

# That We Might Bear Fruit For God

## Lesson 4

Requirement that the Christian accept his "death to law" and his  
"marriage to Christ."  
(Romans 7:1-6)

By F. M. Perry

“(1) 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? (2) 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. (3) 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. (4) Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God. (5) 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. (6) 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.” (Romans 7:1-6 NASV).

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Requirement that the Christian accept his "death to law" and his "marriage to Christ." (Romans 7:1-6)

#### Questions for study:

1. What endemic problems prevent Christians from "bearing fruit for God?" (Romans 6:1; Romans 7:4-6; 1 John 1:8; Philippians 3:9).
2. What is the relationship of "sin" to "law?" Is "law" a problem in a Christian's life? (1 John 3:4; Philippians 3:1-14; Romans 7: 4) .
3. What is the relationship of the Christian's baptism to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ? 'What was reserved for the Christian's personal possession during the actual death, burial, and resurrection of Christ Jesus? (Romans 6:3-5).
4. 'What example of jurisprudence did Paul cite to illustrate God's remedy for the Christian's problem with law? (Romans 7:1-3).
5. Who were the three characters in the example? Who were the three counterparts in real spiritual life to the three characters? (Romans 7:1-6).
6. In what way does the example illustrate the spiritual reality of the Christian's problem with law? In what way is the solution paradoxical to the solution suggested in the example? (Romans 7: 1-6)
7. In reality today, under God's new covenant, are God's laws for mankind dead? (Matthew 5:18; Romans 3:20; Galatians 3:24) .
8. In bringing about the Christian's "death to law" what did Christ do with "law?" (Colossians 2:9-14; Romans 7:6).
9. How and why does "law" cause a problem in the Christian's "bearing

fruit for God?"

10. How do the lessons of Paul's illustration assist in preparing Christians to "bear fruit for God?" (Romans 7:1-6).

## THAT WE MIGHT BEAR FRUIT FOR GOD

Lesson 4. Requirement that we accept our "death to law" and our "marriage to Christ." (Romans 7:1-6)

Questions for study:

1. What endemic problems prevent Christians from "bearing fruit for God?" (Romans 6:1; 1 John 1:8; Philippians 3:9).

The endemic problem of all Christians is that we continue to sin despite the fact that God has forgiven our past sins. "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?" (Romans 6:1). "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8). We cannot "bear fruit for God" until we are sanctified, or made holy. And we cannot be made holy while we "continue in sin."

2. What is the relationship of "sin" to "law?" Is "law" a problem in a Christian's life? (1 John 3:4).

"Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3:4). Everyone sins because everyone transgresses law. Everyone has a strong natural tendency to try to produce "a righteousness of (his) own derived from law." (Philippians 3:9). Even when a person knows a particular law, his own volition is not always strong enough to conquer his inherited tendency to transgress that law. Or, his human nature may prompt him to ignore a law as inconsequential. In addition, there are many "laws" which a person does not know and which, in his "human nature," he transgresses without knowing. Therefore, "law" is a problem in the life of a Christian preventing him from "bearing fruit for God."

Paul's comments in Philippians 3:1-14 indicate Paul's understanding of the problem as he experienced it in his life. Paul said; "Not that I have already attained it (that is; the righteousness which comes from God); or have already become perfect; but I press on in order that I may lay

hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren; I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet." Paul still experienced a futile inner striving for "a righteousness of his own derived from law." But he knew the answer to his problem to be in Christ Jesus.

(It seems to me that mankind's environment; since his ejection from the Garden of Eden, contains a myriad of laws which mankind cannot keep from transgressing. Just "missing the mark" of God's perfection is transgression of law. Law in this environment seems to be like an undischarged capacitor silently holding a charge; waiting to discharge itself through anything that happens to get across its terminals. If a person inadvertently touches its terminals, it zaps them. It can kill.)

3. What is the relationship of the Christian's baptism to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ Jesus? What was reserved for the Christian's personal possession during the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ Jesus? (Romans 6:3-5),

Baptism is a part of our "obedience of faith" to receive from Christ what He made available to us in His death, burial, and resurrection. In His death, burial, and resurrection 2,000 years ago was "reserved" for us a death, burial, and resurrection, that is, "a death to the world and to sin, a burial of our old man of sin, and a resurrection to new spiritual life of our new spiritual man.

4. What example of jurisprudence did Paul cite to illustrate God's remedy for our problem with law and sin? (Romans 7:1-3).

The example used by Paul was that of the law of marriage which bound a wife and husband as long as they lived.

5. Who were the three characters in the example? Who were the three counterparts in real spiritual life to the three characters? (Romans 7:1-6).

The wife in the example corresponded to each of the Roman Christians

to whom Paul was writing the Roman letter (or to any Christian among Christians today). The husband in the example corresponded to "law" in the life of a Christian. "Law" would be the Law of Moses in the life of a Jew or the "law written in the heart" of a Gentile. The other man whom the wife might desire to marry corresponded to Jesus Christ.

6. In what way does the example illustrate the spiritual reality of the Christian's problem with law? In what way is the solution paradoxical to the solution suggested in the example? (Romans 7:1-6).

Our problem with law can only be solved through a death! In the example which occurs in our world of space/time (the fleshly, material world) the husband had to die in order for the wife to still be alive to marry the other man. In the real life spiritual realm in which we live as Christians, the husband (the law) did not die; the wife died to be raised a Christian, a bride fit for marriage to the other man (the Son of God). The solution is paradoxical to those who think only in terms of our three dimensional fleshly, material world. It is paradoxical to think that a wife could "die" and then be married to another man.

7. In reality today, under God's new covenant, are God's laws for mankind dead? (Matthew 5:18; Romans 3:20; Galatians 3:24).

Jesus said, "Until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished." (Matthew 5:18). As we live today, heaven and earth have not yet passed away and all has not yet been accomplished. Paul said that "through the Law comes the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20). Paul also said, "The Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ". (Galatians 3:24). These Scriptures are for the reading of both Jews and Gentiles and refer to the Law of Moses given to the Jews as well as to the "law written in the heart" given to Gentiles. We are not led to the conclusion that God's laws are dead. Sin, which is the breaking of God's law," has the power to kill one spiritually. If one does not repent of his law-breaking and turn to Christ for forgiveness of sins, one will die spiritually. Certainly God's law still has the power to kill. It is not dead.

8. In bringing about our "death to law" what did Christ do with "law?" (Colossians 2:9-14; Romans 7:6).

In the example concerning the law of marriage in Romans 7:1-6, the "law" did not die. Instead, we died! Christ brought about our "death to law."

Paul said, "And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." (Colossians 2:13-14). In this Scripture, when Paul said that "you were dead in your transgressions", we know that the "transgressions" were law-breaking transgressions. Then Paul said that Christ "made you alive" again. In "making you alive," Christ "cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us." The "decrees against us" were for our breaking of laws. The laws were not cancelled out. The "certificate of debt" against us was cancelled out for each of us as we were forgiven by the blood of Christ.

What did Christ do with the law? In a figure of speech, Paul said He "nailed it to the cross." For those of us (Christians) who have had their "certificate of death" cancelled, we "see" God's laws "nailed" there to the Cross. Those of mankind who have not availed themselves of the cancellation of their "certificate of debt," cannot yet "see" God's laws nailed to the Cross.

9. How and why does "law" cause a problem in the Christian's "bearing fruit for God?"

We have inherited from our natural father, Adam, an inordinate desire to "do things our own way." Even though we have "died to sin" and have "presented our members to God", we are still tempted and fall victim in the flesh to the "doing of things by ourselves" and "in our own way," even in our attempts to serve God. All of our actions "by ourselves" and "in our own way" are governed and regulated by "laws

of God". Under "law" we can only please God by perfect obedience to that "law." The satisfaction of "law" by our flesh, however, is always imperfect. We always fail in our effort to do things "our way" for God. Any failure to perform perfectly under law is "sin." Even though our past sins are forgiven through the blood of Christ, we continue to sin. This is the problem "law" causes in our lives.

10. How do the lessons of Paul's illustration assist in preparing us to "bear fruit for God"? (Romans 7:4-6).

The words of Romans 7:4 tell us clearly our "death to law" is necessary and that the joining of ourselves to "Him who was raised from the dead" is also necessary before we can "bear fruit for God."

The figurative phrase, "that we might bear fruit for God," states the ultimate goal of the Christian life on earth, does it not? Since "bearing fruit for God" is our goal, and since the reaching of that goal is the objective of much of the teaching of Paul's Roman letter, the statement of that goal has been adopted as the title of this study of the Roman letter and appears as the heading of each part of the study.

Paul's use of the "marriage statute" as an illustration reminds us that a death of one of the spouses had to take place before a marriage was dissolved and a remarriage of the remaining spouse could take place. This helps us understand how our "death to law" must be realized before we can be free from law to become an effective servant of Christ.

God has bound us all to "law" in our natural lives. We have found, as God intended, that a permanent "marriage to law" is unsatisfactory, indeed, is spiritually fatal! When the gospel is presented to us, it becomes evident that Jesus Christ is the only proper "spouse" for us to have. When we realize that the "marriage statute" prevents the dissolution of our "marriage to law" without a death, and that our spouse, the "law", will not die, we come to a point of complete frustration in the realm of our natural intellect. But the gospel answer bursts through from God's word and we are amazed to find that we have "died with Christ" and with mere steps of "obedience of faith" we can

avail ourselves of a "new marriage" free from the consequences of "law-breaking!"