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## The Christian and the Law

Why did Christ set us free (*Galatians 5:1*)?

- For FREEDOM – from sin, death, and the Law
  - Freedom from: self-centeredness, bitterness, hatred, fear, anxiety, bondage to evil habits...
  - When we walk in freedom, we become a potent witness to those around us who are still walking in slavery!
- However, there are two main ways Christians miss out on the freedom Christ brought to us:
  1. By presenting ourselves to sin (*Romans 6*)
    - I'll continue to do what I want apart from God (sin) because He's God and He'll forgive me...
    - If we live on this basis, we will be slaves to sin; and sin will spread more and more death into all areas of our lives!

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2. The second way we can miss God's freedom is exactly the opposite: we can handle the problem of sin by trying our best to do what God wants. (*Romans 7*)
  - By discipline and dedication, the exercise of a determined will and will power, accountability groups, and annual meetings we try our best to live up to His standards.
  - This is called, "Legalism"
  - The end result, however, is juxtaposed from what we had hoped, as we often become defensive, self-righteous, critical of others, and proud of our own record.
    - Four proofs that we are still under the Law:
      - » We are proud of our achievements.
      - » We are critical of others.
      - » We are reluctant to admit our own failures.
      - » We suffer from depression, discouragement, and defeat.

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Since the Christian is dead to the Law (*Rom. 7:4*), what purpose, if any, does the Law serve?

Three good things the Law does: *Romans 7:7-13*

1. The Law reveals sin as sin.
  - v.7 "I would not have come to know sin except through the law"
    - *Problem 1*: If left to ourselves, we would never think of ourselves as sinners.
    - *Problem 2*: Even if we admit that we have done "bad" things, we are never able to recognize those things as "sin" unless we see that these also violate God's perfect Law.
  - Paul gives us a personal example from his own life – coveting (v.7)

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Three good things the Law does: *Romans 7:7-13*

2. The Law provokes sin.
  - v.8 "produced in me coveting of every kind"
    - Sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, creates a surge of rebellion against God in our hearts.
      - Adam and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (*Gen. 3*)
      - "Adam, you must not..." This then became the one thing Adam wanted to do!
    - Sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, creates a desire to sin in new ways.
      - In telling us not to do something, the law actually encourages us to think about it.
      - "Prisoner Rehabilitation" has very little effect on changing men and woman.
      - The "college freedom" syndrome

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Three good things the Law does: *Romans 7:7-13*

3. The Law brings us to the end of ourselves.
  - vv.9-13 "for sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me"
    - When the law finally began to get through to Paul to do its proper work, he saw:
      1. That he was guilty of having broken it and
      2. That his nature was such that, instead of wanting to keep it, he actually wanted to break it.
    - Instead of driving sin out, the law awakened sin and he saw how hopeless his sinful condition really was!
  - Have you come to the end of yourself or are you still trying your best to please God? (*Isaiah 64:6*)

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*Closing thoughts:*

*Galatians 3:21-25* – If we are "in Christ", then we are no longer to be living under the Law.

*Romans 14:1-2* – Those living by Law (Legalists) are actually very weak in the faith!

1. We must know that obedience to the Law simply cannot deliver us from the penalty (Justification) or growth (Sanctification) of sin. Faith in Christ alone, not the Law. *Romans 3:28 & Galatians 3:3*
2. But it can always do one thing well—even for Christians: It can expose our true wretchedness and drive us back to Christ—never thinking of ourselves apart from Him!

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