

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY
10 Romans 7: 1 - 6 “Sin and the Law” -- with commentary**

The purpose of the Letter to the Romans is to develop a “Model for Living the Awakened/Transformed Life.” Today’s study is the 10th of 27 lessons.

According to our Study Chart we are studying the 2nd section of “Know The Relationship of Sin and The Law.” This is the first of two sessions in this lesson series.

Contextual Statement

According to the Roman’s Chart, this is a third major section of our Romans’ chart. In this part of our lesson series Paul provides us with a discussion of the relationship of Sin and The Law as an experience of death.

Contextual Statement – Concerning the experience of death.

In this study, Paul uses the metaphor of marriage as a method to ground the experience of a widowed woman. According to The Law, a woman whose husband dies is released from her marriage obligations. After a manner of speaking, this woman has “died to The Law.” Consequently, the main point Paul makes is not about marriage but about death.

This point picks up from his conversation in chapter 6: 1 – 23. It is important to note in chapter 6 the way in which Paul uses the term “death” is neither natural (physical) nor metaphorical. The death is the literal death of our “old self.”

Here, Paul says that “through the body of Christ” (vs. 4) we have died a death like Christ. Or, in other words, our “old self” is crucified, dead and buried. In this way we have died “to what once bound us” (vs. 6).

Now, in light of this conversation, please study on.

Read the assignment clear through in one reading.

NOTE: In order to set a better context for this study, the IHOP meeting began their study on verse 6c and 6d. These verses concern serving “in the old way of the written code” and serving “in the way of the Spirit.” I find Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s formulation of “The Responsible Person” to be helpful clarification.

The Responsible Person



Irresponsible “Doing God’s will” Duty Bound

The “Responsible Person” stands in the tension between appearing in the eyes of others as being “Irresponsible” or “Duty Bound.” Both the Irresponsible Person and the Duty Bound Person are, in one way or another, slaves to The Law. This is to serve “in the old way of the written code.”

The Responsible Person takes into consideration all of the various elements and values and then asks “What it is God wants done?” Then, the Responsible Person acts on this belief, **even though in the eyes of others the actions may appear either Irresponsible or Duty Bound. In this way, the Responsible Person makes a FREE DECISION.** This is to serve “in the way of the Spirit.” This is “Doing God’s Will”

I. Vss. 1 – 3, Clarify in a short sentence the metaphor about the obligations of a married woman.

WS: This metaphor is used to demonstrate a cleansing function of death that results in a restoration of equilibrium. One IHOPer observed that this type of experience is a "death that ends in freedom."

II. Vs. 4, This is a loaded sentence. Take it apart in this way.

A. Vs. 4a, What is the experience of having ". . .died to the law?" What difference does it make?

WS: Paul indicates that we experience a literal death of the "old self." The importance of this information is that we no longer are victims to the old obligations that victimize us.

B. Vs. 4b, What is the experience of having died "through the body of Christ?"

WS: 1) WWJD. 2) Baptism is one dimension. On the other side of this death like Jesus' death is a resurrection like Jesus' resurrection. This resurrection is the new self that lives in At-One-Ment. 3) Also implied in this death is the new community to which we belong.

C. Vs. 4c, After this death, who is the other to whom we belong?

WS: After this death we are awakened to the reality that we belong to God who is Perfect At-One-Ment. Of course, the reality is that we belong to God whether we are awakened to it or not. The denial of this association is one definition of the sin we experience as separation, or the antithesis of At-One-Ment.

D. Vs. 4d, Name the "fruit" we are to bear to God because of this death.

WS: Awakening is the fruit that results in acts that bring about At-One-Ment.

III. Vs. 5, Take this apart too.

A. Vs. 5a, What is the experience of being "controlled by the sinful nature?"

WS: The "sinful nature" is a function of our old self (living on vacation; the desert experience of life). The characteristic activity is acts that result in separation from neighbor, self and God.

B. Vs. 5b, Why does The Law arouse "sinful passions?" (First, describe what a sinful passion is.)

WS: Sinful passions are anything that keep us spiritually asleep, the evidence of which is we remain spiritually awakened. Sinful passions keep us a slave to the Law of Sin (vs. 7: 25). Sinful passions are anything that keeps us from our intended purpose as living the awakened life in praise of God.

Doing The Law (Moses promoted 613 laws), creates separation. The individual who is "Duty Bound" to The Law does things out of obedience to The Law that creates separation. We do it because The Law demands it.

C. Vs. 5c, What is the experience of bearing the "fruit for death?"

WS: The Fruit of Death is continued separation and living the unawakened life. Bearing the Fruit of Death is to continue to live on vacation in the spiritual desert instead of living at home in the spiritual oasis.

One person reported a conversation with a friend who responded that they would like to live the life of At-One-Ment with his colleagues, but "I just can't stand the bastards."

III. Vs. 6, Take this apart too.

A. Vs. 6a, Use what we have discussed about the kind of literal death we are speaking about to describe our dieing to "what once bound us."

WS: The crucifixion of the old self is experienced as an awakening event. This is accomplished as we accept the new self revealed to us as a resurrection. In the last analysis, doing God's will is more healthful for us than obeying The Law.

B. Vs. 6b, How does this type of literal death help to define our experience of being "released from the law?"

WS: The purpose of The Law is to awaken us to our choices. What makes this the "old self" is that the guilt associated with The Law leads us to continue a life of separation. This is why Paul Tillich could write that Sin is separation plus guilt. The "new self" chooses to be obedient to God as Perfect At-One-Ment.

C. Vs. 6c, If I was walking down the street and saw someone serving "in the way of the Spirit," what would I be seeing? (Keep it Gut Trip, please.)

WS: I would be seeing someone who is struggling to decide God's will in the circumstances in which she or he is living at the moment. Unfortunately, under the circumstances, the solution they come up with may appear to some as being irresponsible and to other people as being duty bound.

D. Vs. 6d, If I was walking down the street and saw someone serving "in the old way of the written code," what would I be seeing? (Again, keep it Gut Trip.)

WS: I would be seeing someone struggling to fulfill the letter of The Law. For some reason, this situation reminds me of an old axiom, "These people are so heavenly bound that they are no earthly good. Phariseeism may describe such people.

Alright folks, talk to me.