was born in East Germany, a very intelligent individual.

His mom and dad were both teachers, all these things. Went through school hoping to be a physicist, and ends up being recruited by the KGB and other things, the spies of East Germany. His story goes on, and I'm not going to weave in all of its details, but he eventually ends up infiltrating America during the height of the Cold War, the latter part of the 1970s, the early part of the 1980s.

He comes by way of Canada, ends up in America, and takes on the identity of Jack Barsky, a boy who died at the age of 10. He ended up obtaining a legal birth certificate and a passport and all the driver's license required and lived in Virginia.

And his whole reason for being here was to be a spy for the Russians and the East Germans. He was here to try to infiltrate and to take down the American evil.

[16:15] His story is an amazing story. His family did not know what he did. He had a family back in East Germany. He had a wife. He had kids. They didn't know what he did. They just knew that he traveled for a while, and he would always travel through various airports and make it in different ways and end up back here.

He would come back home, and he operated as an insurance adjuster of all other things. He ended up getting a job at one of the great insurance companies, and we don't like insurance companies, right?

But anyhow, he ended up getting there and working his way up the system and was living the American dream. All of a sudden, he began to realize that America wasn't as bad as he was told America was.

And while here, he would get signals from his handlers to tell him to come back, and he would come back and report back and forth. The story goes, after a while, he ends up meeting someone here. Jack Barsky gets married over here, and while his other man was married over there, Jack Barsky starts a family over here. He lives the American dream. He buys a house in the suburbs. He's living just a little bit outside of D.C.

[17 : 18] And begins to really enjoy his American life. But he had a problem. Because the FBI and the CIA were getting very close to him, and his handlers in the KGB knew that, so they gave him a sign that he needed to leave America quick.

He ignored it. Well, the sign came again. Leave America quick. He ignored it. It finally came to a point where he had to make a decision. Either Jack Barsky was going to die, and he was going to go home and take on his identity, or the East German had to die, and he could remain Jack Barsky. He had to make a decision. He couldn't live in two worlds. He finally came up with this ingenious plan, because if there was one thing that the East Germans thought America was rampant with, was HIV and AIDS.

And the one thing they did not want coming back to East Germany was AIDS. So Jack Barsky finally sent an encrypted message and said, I can't come home. I have contracted AIDS. Well, the East Germans dropped him. Counted him as good as dead. Counted him so dead that the KGB went and paid his pension to his family in East Germany, which set them up for life. And Jack Barsky thrived.

[18 : 38] Only problem is, is the house he had in the suburbs, the FBI had bought one next door to him. And he finally got caught. And the truth came out. He ended up going back to East Germany and happened to look face to face with his son over there, who thought he was dead.

But the story I share with you is this. Just like Jack Barsky, we too are faced with a decision. You can't live in two worlds. Because both of them calls to you. Now he is legally Jack Barsky with a legal birth certificate with his actual date.

He has been granted American citizenship because they realized that even all of his spy activities, none of it did any harm to American soul. He was given forgiveness and all of those things.

It's a great story of redemption because the story in it is, he ends up coming to faith in Jesus Christ and sharing his testimony about the love of the church and how the people of faith really ministered to him and how he had this twisted, satanic view of America over here.

[19 : 41] And now all of a sudden, he realizes that's not what it is. But there had to be a legal death before any of it could legally happen.

My friend, I share this with you because look at what Paul says. He says, We're talking about your legal separation from your natural state.

When you were born, you did not have to ask to be joined to the flesh. It just naturally happened.

The sin nature is naturally yours. You took it on at your birth.

All mankind has entered into it because we follow in the likeness of Adam, as Genesis tells us, that Adam bore children in his own likeness. And in case you haven't realized it, Adam's likeness is not one we really want to adhere to a whole lot, but it is naturally ours.

We took it on. We did not have to ask. But what we're wanting is to be separated from that. But we understand this. Paul says, You cannot just be separated from something because you want to be separated from it.

[20 : 46] He says, The law has jurisdiction over the living. And he uses this illustration of marriage. For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living. But if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning her husband.

Now, the question we must ask ourselves is, Why does he pick on ladies here? And some of you are going, Yeah, he's just picking on women. I knew the Bible was sexist and trying to be mean and all this other stuff. Wait a minute. Let's put it in context, okay?

If Paul had said the married man is bound by law, the men would have said, No, that's not right because in Roman law, I can leave my wife anytime I want to leave my wife. And in Roman law, you could legally be separated.

If she burnt your toast one too many mornings, you could tell her to go on and give her a certificate of divorce. That's okay. Listen, men, we all endure meals every now and then in the early years. It's okay. But by Roman law, you didn't have to have a grounds if you were a man. But according to Roman law, I'm not picking on you ladies.

[21 : 45] I'm talking about the Roman law. The ladies' rights were forfeited at marriage, which you had no legal grounds whatsoever. I don't care how bad it got.

I don't care how terrible it was. If the husband was alive, you were with the husband. Now, I'm not saying it's right. I'm just telling you what was there. You were bound to him.

That's why he brings up ladies. Now, we got to stay in touch with this, okay? Because I think this illustration runs so rampant through it. He says she is bound. In verse 3, he says, So then, if while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress.

But if her husband dies, she is free from the law so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man. Now, this shows us the necessity of death. Friend, listen to me.

Romans 6 has told us that we do not have to sin anymore, that the moment we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, that his death is our death. We'll get to that in just a minute, that we have died, and we no longer have to obey the sinful passions of our flesh.

[22 : 53] But here is what I want you to understand. Legally, legally, you are free. You're free. You no longer have to do what your body naturally leads you to do.

You're no longer bound, and we need to get this. We have this tendency in the church, and we have this tendency in the world to say, well, I can't help but sinning because that's who I am.

No, not when you have died. A dead man does not sin. Okay? A dead man does not fall. A dead man does not fall. And I'm not trying to be morbid here. I'm just trying to be honest. But this is the problem we find.

We have a tremendous amount of people within the church. And this is, I was guilty of this for a number of years. And we have to examine our own lives, not to be judgmental to the person sitting beside us, but we have to examine our own lives.

We have a lot of people in this world, and even within the church, who are in the process of spiritual adultery. There are a lot of people who want to be joined to Christ the whole time staying joined to themselves.

[24 : 00] They want to be with Jesus because heaven seems great and the rewards seem awesome. But they like the life they're living, and they like the flesh that they inhabit.

They want Jesus, but they want the sinful pleasures. They want Jesus' benefits and His blessings and His reward and His provisions. But that temptation that pulls on the flesh is so much fun.

Friends, listen to me, especially young people, don't let anyone tell you sin is not fun. Satan has made sure that the flesh enjoys some sinful actions. But that does not mean that it's right.

But I have found I have had a lot more fun with my liberty in Christ than I ever had in my bondage to sin. That it is a lot more fun to have joy that the world cannot understand and to experience a little bit of happiness that the world can provide.

But the problem we see is this spiritual adultery. They want Jesus and themselves. And my friend, let me tell you, that's not possible. It says, and I believe it is the book of Peter, 1 Peter, that friendship with the world is hostility towards God.

[25 : 17] That we cannot love the world and love the Lord. At the same time, now the world does not mean the trees and the birds and all the things. It means the spiritual forces of darkness. We cannot love the things of darkness and love the God who created us.

What you have in Jesus is a bridegroom calling out to you, saying, hey, I'd love to be in a relationship with you. And you sense that and you feel that pulling. It's called this wooing.

He's winning you over and saying, I love you so much and I'd love to be in a relationship with you.

But the problem is, is you are married to someone else. You're married to that sin nature.

And by law, you're bound to them. Someone has to die. Has to. Because the law has binding power as long as both are alive.

But look at what Paul says. Paul takes this illustration and turns it on its head and makes us go, what? Because look at what he says.

[26 : 22] Verse 4. Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the law, to the body of Christ. You say, wait a minute.

I thought the illustration was about a woman and her husband. And the husband dies. I'm okay if the husband dies, right? As long as the woman wants to be free, let's let the husband die, but leave the woman alone. If we want to follow Paul's illustration, what he is saying here is the woman and the husband are bound.

The woman wants to be married to someone else. There's someone who's going to be better than this husband, who would treat them better, who would respect them better, who would love them better, who would give them things better. And then, instead of the husband dying and freeing the woman, the woman dies.

And you're like, wait a minute. That doesn't seem right. But it is. Because the dead woman is free from the law too. Because the law has no binding over a dead person.

Because they're free from the penalty of the law. Paul says, you were made to die. This is why this illustration is so important for us.

[27 : 26] And then I'll move to my second point. I want you to understand this. The moment you were born, you were wed to this thing called flesh, the sin nature. Christ came into your life and he's revealing himself as an awesome bridegroom who wants to love you and wants to welcome you into his presence.

And you feel a yearning to be married to him. And you say, well, if I could just have the sin nature or the flesh die, then I could be married to Christ. That's not how it happens. We die. And then are married to him.

And how do I know that's true? It's because even after you've been married to Jesus Christ, you still have the flesh and sin nature inside of you. Do you acknowledge that?

Once I accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and He is forever mine and I have been joined to Him, I have found that my old husband, the sin nature, is still alive. And he comes back.

I know you're talking about it. It's a twisted picture. Wait a minute. This sounds wrong. But listen, it's the picture of the Bible because the Bible says that I am the bride of Christ. He is the bridegroom. He has the headship and the authority and the lordship over me.

[28 : 33] I am His bride. But what I have found is that the one I used to be married to, my sin nature, still knocks on my door and says, wait a minute. I'm still here. Wait a minute. I'm still here. Don't you want to do this?

Don't you want to do that? Can't we go out and have fun? Can't we just hang out a little while? And this is what I have to do. I have to tell that which is still alive that I used to be married to, yes, but I'm dead.

You, O flesh, are still very much alive. Sorry, that got really loud. You, O flesh, are still very much alive. The problem is the one that you were married to is dead.

And that dead person was brought back to life and was married to someone else who died and came back to life. Friend, listen to me.

I don't know where you're at, but I know one thing. Before you can be legally separated from the person you've always been, somebody has to die. And if you're waiting on that flesh, the sin nature to die, it's going to be too late.

[29 : 34] It must be us before we can ever be wed to another. And man, what a bridegroom he has. Now, I would love to stop right there, but I want you to see these last two.

And I know my time is ticking on me very quickly. And I'm going to let you see them. Because they're so wonderful. Not only is there a needed death, there is a natural fruitfulness. And I won't get into this a whole lot.

But look, it says that you have died to yourself so that you may be wed to another. He who was raised from the dead. How is a dead person married? Well, a dead person is married if it marries another dead person who came back to life and can bring them back to life.

I know that's a real big story, but this is how it works, okay? Jesus is so powerful. He came out of the grave. He died, came out of the grave. And then he calls us out of the grave. And we're married together with him. We are wed.

But here's what I want you to see. It says, so that you may bear fruit for God. You know that there's never a separation from something unless there is a uniting to something else in Scripture.

[30 : 30] It's this great theme throughout Scripture that God sets people free in order to bring them in. He causes someone to die so that he can raise them up. He breaks this tie so that he could unite this bond, this union, okay?

There's always this, this so that you can do that. Because if you just die to yourself and you're not married to Christ, you're going to be what Jesus shared about Matthew, the man whose body was full of demons.

And he got all the demons out of him. He cleaned up his life. He swept the place and got in order. And the demons left him. And the demons went out over all the waterless pits, it says, and looked everywhere to go. And the demon couldn't find anywhere to go.

So he came back to that man. And when he came back to that man, he found that that man had cleaned up his life. He had swept his life out. He had, everything was good and clean. And the demon says, man, this place is cleaner than when I left it. There's room for more of us.

So he goes and gets more demons. And then the more demons inhabit that man. Because when he cleaned up his life, he didn't fill it up with anything. You know, that's why I tell you that if you're just going to clean up your life and get your life right, you better fill it up with some Jesus.

[31 : 30] Because if you just clean up your life, that demon that's haunted you is always going to come back. And when he comes back, he's going to bring more. Because your life cannot exist in a vacuum. And the only way to fill it up with Jesus is to let Jesus have all of you.

And you have to fill it up with something in order so that it's not filled up with what you don't want it to be filled up with. The reason Satan finds so many opportunities in our lives, our lives, is because we let so many vacuums exist in our lives.

And there are too many holes that Satan finds empty. And he says, I can plug in there. I can plug in there. Or I can plug in there. But that's a whole other sermon. But anyhow, we have been set free legally so that we can be united to someone else that is Jesus in order that we may bear fruit for God.

Do you know that the natural production of every union throughout creation is fruitfulness? It just is. You expect when two things come together for there to be fruit.

And when it doesn't happen, we call that unnatural or abnormal. In the animal kingdom, even in our own lives, we count that as there's something that we need to resolve because naturally there should be fruit.

[32 : 38] Then why is it, just to be honest, within Christianity, when we talk about Jesus being our bridegroom and we being his bride and he is the lover of our souls and the reason you have the book Song of Solomon, which I'm still trying to figure out that if the Lord allows me to tarry and I preach all the way to Song of Solomon, how I'm going to preach through that without being sensitive for children.

I don't know how long it's been since you've read Song of Solomon, but I will not be able to preach that one with young children in the audience because it's all about love and infatuation and embracing and man, you know, it's real intimate.

Why is that even in there? It's because that's how God sees us. We are his bride. He loves us. He delights in us. He rejoices in us. Why is it that we think that that's the only union that we shouldn't expect fruit from and it'd be okay?

Why? Because the natural order of every union is the production of fruit, my friend, listen to me. Naturally, the believer should be fruitful.

We have broken our legal binding of the old self, whereby the way we were naturally fruitful, because what does it say? That the passions of the flesh were aroused by the law and produced the fruit of death.

[33 : 53] Nobody had to teach you how to do that. I gave that illustration the one Sunday here about if I put three cups up there and I put something under the cup and I showed you what two of them was and I told you not to touch that third one and I said there's something under there but don't touch that third one.

I had people after service tell me, you know, if you'd done that, I'd have waited until everybody left and I'd have went up there and flipped over that cup. You know why? Because the law tempts you. It just does. It does.

Don't do this. Don't do that. Don't touch that. Don't do this. Don't go there. Don't do that. And there's something in you that causes you to naturally bear fruit of doing it anyway. Rebellion.

But when we come to Christ, there ought to be this fruitfulness for God and this fruitfulness for the kingdom. And this is why this illustration I think is so important because in this illustration, we are the woman.

Remember that, okay? I know some of you men are struggling with this. You're like, this is so hard. But just stay with me here because we're talking about the woman dying, being married again. Well, the fruit always comes through.

[34 : 50] It's just a natural order of things, right? Fruit comes through the labor and the pain of the woman. And men, I know we can say, oh, honey, I know it's terrible as much as we want to, but we don't know anything.

Okay? We just don't. Okay? We're not experiencing the pain of childbirth that was given in the Garden of Eden. And, you know, we get the sweat of the brow and the toll of the land and the thorns and all the other stuff but this pain of childbirth and all that.

So we don't understand that. We don't get that. Those are things that mess with us a little bit. I know when I've watched the birth of our children, I was like, wow, I'm just glad I'm a man, you know? But there's some pain and turmoil and labor and all those things going.

But it always flows through the woman. But guess what? In this illustration, we are the bride, which means the fruit is going to be born through us and through our efforts and through our labor and through our striving.

We're saying, well, I'm just waiting on Jesus to do it. Jesus is married to you. He loves you. He adores you. He is in communion with you. And He wants to bear fruit through you.

[35 : 49] And it's our efforts and our labor and our strenuous activity, which brings it about. Not because we're wanting to please Him, just because we love Him.

Remember what we found in Romans 6. And third and finally, there is a new motivation. There is a new motivation for a life that has been legally separated from its natural union.

And He says it here in the sixth verse. And I'm not going to take time because I know time is slipping away from me. But it says that we serve through the power of the Spirit, the newness of the Spirit, and not the oldness of the letter.

I spent a number of years in my life where I felt like God was calling out to me and He wanted something to do with me. And I remember that I would try to serve Him in the oldness of the letter. Maybe some of you are there now. Maybe you've accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Maybe you really have died to yourself and you find yourself. And this is a thing that we have to balance, okay? This is something we have to understand because there would be people in the church at Rome that would say, okay, yes, yes, I believe in Jesus.

[36 : 54] And since I believe in Jesus, I must do this, I must do that, I must do this. Maybe you still struggle with this. Maybe you've really accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Maybe you're genuinely saved, set free. But maybe you don't really understand this.

I've known committed, devout followers who still struggle with this. They go to the Old Testament and they read it. And they read about the keeping of the Sabbath and all these laws. And then they get convicted and they're like, ah, wait a minute, so I can't do anything on Saturdays and I've got to do this.

Listen, friend, while the law is perfect, it is the oldness of the letter. We serve in the newness of the Spirit. And what I have found in the Old Testament, and I love the Old Testament, I think it is absolutely perfect.

We find in the Old Testament the perfect standard of obedience to God that no man can live up to. And if you are trying to live out Old Testament Christianity, Satan has got you running in circles. And he's got you beating yourself up. And he's got you living in doubt. And you're probably even doubting your own salvation because you're reading things in the Old Testament that you know you can't do.

[38 : 01] But guess what? God knows you can't do it. He knew you can't do it when He called you to Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ. He loves you and He has redeemed you and He has given His Spirit inside of you.

Friend, you no longer legally serve Him by the law because the law no longer is binding over you. But you serve in the newness of the Spirit. What is the motivation for obedience in the believer's life?

It is the Holy Spirit living inside of them. Paul says in the book of Ephesians, you were sealed until the day of redemption with the wedding ring of the Holy Spirit. He gave you the engagement ring of the Spirit inside of you.

And the Holy Spirit, this is what I have found, okay? People can say, well, I'm led by the Spirit. I'm led by the Spirit. Don't get too carried away because one thing I have found is the Holy Spirit never leads you contrary to God's revealed Word.

