***We are Released from the Flesh  
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Today, I'd like you to turn to Romans 7 once more, and we want to conclude the section that we have been pursuing. Paul is here summing up the issue of God's solution in verses 5-6 – God's solution for the inherent moral contamination of human nature. This sin nature, or flesh quality, inherited from Adam, disqualifies a person for life in heaven with a holy God. And that's the problem.

**The Flesh**

You come into this life at physical birth with a nature which is already contaminated in such a way that you are disqualified from entrance into life in heaven with God. That obviously is a problem that has to be immediately solved before physical death overtakes you. Paul refers to this contamination by the word "flesh." This flesh quality makes it impossible, not only for us to enter heaven, but it makes it impossible for us to do anything to solve the problem. There's nothing we can do to reverse the condition in which we're born. We cannot do anything, therefore, Paul has made clear, to earn eternal life with God.

God, as the moral judge of His creation, has therefore resolved this dilemma. On the one hand, we cannot go to heaven because we're born with a contaminated moral nature. On the other hand, that contaminated moral nature precludes us from doing anything about solving the problem. So, God has to solve the dilemma.

That's what we have had explained to us so magnificently in this book. God Himself, through payment for the depth of the sin nature on the cross through Jesus Christ, has made it possible for human beings, apart from their human effort, to come into a life forever in heaven.

So, a Christian is positionally free from the authority and the control of the flesh nature. And he has been freed entirely by the grace of God, apart from his own efforts. There is, therefore, no amount of rule-keeping or of right conduct that could overcome the destructive influence of the flesh, or the animal sensuality quality, that resides in every human being.

**Mental Attitude Sins**

Again, we would warn you of the fact that we are dealing with something that is not only overt, but it is also internal in terms of the mind. This is what we refer to as mental attitude sins. And we have to remember that with God, the sins of the mind are on an equal plane of horror and hideousness with the evil that we overtly express. The Lord Jesus Christ made this very clear. Scripture makes this very clear.

Adultery overtly is bad business. But until you have demonstrated to yourself that you have never been guilty of this mentally, which puts you in exactly the same category as a person who has overtly done it (maybe not with the same dire consequences), then you better shut your mouth about the subject. If you have never been guilty of covetousness (greed), and you find somebody who is worshiping an idol, you better keep your mouth shut about it, because you've done the same thing. If you have never committed overt murder, but you have been guilty of hatred, envy, or jealousy, and all that accompanies hatred, that whole cluster of evils, then you better not get up in arms over somebody who has committed murder, and be indignant, because you don't have anything to talk about.

The apostle Paul rammed that home, and rammed it right down the throats of the religious man earlier in the book of Romans. And it behooves us to remember that fact, and to remember it very, very effectively. The quality of the flesh is to produce evil, and it makes no difference with God whether it's mental or overt. It's just as hideous, and it's just as heinous with Him.

Verse 5, which we looked at in the previous session, sums up life which all of us once knew under the authority of the flesh – this self-centered, animal, sensual, gratification type of life. We have found in Scripture that the flesh is hostile to God, and to His standard of absolute righteousness. Therefore, all divine laws of moral conduct are viewed by the flesh as an infringement of personal freedom, and there is something within each of us that simply rejects when God says, "Thou shalt not do something." Our flesh says, "You're denying me what is my freedom and my right."

The standard of God's righteousness arouses, in fact, the sinful passions, Paul told us in verse 5, of the flesh to produce works of evil through the human body, which includes the mentality of the soul, which resides in the brains of that body. These evils are mental. They're overt in their expression, equally hideous with God. Both of them are so because they violate God's integrity. Whether you think an evil, or whether you act an evil, you have violated the integrity of God on both accounts. His Holiness has been compromised.

**Death**

The final result of the evil fruit produced by the flesh is death. That means ashes and decay: dust-to-dust; ashes to ashes. So, no matter how educated; how intelligent; how sophisticated; how cultured; or, how experienced or influential a person may be, if he is dominated by the flesh, he ultimately produces death. This is true in time; and, this is true in eternity. What's wrong with the world today is because we have sophisticated, influential, powerful people who are in positions of decision-making and of opinion-influencing who are people who are dominated by the flesh, and they are producing a world filled with death. If we follow the full course of the pattern of events that we're repeating in our day that we have, not three decades ago, gone through, that led us into World War II, we're going to see death all over us again. The death of statesmen as the result of their flesh functioning will be poured out from the skies on the populations of one country or another.

So, it's a fascinating time in which we live. It is a time in which things are moving very rapidly, and things are coming to a head very rapidly. It behooves us as Christians to get squared away, because examination time may not be all that far away for you and me at the "bema" seat – at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

We turn now to verse 6, where Paul says, "But now we are delivered from the law." Those opening two words, "but now," are words that we have met before. They're sort of favorites with the apostle Paul. They are words which indicate a time change. The word "but" looks like this in Greek. It's "de." it's a conjunction indicating a contrast with something before. The word "now" looks very much like the English word in Greek "nuni," and this is an adverb of time – the time which emphasizes the present, or "the now."

**Death and Life**

So, we've already come across this phrase in Romans 3:21, and we've had it in Romans 6:22. In both of those places, it was a clear line of demarcation that Paul was indicating between something that happened in the past and something of the immediate present. The contrast here, in verse 6, "but now," goes back in contrast to the opening words of verse 5, "for when." So, you put one against the other: "for when," the past; "but now," the immediate present. And the apostle Paul uses these two words in order to emphasize, in a very definitive and strong way, that there is a clear line of difference between the past and the immediate present – a contrast between "for when," in verse 5, which represents our past as believers; and, "but now," in verse 6, our present situation. This is the line between life in our first marriage under the authority of the flesh, and our second marriage under the authority of the Holy Spirit. The contrast here is being under law, resulting in death. That's verse 5: "for when." And now the contrast is being under grace: "but now," resulting in life.

These words indicate that a Christian has undergone what can only be described as a profound change of authority in his life: from the authority of law and the flesh (and they go together), to the authority of grace and God (and they go together): grace; and, God the Holy Spirit. This is true of every believer forever. This is a profound change of authority. That is what Paul has been driving at here for us to understand – that God has removed the authority of the flesh over you. He has not removed its presence and its potential damage to your life. That's there. But it's controlling absolute authority (its sovereignty) has been removed, and has been broken forever.

**We have been Delivered**

So, here's the dividing line. Here's the continental divide between life in the flesh and life in the Holy Spirit. "But now we are delivered." The word "delivered" looks like this in the Greek: "katargeo." "Katargeo" here means "to be released:" "But now, in our present circumstance, in our second marriage to the resurrected Christ, we are released." This is in the aorist tense. So, it looks to the point in time in the past – the point of our salvation, where once-and-for-all release was made. Its passage, which indicates that we have been released by a judicial act of God. We've been released by something that God has done for us, not something that we did for ourselves. It's in the indicative mood, which indicates that Paul is making a statement of fact: "We have been delivered." This is the same word that we had in Romans 7:2, where it was translated as "loosed," where the wife is loosed from the law of the dead husband – from the law of the husband, it says, "You're attached to your husband until he dies."

**We have been Separated**

So, we would translate this as: "We have been released:" "But now, in the immediate present circumstance in which we find ourselves, we are in a status of having been released." The idea is to be freed from some authority. And that's why he uses the word "from," and this is the Greek word "apo." This is a preposition in the Greek language, and it is a preposition of separation. It indicates a clean break. When the Greek uses this word "apo," this is a distinctive preposition to convey the idea of a clean break – a very distinctive separation.

**Released from the Law**

So, we have been separated from something. Well, what in the world could that be? That's so emphatically presented, and we see that it is: "Delivered from (released or separated from) the law." You probably have begun to memorize this word for "law:" "nomos." We've had it several times now. This word "law" is referring to any system of rules by which one lives – a code of regulations. Here, in this context, we're talking about a system of rules which reflect the standard of God's absolute righteousness.

**God's Holiness**

In the Greek Bible, it says, "*the* law," making it a specific code of laws that it has in mind, such as the Mosaic Law, with which we're all well acquainted. The Mosaic Law was such a specific code that let people know exactly what God was like relative to moral righteousness. If you want to know what is absolute righteousness mean, then just study the Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law will convey to you all of the details of absolute righteousness. The idea behind this word "law" is a system of human doing as an effort to satisfy the holiness of God. The holiness of God is His perfect justice that says, "Sin must be punished; I cannot excuse it; and, the standard of absolute righteousness." You cannot go to heaven until you are as perfect as Jesus Christ – absolutely righteous. Those two factors constitute God's holiness.

The status of every Christian is total freedom from all systems that try to achieve that kind of holiness – complete freedom from all systems of keeping rules, and all systems by which we would escape from the lake of fire. Most people don't know that. Most people do not appreciate this little preposition, "apo," indicating its clean break with the law, and its separation from it as a system of achieving merit with God. There are still people who, because they do not understand what Paul means by this word "flesh," and do not understand that this dominates and controls our nature, and that we are totally contaminated by this – they still have the arrogance and the gall to think that they can do something to appease God's wrath against them, and to secure eternal life. They still think that they can do something to secure a position of blessing and favor with God. That's not true.

**God Does it – not us**

You cannot do it before you're saved. And I'll tell you something worse. Those of you who sit here as believers can't do it now that you're saved. If you think that you can produce something that God is going to welcome out of what you do, and that He's just going to fall all over Himself with the delight of what you've done, you're wrong. We're going to discover that the thing that delights the heart of God is what He Himself produces, through His integrity, by means of the Spirit of God that involves you. And if you don't know how to function on that basis, you never will produce what pleases God, and thus that for which he will bless and reward you.

So, this is a very important point to understand. God says, "You are separated, once and for all, understand, from all systems of trying to appease the wrath of God. You're release from every necessity of trying to live under such an impossible, miserable system. And that's what it is. It's a miserable system. You and I as Christians are totally free from all systems by which we try, through our efforts, to satisfy the integrity of God.

That's what people are doing. They know that God is holy. They know that God has exercised His judgment toward sin. They think that they can satisfy, and they can meet that holiness, in some way on their own. What are we released from?

**What are We Released From?**

1. **The Lake of Fire**

Well, we're released from the law of God's holiness in its removal of us from condemnation in the lake of fire? When God says, "You're released from the law," it means that you're released from judgment of the lake of fire.

1. **The Law can't Justify you**

When He says, "You're released from the law," you're released from the fact that the law can't justify you. That's one thing that Paul has made very clear. You cannot achieve justification in God's eyes by human works.

1. **Enslavement to Evil**

When it says, "We're released from the law, it means that we are released from enslavement to a life of evil. It isn't pleasant to be guilty of mental and overt evil. That's a very depressing thing. It'll frustrate you as a believer. It will destroy you if you cannot resolve that problem – to live in a life of an enslavement to evil, because the only thing that that ends in is death and ashes – in time and an eternity. So, here you are faced with the fact that we are released from the law, because as long as you're enslaved to the law, you can expect nothing but a life of evil.

1. **The Ability of the Law to Arouse the Flesh**

And release from the law, in the fourth place, means to be released from the ability of the law to arouse the flesh – to oppose God's will and His rules. That's one of the great things, as we learned in the previous session. Paul says, "One of the terrible things about living under the flesh is that when you try to live by God's moral standards, God's moral standards cause the flesh to react with indignation. It's being denied its freedom. So, it strikes out against God. You tell the flesh, "Don't do this." And the flesh says, "Who do you think you are, God, to tell me what to do?" And the flesh turns around and says, "That's the very thing I will do." But now, on the other side of salvation, we are released from the legal system of keeping rules.

**We Died with Christ on the Cross**

"That being dead." And he describes what our condition was in that system. "Being dead" looks like this in Greek: "apothnesko." "Apothnesko" is the word for termination of life. It indicates separation. Here it refers to the termination of the authority of moral law over a believer through the death of that believer in Jesus Christ.

We had this principle in Romans 7:4: "Wherefore, my brethren, you also are become dead to the law (to a legal system) by the body of Christ." And what he is referring to here is that the believer, because he was joined to Christ on the cross as a husband when Christ died; the husband is gone; the wife died with Him; and, the woman (we believers) are left to be married to Christ in His resurrected state.

So, here it refers to the termination of the authority of law over believer, through the death that that believer experienced in Jesus Christ. This is aorist tense. It's at the point of salvation when we're joined to Jesus Christ in His death. It's active. This is actually experienced by you and me, by divine imputation. God imputes the death of Christ to us. It's a participle – a spiritual principle, expressing here a circumstance.

We would translate this as: "Having died to that. But now (this side of salvation), we are released from legal systems of morality – having died to that in which." The word "in" is the Greek preposition "en," indicating location. The word "which" is "hos." It's a relative pronoun. And it refers back to "law." When it says, "That, in which," meaning the law system (that's what it refers back to – God's rule of holiness which imposes the penalty of death for a violation of that law) – in which we were held.

The word is "katecho." This word comes from two words. The first word is "kata." "Kata" is a Greek preposition, and it means "down." The second word is a verb "echo." "Echo" means "to hold." You put those two together, and the literal meaning is "to hold down." And that's exactly what it means – what you and I think of when we talk about "holding down." It conveys a quality of firmness. It means "to hold fast," or "to hold firmly." And we were once held firmly in this thing. We were dead in that in which we were held firmly, referring back to the law. This is in the imperfect tense. So, it was our repeated condition in the past. No matter how, in our unsaved days, we moved, we found that there was a grip on us that we could not control, and that we couldn't handle – the grip of the wrath of God and the condemnation of God's law. It is passive. This was done to us as human beings by a law system. It is indicative – a statement of fact.

**We Died to the Law**

So, we translate: "Having died to that by which we were bound." What have we died to? We died to the authority and the condemnation of the divine law of absolute righteousness. That's what you have died to. You will never go to heaven until you have died to the condemnation of the law of absolute righteousness. The violation of God's law of absolute righteousness requires a penalty. The penalty is death. Until you die, and you pay the penalty of violating the law of absolute righteousness, there is no hope for you. There's only one way you can die to pay that penalty, and that is to experience it with Jesus Christ, our first husband, while He Himself was under the condemnation of God's law. We, as his wife, died vicariously then with Him.

**The Law is not Dead**

The law system, demanding absolute righteousness, did not die. You notice that. Paul is very careful not to say that the law died. It says that, "We died to the law." And the way we died to the law is because we were joined to Christ. The law did not die.

Some people make a mistake. People who are premillennial dispensationalists and grace-oriented people go too far in saying that: "The law is gone. The law is out. The law is canceled." It's only canceled as a system as a way of life. But don't ever forget that what the Lord told us was what an absolutely righteous God is like, and what He requires of us. And everything that that law tells us about that God's nature and His demands are still true. That still is imposed upon us.

So, the law is not dead. The Bible is very careful not to say that. It says, "That we are dead to it." The law system demanding absolute righteousness did not die. It's still in force, and it still expresses the integrity of God.

**Grace and the Law are Mutually Exclusive**

This release, however, from the law authority, opens the door for you and me to the glorious position under grace. And there again we see that if you are under the system of law, you cannot be under the system of grace. If you are under the system of grace, you cannot be under the system of law. The two are mutually exclusive.

So, don't you dare say for one moment, "I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior, and I am having water baptism just in case I need that too." That is a human work, and you will go straight into hell when you do that. That is a work of man. Don't you dare say, like the Mormons say, "Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, and live up to the moral code of the Bible. If you fail the moral code of the Bible, you will not be saved." The Bible says, "If you try to gain salvation by keeping a code of laws, you will not have salvation. You might say, "But I'm doing this in all sincerity." That's right, folks. Hell is filled today with sincere people who were very, very sincerely wrong, as the saying goes.

One attempt on your part to interject your foul flesh as a point of assisting God to save you, and you're done for. And you can't do anything that does not bring the contaminated foul sin nature that we have within us upon what you try to do. Everything you do is tainted with this disease of sin.

So, don't insult God, and don't deceive yourself, and don't hurt yourself, by failing to understand that grace and human effort are mutually exclusive. We have been released from the authority of the law. And the great truth that that tells us is that we have now been opened to the glorious store of grace. The tyrannizing power of the flesh, through the moral law of God, is forever terminated for the believer. But now, this side of salvation, we are released from the system of human doing, having died in that in which we were held; that is, the law which once held us.

Now, in the last part of verse 6, he comes to the great contrast. This is what really is true of us: "That we should serve." The word that looks like this in Greek. Let's look at that first: "hoste." This is what we call, in the Greek language, a little particle. And it's a word that expresses one thing: result. So, here immediately, the Bible tells us the result. Here is a result, and this quality of result is grammatically emphasized (for those of you who like the grammar), because it has an accusative personal pronoun, and it has an infinitive with the verb. And when you get these combinations together, that's what the Bible is yelling out to us: "I'm telling you a result of what God has done."

**We Should Serve**

"So that", is the way we would translate it. We, on this side, have been released from all systems of human doing, where in when we were under such a system, we were in a capacity (we were in a position) of death, and we were held firmly in that position of death. All that we have been released from. Why? Why did God do this? "So, that we (that is, we believers) should serve." The word for serve is "douloo." You remember the noun "doulos" – this word for slave. We've had it several times. You can see the relationship to the verb – to serve as a slave. It is present tense – continual slave service. This is saying that you should continually, moment-by-moment be in a position of a slave serving another master. It is active – you, as a Christian, doing this service. And we have this verb in the infinitive because it's emphasizing result. It expresses the result of our death to the system of law rules.

We would translate this as: "With the result that we serve as slaves." If you have a King James translation, it gives you a little bit of the deceptive idea that we *should* serve. No, it's not that we should. It's not that this is something you ought to be. This is something that you do – "that we serve as slaves." We are doing it. And the object of our service is understood to be God.

Now, if you don't serve as slaves in the particular capacity in which he's going to describe here, you don't serve God at all. So, there is a lot of so-called Christian service going around which is no Christian service at all. There are a lot of things that are being done by believers that they think is something they're doing for the Lord in order to store treasures in heaven, and they are no such thing. We serve in a certain capacity in a certain way. The object of this service is God.

**Newness of Spirit**

"We serve as slaves in." And again, it's that great preposition "en," indicating location: "In (what he call) newness." This word looks like this: "kainotes." This is a noun. It indicates a different kind of enslavement from the one that we experienced to the old flesh. It is new in contrast to the previous dead condition, particularly our dead human spirit, which we received at birth. Here is a new condition of service – a new status. Newness of what? Newness of spirit. This is the word "pneuma." This is the noun for "spirit." Here it is with a small "s:" spirit, because it refers to our human spirit. It refers to the human spirit – a newness of human spirit.

**You were Born Spiritually Dead**

When you come into this world by physical birth, you come in physically alive, but spiritually dead. You come into this world with a dead human spirit. And while you have a dead human spirit, you are under the enslavement to the sin nature. The evil propensity with which you were born dominates your life. You are enslaved to systems of rule-keeping which can achieve absolutely nothing for you.

So, here you are – born in this world. Maybe you're very intelligent; maybe you're very educated; maybe you were born with a silver spoon in your mouth; maybe you were born with a gold spoon; and, a few of you probably with a platinum spoon. It doesn't matter what your social or economic or family or natural ability condition is. You were born spiritually dead. You were born in a condition where you did not have a spiritual life.

**You Believed the Gospel**

However, at that point in time, when God the Holy Spirit opened your understanding to your dire condition, and to the lake of fire yawning before you, and to the opportunity to escape that hell through what Christ has already done for you, you exercised your volition, and you believed the gospel, and you received Jesus Christ. In that moment, something very wonderful took place within you. You no longer continue to be a body and a soul. You blossomed out into the full image of God, in that you became a living human spirit. Up to then, you were going around this world with a living body, and a living soul, but a corpse of a human spirit. And the stench that you often discovered in your moral life was the stench of the human spirit lying within you as a dead corpse.

**Regeneration**

Now God has brought that spirit to life. That's what we call regeneration. And it is accomplished by God the Holy Spirit. This word "pneuma" is used in the Bible also for God the Holy Spirit. And while I think it is best to view this passage as referring to newness of spirit, and as referring to a new living human spirit within us, it is, of course, also connected with God the Holy Spirit, who is the one who makes that spirit alive, and who brings that spirit into a new condition from the previous condition of death. This regeneration is accomplished by the Holy Spirit, who then teaches Bible doctrine to the believer's the human spirit. Whatever Bible doctrine you learned today, it's because God the Holy Spirit is teaching your human spirit, and He's storing it in there. It's as Paul, we will learn a little later, says, "God's Holy Spirit, witnesses to our human spirit that we are the children of God.

**Compatible with Divine Integrity**

So, here is this God who has regenerated you. He has accomplished this by the Holy Spirit, and He teaches doctrine to your human spirit. So, you now live and serve under the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit who is directing your human spirit? This is the lifestyle that is the result of the grace of God. It's a gift of grace. And it is totally compatible with divine integrity. The old life was totally incompatible with divine integrity. This life is totally compatible with divine integrity.

Here you are, living day-by-day in a way that is compatible with God's holiness. A Christian under grace, spiritually alive is not, therefore, one who is going to live in an orgy of evil. That's where we begin. The attack was: "Well, if you're not under law, but under grace, then that means you can live any kind of a life you want to." But what being under grace means is to be under the direction of God the Holy Spirit, and to have a living human spirit that He's constantly teaching, and that He's constantly directing, and that He's constantly guiding.

This brings up something else. Sometimes you don't have the guidance in your life that you need. Sometimes you don't have the orientation for the things you should do and not do, because your human spirit is not filled with God's viewpoint. You should not make the mistake of thinking that God is going to guide you if you are ignorant of doctrine. He will not guide you very much. That's why a person who comes into the Christian life, when he's first born again is a baby Christian, he has practically zero guidance from God the Holy Spirit. He has very minimal guidance because he has no capacity for direction. But as you store God's viewpoint in your spirit, you have the capacity to be guided by Him. Then He guides you.

That's why you will do certain things; you have done certain things; you'll go to certain entertainments; you'll go to certain social functions; you'll associate with certain people; and, you'll enter into certain business deals that now you look back upon, and you say, "Why did I ever do that?" And you're actually horrified that you had part in that: "Why did I ever go to that worldly function? This is a function that characterizes the world. It's a function that honor Satan. There's nothing glorifying to the Lord Jesus Christ. Here I am. What am I doing here, sitting watching this movie that is completely degrading to me as a believer?"

Now you look back and wonder how it is that you could have done a thing like that. How is it? Because you were ignorant of doctrine in your human spirit. But as your spirit becomes filled with doctrine, your soul becomes ennobled. Now your mind doesn't make these choices anymore. Your mind does not accept the things that you did in the past. You rebel against them because now you've got God's taste.

So, some of the problems, when you think you don't have God's guidance, is right back in your own life. Don't be looking up there and saying, "Oh, Lord, you didn't guide me." It's because you didn't prepare yourself with the intake of doctrine. That's why it may be a small thing for you to say, "Well, here it is, Sunday morning or Sunday night. It's time to learn the Word of God. It's time to go to church. I'll make it. I won't make it." That's a big thing. Only in eternity are you going to look back, and you see the score added up, and you're going to say, "Boy, I missed too many. I would have been so much better off. There would have been so much more for me up here.

So, the Christian, spiritually alive under grace, is not enslaved to an orgy of evil, but to the will of God.

The last part of Romans 7:6 gives the contrast – the contrast to the newness of the human spirit guided by the Holy Spirit: "And not." The word "and" is "kai." It's a conjunction, and it is adding a contrast (a conjunction of contrast). The word "not" is our old friend "ou," which is the strongest Greek word for a negative: "And not." And the object here is "not service to the flesh," which is understood: "And not to the flesh (not in service to the flesh) in the oldness." The word "oldness" is "palaiotes." This is a noun which comes from the adverb "palaios." "Palaios" means "old" in terms of being worn out and obsolete.

I think this is interesting. He's describing the law. That's what he's talking about. The oldness is going to refer to the law here, which is obsolete – not old in the sense of time. There is another Greek word: "archaios." "Archaios" is a word for "old" in terms of time (in terms of age). But "palaios" means "old" in terms of its being worn out and obsolete.

So, here we are describing the law, God's standard of righteousness in terms of rules, as being obsolete and being worn out. How does that go for all you legalists and the law-keeper lovers? This word refers to the obsolescence of a system of law-keeping to escape the condemnation of God's righteousness.

This is the oldness of what he calls "the letter." The word "letter" is "gramma." This Greek word basically denotes that which is traced or drawn on a paper, and from that we get the idea of the letters of the alphabet. It is used here of the moral code of God in written form. The most outstanding of that, of course, was the Mosaic Law. But there are other codes that are found in Scripture. The New Testament is filled with written codes that constitute moral standards compatible with God's integrity. This refers to the old external authority of law governing man, in contrast to the new internal authority of the Holy Spirit governing through the human spirit.

So, the contrast here is that we should serve as slaves in a new human spirit, made alive by God the Holy Spirit, and not in the oldness of trying to keep a system of legal regulations. We, on this side of salvation, have been released from systems of regulations. When we were in those systems, we were held in the position of death, and we were held firmly. God has released us from that position so that we could serve now with living human spirits, and not in trying to serve God through the system of rules and regulations which never work. The effect of service as a slave of the Holy Spirit is life, while service as a slave of law results in death.

2 Corinthians 3:6 puts it this way: "Who also has made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter (keeping rules), but of the Spirit (guidance by the Holy Spirit through the human spirit). For the letter kills, but the Spirit (the Holy Spirit) gives life." You and I as believers are in a state of grace, and we are accepted by a holy God, not for what we do, and not for keeping rules, but for what has been done for us through God the Holy Spirit.

Christianity is not something for you and me to add on to an old structure that we already are in the flesh. It is something that is characterized by newness from one end to the other.

Let's look at a few verses that emphasize that point. People still think that Christianity is something you add on to what you already are. John 3:3, speaking to Nicodemus: "Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Verily, verily, I say unto, except a man being born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.'" It is a totally and completely new birth. It's a different, different system – a different situation altogether.

Matthew 9:14: "Then came to him, the disciples of John, saying, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast often (human doing), but your disciples do not fast?' Jesus said unto them, 'Can the sons of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then they shall fast. No man puts a piece of new cloth on an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up, takes from the garment, and the tear is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old wine skins, else the wine skins break, and the wine runs out, and the wine skins perish. But they put new wine into new wine skins, and both are preserved." The point of that is salvation (regeneration) is not adding to an old wine skin. It is not adding to an old cloth. It is a totally new structure.

In Philippians 3:3, Paul says, "For we are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." This is a total contrast. It is no longer the flesh. It is no longer that dependence upon that sin propensity, but now dependence upon functioning in the human spirit which is alive through God the Holy Spirit.

In Galatians 6:15, Paul says, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (a new creation)." It is again not what you have done in some religious ritual. It is a new thing that God has created.

Then one final one (a famous verse) in 2 Corinthians 5:17, where Paul says, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new." And that is what the apostle Paul is trying to drive home to us. We are on the other side of salvation. Salvation, and our position under grace, is totally new. It has nothing to do with the old system of trying to keep some code of rules. It is a new system where God the Holy Spirit, is working through our human spirit.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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