***The Purpose of the Mosaic Law
RO85-02***

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Please turn to Romans 7:7. Our subject today is "The Vindication of the Mosaic Law."

In the first part of the book of Romans, the apostle Paul has established the fact that every human being lacks the absolute righteousness and the propitiation of divine justice which is necessary to spend eternity in heaven. Everybody lacks the standard of being just as good as God, and everybody lacks the standard of having satisfied the justice of God.

**Absolute Righteousness**

Absolute righteousness is the perfect moral standard of God Himself. Absolute righteousness is not relative righteousness, which is one person having a higher moral performance than another person. Relative righteousness is something that exists between people. That is not enough with God. The standard of righteousness that God demands is nothing less than being as good as His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, a record of absolute perfect moral conduct.

**Propitiation**

On the other hand, divine propitiation means that the demands of God's justice to punish evil have been completely satisfied. The word "propitiation" means "satisfaction." The divine punishment for evil is spiritual death. For God's justice to be satisfied against an individual, that person must pay the price of spiritual death. The problem there is that you are born into the human race spiritually dead. So, you don't have the resources. You don't have the capital to pay the price of spiritual death.

These are two very important factors. If you get hold of these two, you will understand the nonsense of trying to get yourself into heaven by something you can do, or trying to keep yourself secure in eternal life by something that you personally can do. You are already so contaminated that there is nothing that you can do which is acceptable to God. We lack absolute righteousness, and we lack the ability to provide satisfaction to God's divine justice.

In the first part of the book of Romans, the apostle Paul has hammered away at these two factors, and he has established the fact that everybody lacks this kind of righteousness; that everybody lacks the status of satisfying the justice of God; and, that everyone is totally incapable of securing these two in order to go to heaven. Man is helpless and hopelessly lost, doomed to the lake of fire, and there's not a thing he can do about it.

So, Paul, thereby, established the need for the gospel message, which is God's solution for this terrible human dilemma. Paul points out that the problem of failing to qualify for eternal life in heaven is true of immoral people; it is true of moral people; and, it is true of religious people.

**Sins**

The problem of lost people is twofold. Everyone has committed acts of evil. Evil consists of two things: sins (individual violations of the moral code of God); and, of human good (a product of the sin nature). Human good is called filthy rags. It is man's righteousness. So, on the one hand, we are all legally guilty before God, as the supreme judge of all the universe, because of our sins (plural).

**Sin**

Secondly, the other problem is "sin" without the "s" (singular). And when the Bible uses that word, it is basically referring to the inherited corrupt nature – the sin nature with which we stand morally corrupt in the sight of God.

So, our two problem are: sins (plural); and, sin (singular). "Sins" refers to the accumulated transgressions of the individual sinner. "Sin" refers to this hereditary corruption of nature. Now both of these have to be dealt with. You cannot go to heaven until your individual acts of transgressions have been dealt with in a way that satisfies God, and until the fact that you have a corrupt nature has been dealt with. Both of those must be solved.

Now you can see that the problem is infinitely more complex than one might imagine. A little bit of study of the Bible very quickly puts into a ludicrous light the whole concept of human beings being able to do anything to satisfy God, or being able to do any good work that is acceptable toward salvation. This is what Paul has established in the first part of the book of Romans – reducing it to these two words.

Then, beginning in Romans 3:21, he proceeds to explain how God has dealt with these two problems of "sins" and "sin," and to make it possible for helpless sinners to enter heaven forever. This divine solution is the good news of the gospel. Each of the sinner’s two problems has a judicial solution by God, and an experiential solution by God: a solution that deals with God as judge; and, a solution that deals in terms of our personal experience.

**Imputation**

Let's look at "sins" first. This is just a brief review. In terms of sins (individual acts of evil), the judicial solution is explained in Romans 3:21 through Romans 4:25. The solution, we found, is the imputation of the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ to the sinner based upon the payment to divine justice of the spiritual and physical deaths of Jesus Christ on the cross while bearing the sins of the world. This imputation of absolute righteousness to the believing sinner is a free gift from God to those who are trusting in Jesus Christ as personal Savior. It cannot be earned by man's good works, which are all a product of his old sin nature, and so are evil to begin with.

**Justification**

The believing sinner who possesses the imputed absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ is declared by God the judge to be justified – not guilty of any moral evil. That's what we mean by the term "justification."

So, God's solution for our sins in terms of his role as judge is to justify us by giving us the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ – giving it to us as a grace gift, if we're willing to take it.

**The Indwelling of God the Holy Spirit**

However, then, he has an experiential solution for our "sins" (our individual acts of evil). And that experiential solution is described in Romans 5:1-11. The experiential solution for our sins is the indwelling Holy Spirit, providing the believer with an inward sense of peace with God, and the mental attitude love of God permeating the soul. The believing sinner is thus delivered from the inward sense of guilt before a holy God, and he is released from the inward terror of God. The individual acts of sins are dealt with by the presence of God the Holy Spirit, who is residing within the individual believer.

**The Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

Then there is the problem of "sin" (the old sin nature). This also has a judicial solution. This is explained in Romans 5:12 through Romans 7:6. And that is the last section that we studied. How has God, as judge, dealt with the problem of our sin nature? Well, the solution is the removing of the sinner from the place of enslavement to the sin nature in Adam, to the place of freedom from that sin nature to a position in Christ. This is executed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Adam is viewed by God, the judge, you'll remember, as the federal head representing all lost humanity; and, Jesus Christ is viewed as the federal head of all saved humanity. The position in Adam is called the position of the old man, while the position in Christ is the position of the new man.

**Being in Christ**

The believer is identified with Jesus Christ as He died for sins. So, that believer is freed from the control of the indwelling sin nature which has doomed him to eternal death in hell. It is being in Christ that solves the problem of the sin nature. So, the believer is no longer in legal bondage to the sin nature. The inherent propensity to sin, which he inherited from Adam, has been neutralized.

**The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ**

Then there is an experiential solution. And this is one of the most glorious and dramatic parts of God's dealing with the human sin problem. And this is the section which we are now going to begin to study at Romans 7:7. This section of experiential solution for the sin nature is explained in Romans 7:7 through Romans 8:39. The solution for sin nature in the believer's experience is the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit provides the spiritual believer with victory over his propensity to sin, and gives guidance to live a life of holiness. It is a life of compatibility with the integrity of God. And this is accomplished through what the Bible calls the functioning of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ. The experiential solution is the functioning of the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit within the individual believer.

**The Mosaic Law**

So, today we begin the study of Paul's explanation of this experiential solution for the indwelling sin nature. Romans 7:7 says, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law, for I had not known coveting except the law had said, "You shall not covet." The place of the Mosaic Law comes into the picture at this point. The righteousness of the Mosaic Law is the issue here. Paul has made it very clear in the previous part of his epistle that a lost sinner center cannot be saved from hell by keeping the Mosaic Law. If it could, that would be salvation by human doing. The description of God's absolute righteousness, which is contained in the Mosaic Law, was designed to show man how far he falls short of God's required standard for life in heaven. That was the point of the Mosaic Law – not to get you there, but to show you why you can't get there; to show you what you are in your moral character; and, to show you how far you fall from God's standard of absolute righteousness, so that you don't have a chance – not a chance.

So, the law of God brought the evil of man into sharper focus, so that the grace of God would save man from hell, was shown to be the more glorious, Paul stated this in Romans 5:20 when he said, "Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound, but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Paul said that where the Mosaic Law was there as the standard: the more the law spoke; and, the more the law condemned us, the more glorious was the grace of God, because it overcame even greater condemnation. The greater the condemnation, the more glorious was the working of the grace of God.

So, that doesn't make it look very good for the Mosaic Law. Paul also showed that the Mosaic Law was just a side issue in the plan of salvation – that it is not the means to salvation. It had a secondary side issue. That is the point of all this. Paul very properly rejoices that the Christians are not under any legal system, but under grace, both for salvation and for sanctification. He explicitly pointed this out in Romans 6:14, where he said, "For sin shall not have dominion over you." The sin nature shall not have dominion over you: "For you are not under law, but under grace." And Paul was delighted to be able to tell people, "You don't have to be a slave of that inward natural propensity to evil. God, the judge, has dealt with that judicially, and He has neutralized it. You can live above it. You are not under a law system. You are under grace.

Furthermore, Paul has declared that the Mosaic Law system bestirred sinful passions in man through the rebellion of the sin nature which resulted in death. He pointed this out in Romans 7:5: "For when we were in the flesh, the sinful impulses which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. And as we saw in the study of that verse, the very Mosaic Law, which was an expression of God's absolute righteousness, bestirred the rebellion and anger of man, so that out of the standard of the law itself came evil. Man, in rebellion, was against God Who is trying to tell him what to do. And the law was hated. And when God said don't do it, the sinful nature of man said, "Yes, I will do it. You won't tell me what to do." So, the law was a source of deepening the sin of which men were guilty.

So, the moral law God condemns man to eternal death, and the release from that law through Jesus Christ is a glorious truth. Well, Paul's teaching that justification and sanctification are impossible by keeping some legal systems, such as the Mosaic Law, has brought a vicious counterattack against him, and he had this many times in his ministry.

So, at this point in Romans 7:7, he takes up an attack (a response) to all these things that he's been saying against the Mosaic Law. Paul is accused of declaring that the Mosaic Law, which is from God, is of no value, and that, in fact, it is an evil thing, because he says that it produces death. Paul, therefore, proceeds to explain what the real purpose and the value of the Mosaic Law in the divine plan of salvation really is.

**Salvation is by Grace Alone**

God's plan of salvation is based on the grace principle. It always has been, in the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament. No legal system must be brought in for salvation or the whole divine plan of salvation is neutralized, and everyone is lost. That is very crucial to understand. That's what Paul is trying to make clear. Paul says, "Don't fall into the trap of taking some ritual, and saying that this is part of salvation. If you're going to go to heaven, you must perform this ritual," because what you have done is brought in a law system, and when you've done that, you've ruined the whole plan of God, which is a plan of grace alone.

**Legalism**

So, the apostle Paul, while stressing that, has had to put the law in its secondary position. And some people, the legalists, have risen up in a vicious counterattack. Legalist is a person who thinks he's going to gain merit with God for something he performs in order to be saved. That's what we mean by legalism. And the same thing applies to thinking that if you keep certain rules, you are a godly person. Now there's a way to do that. But the minute you think you can do it by getting a certain set of guidelines to follow, you've missed the boat.

On the other hand, that is not to say it might be smarter not to chew; it might be smarter not to smoke; it might be smarter not to spit; and, it might be smarter not to do all those other things as well – but for other reasons, not in order to try to gain points with God for blessing, either in eternal life or prosperity of any kind.

So, the apostle Paul has indeed put the Mosaic Law on a side (as a side issue), a vehicle which God used to achieve certain ends, mainly to make certain things clear to us relative to our problems of "sins" (individual acts of transgression) and of "sin" (our corrupt nature).

In Romans 7:7, therefore, he begins: "What shall we say then?" The word "what" is this word "tis" in the Greek language. It indicates a question. "What shall we say?" "Shall we say" is the verb "lego." This is the word that stresses the content of a statement that you make. Here it refers to the content of Paul's statement about the Mosaic Law, and, by analogy, to all systems of rules for right conduct. He says, "At any time in the future, when we make a statement about the value and the nature of the Mosaic Law, in view of what I have been teaching you about the Mosaic Law (it's future tense), what shall we now say?" It is active. It's a personal opinion about the Mosaic Law. It's indicative mood, indicating that it's a statement of fact here.

"What shall we say then?" The word "then" is the Greek word "oun." It means accordingly; that is, in view of Paul's condemnation of the law in certain respects, and his great commendation of grace: "What shall we say?" That is: "What conclusion can we reach? In the light of these facts about the Mosaic Law, what conclusions shall we draw?" The fact of the impotency of the Mosaic Law to save a lost sinner? The fact of the incapacity of the Mosaic Law to deliver a sinner from being dominated by his sin nature? The fact of the Mosaic Law inciting the sin nature to do evil – making the sinner a slave of his sin nature? The fact of the total antithesis between law and grace, and the total exalting by Paul of grace? In view of all this, what shall we conclude?

The whole phrase indicates a beginning of a new section in Paul's epistle. And that beginning is the experiential solution now that God has for the sin nature. How are you going to control that corruption within you? How are you going to keep that thing on a chain? How are you going to put a choke collar on that dog, the sin nature, so that you can bring it up short every time it tries to snap and bite you and take over? That is: "In the light of these facts about the Mosaic Law, what conclusion shall we draw?"

Paul says, "Is the law sin?" The word "is" is not in the Greek Bible. It is therefore a stronger statement – a more emphatic question. It simply says, "The law sin? Is that the conclusion we should reach? The word "law is "nomos." It is the general word for "law." In the Greek Bible, it says, "*the* law," making it specific. It is referring to a specific code of moral laws, and by the context, that specific code here is the Mosaic code, which Paul has in mind.

He says, "Shall we call that Mosaic code sin?" The word is "hamartia." "Hamartia" is the word for sin which means missing the mark of God's standard of absolute righteousness. This time, the Greek language does not have the word "the." It does not say "*the* sin." It just says, "sin:" "the law sin," without that definite article (without the word "the"). It is referring to evil in general. It is referring to an evil system as such. And Paul formulates the proposed conclusion of the legalists in the words, "The Mosaic Law is an evil system. The Mosaic Law is evil in quality." That's what people were accusing the apostle Paul of saying.

Well, his response is translated in our King James Version: "God forbid." Now this is a strong statement. It is one that Paul uses frequently when he wants to declare that something is absolutely not so. In the Greek language, it's actually two words. The first word is "me," which is the negative. And then the verb "ginomai." "Ginomai" actually means "to become." It literally says, "May it not become." This is in the aorist tense, which means that at any point in time this would not be true. It is active – that any person should think this personally, and hold this viewpoint. And it is a mood that isn't used very often in the Greek New Testament. It's called the optative mood, and it's a mood which expresses a possibility or a wish. So, we get this "May it," because it's a possibility or a wish: "May it not become."

**God Forbid (Perish the Thought)**

Well, actually, this is a Greek idiom. And you can't translate it word-for-word because it doesn't make sense. It's one of those things like we talk about: "having a drink on the house," and that doesn't mean that you're out on the roof drinking a Coke. It's an idiom, which means you get something free from the establishment. That's what this is. This is a Greek idiom. And what it really is, is a way of expressing a strong abhorrence of something: "May it never be, by no means." The modern expression is: "Perish the thought," or "Certainly not."

The apostle Paul uses this whenever he wants to put home an absolute rejection of an idea. He does this several times in the book of Romans – this exact same expression. He does it in Romans 3:4, Romans 3:6, Romans 3:31, Romans 6:2, Romans 6:15, Romans 7:7, Romans 7:13, and Romans 9:14. Several times he uses this expression. Of all the times that it's used in the New Testament, he's the one who uses it most of the time.

**I had not known Sin but by the Law**

Paul is not implying that the Mosaic Law is inherently sinful. He is strongly, with these, words rejecting that idea. Instead, he comes along and says, "Nay." Actually, this is the Greek word "alla," which expresses a strong contrast. We would translated as "but" or "indeed." Paul says. "No, it's not inherently sinful – the law system of Moses. Indeed, I had not known sin but by the law." The word "known" is this word "ginosko." "Ginosko" is a verb for knowing by means of one's personal experience. This is something you learn by experience. And Paul tells something here about the sin nature that he did not learn by experience. He had to learn it (he's going to show in a minute) because he read it in the Mosaic Law. He did not learn something by his personal experience. It's in the aorist tense. At no point in his past life did he learn this. It's active. Paul's personal experience lacked this. It is indicative. It is a statement of fact. And it is modified by the negative "ou.". He did not know this.

We may translate this as: "I would not have known (or I did not know) sin" (and again, it's that word we had before: 'hamartia'). This time, in the Greek, it is "*the* sin," meaning that it's indicating the sin nature in man – that propensity within us to do evil. "Hamartia" means falling short of God's moral standard, and so missing the mark. And it is therefore a very fitting word to use here, because man's sin nature always misses the required standard of God's absolute righteousness. That's why he describes the sin nature by this word "hamartia," because it means here's the target, and every time a man shoots, he hits there, or he hits it way out here, and gets Maggie's drawers waved at him, because he missed the target completely. It's missing the mark. "Hamartia" means you don't even get near. It's a very fitting word for describing the sin nature which always misses the mark of God's absolute righteousness.

The sin nature, which you remember, has a strong point here which produces human good, and then it has a weak point which produces sins. And these two together form the sewage of evil that comes out of the old sin nature. That factor within us is incapable of hitting the mark of God's absolute righteousness. Whether it's human good, or whether it's our sins, it's all evil. It has a side that goes toward asceticism, and then it has a side which goes to arrogance. Some people have a sin nature such that they just want to wallow with evil. God condemns that. Some people have a sin nature that just wants to play asceticism; it wants to self-deny itself; and, it wants to crucify itself. So, it's a totally different kind of evil. The old monastery, and the old getting-apart-from-the-world – that's all evil with God, because the sin nature is not capable of producing anything that is acceptable with God.

So, this is why people get along with one another, or don't get along with one another, on a humanistic level. If you're going to marry somebody who is not a Christian, by all means, get somebody who has the same kind of sin nature as you have, or you have lots of trouble. If you're going to marry somebody, get somebody who's either a wallower in evil, if that's what you are; or, an aesthetic, if that's what you are – you like to go around lighting candles and making signs of the cross. If you don't, you're going to have a lot of conflict in your marriage in your unsaved situation.

This thing cannot produce anything acceptable to God. *The* sin nature misses the mark, so it's described by "hamartia" very fittingly. A specific moral commitment from God shows man his sinful nature. He does not, and he cannot, obey God.

Now the Mosaic Law revealed this to Paul, and revealed to Paul his own moral corruption. That's the point, Paul said, "I would not have known how morally corrupt I am if it was not for the Mosaic Law, because Paul was a very sweet, religious boy. He was somebody who stood religiously head-and-shoulders above his peers: "I would not have known this except (unless) by," and that's the preposition "dia," which means "through" or "by means of:" "I wouldn't have known how corrupt I am except through the law." And again, it's that "nomos." This time, there is no "the." It is not "*the* law" – just without a code of rules such as the Mosaic Law.

So, what Paul is doing is denying that he is discrediting the value of the Mosaic system (of the Mosaic Law system). Paul learned something very important about his sin nature itself from the Mosaic Law. Paul was always aware of his natural inclination to do evil. He knew that he was sinful. What Paul learned from the moral rules of the Mosaic Law is the true character of his sin nature – how totally depraved he was.

People have their own codes of conduct which they believe will secure divine approval for them. And they go along, blindly believing that, until they come up against a description of God's standard. And when they see God's standard described, then they look at themselves and say, "Boy, I'm not anything like that. I may look OK to myself, but if I have to match up to this, there's no way I'm going to make that.

The unregenerate doesn't think that God considers him to be all that bad. And so he expects favorable treatment from God. But once a lost person comes up against a statement of God's standard of absolute righteousness, such as in the Mosaic Law, then that person realizes how completely his sin nature separates him from God. And then he begins to be troubled about his eternal destiny, and to seek for an answer.

That's why, in some respects, it is legitimate for an evangelist to preach about sins. It is legitimate if he is moving people toward the realization and toward confronting what they are by nature – how corrupt they are by nature. Once people grasp how corrupt they are in the old sin nature, so that nothing flows out of it but evil, then they stop trying to make it on relative righteousness: "I'm better than the next person." And they seek to make it on the basis of what is acceptable to God, and they begin looking in the right direction.

**By the Law is the Knowledge of Sin**

The Mosaic Law portrays God's moral standards, and it reveals the depths of human depravity. This same principle was enunciated by Paul in Romans 3:20, when he said, "Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God. For by the law is the knowledge of sin." The standard of righteousness of the Mosaic Law clearly put everybody under a curse, and that's all it did. It revealed just how bad things really were.

**Under God's Curse**

This is stated by the apostle Paul and another letter, in Galatians 3:10, where he says, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse. For it is written, 'Cursed is everyone that doesn't continue in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.'" Paul says, "If you miss one piece of the law, you're under God's curse." So, those who read that standard, and they say, "Oh, boy, I missed this; I missed this; and, I missed this – there's something really bad about me. There must be something inordinately corrupt about me by nature. That is the problem that I can't match up to this standard."

The only escape from the curse (this curse of God upon the sin nature) is through Jesus Christ. And Paul points that out in Galatians 3:13, when he says, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. For it is written, 'Cursed is everyone that hangs on the tree.'" Because Jesus hung on the tree of the cross, He was under the curse of God, and He bore that curse because He was taking that in our place because we deserved it.

Then, in the rest of Romans 7:7, Paul talks about the functioning of the Mosaic Law: "What shall we say then? The law sin? God forbid." Perish the thought: "But in fact, I had not known the depth of corruption of my sin nature but through the law, for I had not known." And now I must point out to you that it's the same English word "known," but it's a different Greek word. Before we had the word "ginosko" – learning through your personal experience. Now we have a different one: oida." "Oida" is a word for knowledge gained by reasoning or by learning – not by experience. The Mosaic Law provided Paul intellectually with a divine moral standard by which to evaluate his own desires and his own conduct. This is in the pluperfect, which means at a point in the past, Paul came to a complete understanding of the total depravity of his nature as he read in the Mosaic Law, God's standard. The process was completed in the past. It is active. Paul had the knowledge. It is indicative – a statement of fact. This is modified by "ou" (the "no"). He said, "I would not have known (I had not known)."

**Coveting**

Then he tells us what he didn't know. He calls it "coveting." This is the word "epithumia." "Epithumia" is a noun, and it means "a strong desire." Often it is translated as "lust." The word itself is neutral. It may be a strong desire for something good; or, it may be a strong desire for something bad.

For example, the Lord Jesus used this identical very word in Luke 22:15 at the last Passover: "And He said unto them, 'With desire.'" There it is. "With 'epithumia:'" "I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." And Jesus was using it in a good sense there, with a deep desire to complete this memorial feast.

Now the context will indicate whether the word is used with the desire for good or for evil. Most of the time, "epithumia" means a strong, intense desire for something bad. And "coveting" here refers to a strong desire for something which God has forbidden. Paul says, "I would not have known coveting except the Law." And again, it has the definite article, "*the* Law," referring to the Mosaic code of laws: "Except the Law had said." The Greek word is "lego," stressing the content of the statement. It is imperfect, meaning that repeatedly in the past, this was brought to Paul because it's recorded in the Mosaic Law. It is active. The Law says it. It is a statement of fact: "I would not have known coveting except the Law said, 'You shall not covet'" ("epithumia"). There's the verb form for "coveting." You will not have a strong desire. It's future tense – at any time in your life. It's active – a personal attitude. It's indicative – a statement of fact about life. And it is modified by the "no" ("ou"). You will not have a strong desire.

**The Tenth Commandment**

Paul, of course, is referring to the tenth commandment of the Mosaic code, which you find recorded in Exodus 20:17: "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is your neighbor's." The tenth moral principle of the Mosaic Law is fantastically different from the other 9 moral principles, because there is one thing about the tenth commandment relative to coveting which is not exactly true of the others, and that is that it is a mental attitude sin – a mental attitude evil. The others are overt actions. God says, "Don't do this thing outwardly. Don't do this thing." Here he comes along and says, "Don't have this attitude in your mind." And this is to stress that the corruption of the sin nature is a mental attitude corruption.

Paul's view of evil as a Pharisee (when he was a Pharisee) was that sin extended only to what was external. But the "no coveting" commandment revealed to him that evil is also a mental attitude. A mental lust for your neighbor's wife is equivalent in evil with the act of adultery. A mental lust coveting for your neighbor's possession is equivalent to going and stealing from him outwardly, and so on.

**Hatred is Murder**

Now the Lord Jesus Christ taught the same identical fact in the Sermon on the Mount. Let's look at just a couple of examples. In Matthew 5:21, Jesus pointed out that mental attitude hatred is murder with God: "You have heard that it was said of them of old, 'You shall not murder, and whosoever shall murder shall be in danger of judgment.' But I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of judgment. Whosoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be in danger of the council. Whosoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be in danger of hell fire." Hatred is murder.

**Mental Adultery is Adultery**

Jesus also pointed out, in another example in Matthew 5:27, that mental attitude lust is adultery with God: "You have heard that it was said of them of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say unto you that whosoever looks upon a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart."

**The Mental Attitude**

Now the Lord Jesus Christ stressed that the mental attitude was the issue. Unfortunately, among fundamentalist Christians and Bible church Christians who are devoted to the Bible, we don't hear too much about mental attitude evils (mental attitude sins). We want to see everybody acting in a certain way externally, but we don't give a flip for what they are thinking. And it is your thinking that puts you into the enslavement of corruption to the sin nature that brings you into those open actions.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in Matthew 22:36-40, pointed out that mental attitude love is the basis of the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law. Notice Matthew 22:36: "'Master, which is the great commandment in the Law.' Lord Jesus said unto him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." This is the Greek word "agapao," and it means mental attitude love. The Mosaic Law was concerned with your mental attitudes. The sin nature is so vile that it corrupts our minds, and it gives us corrupt mental attitudes.

So, what Paul is saying that he learned from the Mosaic Law was that an evil mental attitude is as damnable as an evil deed with God. As Paul matched himself up to God's law, he realized how inherently corrupt he really was, in spite of his external righteousness in terms of keeping the Law.

In Philippians 3:9, Paul said, "And be found in Him not having my own righteousness." He once had his own righteousness, which was keeping all the details of the 613 points of the Mosaic Law: "To be found in Him not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Paul's sin nature generated powerful mental lusts for evil things. And that's why he chose the tenth commandment as an example of what the law does for you: "You shall not covet." That is a mental attitude quality. Where Paul the Pharisee was highly esteemed by his contemporaries for his religious devotion, he was, in fact, he realized, through the law, a vile stench in the nostrils of God.

Luke 16:14-15 puts it together very nicely. The Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided Him. And He said unto them, 'You are they who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

So, we have a very important lesson from Romans 7:7. You may look like a prince to the people with whom you associate, but don't you make the mistake, if your soul is filled with mental attitude evil, that you're kidding God for one moment. You're a stench in His nostrils. And there are many people who are highly esteemed in our society; who are exalted; who are glorified; and, who are promoted, who are so shot-through with mental evil, even in Christian circles, that it makes the living holy God want to regurgitate in revulsion.

The apostle Paul says, "God has an experiential solution for the domination of your inward propensity to sin (the sin nature). And he says, "The first thing I want to make clear is that the Law is an agency to reveal how bad we are by nature, and that was the role of the Law." Take note of your mental attitude sins. That's where your godliness must begin.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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