

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – June 4, 2023

Theme: The Power of God at Work in us Topic: The Law Cannot Save from Sin

Main Texts: Romans 7:1-25

Key verse: Romans 7: 8 – *“But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead”* (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: In Romans 3:19-23, God’s word emphatically declared that everybody in the world is guilty before God. The following chapters of Romans then went on to assert that only in Christ and through Christ is man’s guilt atoned, and this by faith alone. This salvation by faith in Christ alone appear to fly in the face of the law as given by God. And it became a matter of contention and a stumbling block for many Jews of Paul’s days, and for many believers and non-believers, even today. So, in today’s passage, the Holy Spirit leads Apostle Paul to again emphatically assert that the law cannot save from sin. He also provided clarification about the law, and its purpose. Three of those clarifications are covered in this study.

1. **(a) Romans 2:13b states that “...but the doers of the law will be justified.” How would you reconcile this statement with Romans 3:20 which says that by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in God’s sight? (b) Romans 7:1-6 uses marriage to illustrate the binding nature of the law. What does this say to you when you think about relying on the law for salvation? (c) If Galatians 3:10 and James 2:10 are God’s standards for those who rely on the law for salvation, what chance is there that someone can possibly meet this standard? If not, where does that leave the law regarding salvation from sin?**

Without a doubt, *“... the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”* (Romans 7:12 NKJV). But cannot save because by its nature, the law is binding. Thus, it puts anyone who relies on the law under the strongest possible obligation to adhere to it 100%. So, it simply cannot solve the problem of sin. In fact, the law and sin are so closely connected that one must come out from under the law if transgression is ever to be dealt with (Romans 7: 1–6). This is not the fault of the law, which is holy. Neither is God to blame, for the Lord never intended His law to answer the problem of sin (see Galatians 3). In fact, unless our Creator changes our hearts, His law is a tool that sin uses to urge us to greater wickedness. Apostle Paul testifies to this reality, just as we all can attest that, *“... if it had not been for the law, I would not have known what sin is really like.* (Romans 7:7b CEV). Or that the reality that nothing good lives in us, and even when we want to do what is good, we find that we are completely incapable of doing anything good. (Romans 3:10-12; 7:18-20).

2. **(a) Apostle Paul cries out in frustration over the depravity of his heart and his inability, of himself, to obey the law. Is this a unique experience of his or common to all? (b) If Apostle Paul’s confessed inability to obey the law is common to us all, what does that say about any argument concerning the law as a means of salvation? (c) In the light of your answer to 2a & 2b, let participants share what they will do the next time the idea of the law as a means of salvation crops up in their minds.**

The law serves a lot of useful purposes, but securing salvation is not one of them. Rather, the law is like a mirror, which when it confronts a person, reveals the evil in the individual, and therefore makes the individual miserable. As theologian Charles Hodge said that "The law, although it cannot secure either the justification or sanctification of men, performs an essential part in the economy of salvation. It enlightens conscience, and secures its verdict against a multitude of evils, which we should not otherwise have recognized as sins. It arouses sin, increasing its power, and making it, both in itself and in our consciousness, exceedingly sinful. It therefore produces that state of mind which is a necessary preparation for the reception of the gospel. Before the gospel can be embraced as a means of deliverance from sin, one must feel we are involved in corruption and misery". The law cannot save from sin – either for the unsaved or the believer. That was the devastating frustration Paul experienced (Romans 7:24).

3. **(a) Romans 7:7 -8 (NLT) states that ‘it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, “You must not covet.” ... If there were no law, sin would not have that power.’ Let some participants share what they understand from these verses and how they have experienced its truth. (b) If the Law cannot save from sin, what then is its purpose? (See Romans 7:24-25)**

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us Jesus Christ who is Your indescribable gift to deal with our sin problem. Help us to daily cling to Jesus Christ for our salvation, and to help others to run to Christ as the only means by which anyone can be saved from sin. Amen.