

as I had been miserably defeated before that experience. And this went on for probably better than a year in my experience of feeling that God had just shown me the real answer to what the abundant life was all about. And it was an abundant life. I led many people to Christ; I probably led as many people to Christ during that one year as I ever have at any other time in my life, and that was long before I came on the Caspus Crusade for Christ staff. And it was an exciting year. But then suddenly things began to go wrong, and I had my first real taste of Satanic opposition and spiritual warfare. And I was very confused; I didn't understand it; I didn't know what was going on. I couldn't understand why people would lie about me, people that I had led to Christ, and people that I had trusted implicitly. I could not understand why people were so suddenly, over what appeared to be small and minor issues, suddenly you saw an outburst of hatred or resentment. And there were things that I just couldn't understand. I learned later that this was a work of Satan. But I didn't understand Satan's activities at that time, and I did not understand spiritual warfare. And so what happened was that I began to put aside, or forget, interestingly enough, the truths I had learned in Romans 6. I became very introspective, began to try to find from within some reason to justify myself. And I felt, "Well, surely there's something seriously wrong with me, or things wouldn't be going so badly, and there wouldn't be such a chaotic condition." And so I began to look within to try to find out what was wrong. And, of course, the more I looked, the more I found that was wrong. You know, if you start looking for something bad within you, you'll never be disappointed. And so the more I looked then more I saw within me that was bad, and I became caught up in a terrible struggle, which led ultimately to a very deep depression, and a total defeat, and a miserable christian experience for a very long period of time, much longer than I hope any of you ever have to go through. And I could not understand it. The struggle of Romans 7 became a reality to me. Now, this often happens. I think that Romans 7 is where it is because God inspired Paul to put it there, and it's so characteristic of human experience that once we've arrived, we've learned many truths, and maybe we're set

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free, and then suddenly, before we know it we're back into the struggle again. And, of course, I'm grateful to the Lord that He saw fit to begin to show me the way out of the mess, and has given that peace that passes all understanding. But it's really something to experience a Romans 7 experience. Now, some of you may have experienced a little of it; some of you, I can tell, have experienced a lot of it; and some of you probably feel that's all you've ever experienced. But there is a way out. J. Vernon McGee, in his little two-volume set called Reasoning through Romans, which, incidentally, is very good, and you can order it from the Church of the Open Door, makes this statement: "It is the struggling soul who is in a position to hear the new technique which God has provided for living the christian life." And, of course, the new technique is revealed in Romans 8. This chapter, Romans 7, tells us how NOT to do it. That's interesting, isn't it? But most saints learn by trial and effort. The answer to sanctification is not here, in chapter 7, but there is an arrow pointing the way. In the first section, God shows how those that were placed in Him, that is, in Christ, or placed by Him under that Law, were released from that relation by sharing in the death of Christ, so that, joined to a risen Christ, they bear fruit, and released from the Law, they give glad and willing service. In the second section of chapter 7, we have Paul describing his struggle under the Law, as a converted Israelite, before he knew the great facts of this first part, that in Christ he was dead to the Law. Now, let's look at Romans 7, verses 1 through 4. Incidentally, I would suggest that you read Romans 7 in the Living Letters. I feel that in this case Mr. Taylor has interpreted the chapter well, and Living Letters will be a very helpful thing to you. "Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who knew the law)" and that's an interesting statement, by the way, because, remember the church in Rome was primarily a Gentile church, but it's very likely that some of the leading christians in the church at Rome were Jewish christians. And, undoubtedly, they had instructed the Gentile believers in the Law. "For I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?" That's the principle that we're dealing with, just

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like sin has jurisdiction over us as long as we live in the old, natural state. That's why we have to be put into Christ, and into His death, and we have to experience His resurrection, or at least, we have to be put into His resurrection. And so the Law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives. "For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if here husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then, if, while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God." Watchman Nee has an interesting discussion. He has a chapter called, "The meaning and value of Romans 7" in the Normal Christian Life. And I think his discussion of this illustration here of the woman and the two husbands is probably one of the best that I know about. Watchman Nee describes it like this; he sort of adds a little bit to the analogy. He says we have a case here of a woman who is married to a perfectionist. Now this man that she's married to, and Watchman Nee believes that the first husband represents the Law, and I'm aware that Hal Lindsey teaches it a little differently. Right now, we'll follow Mr. Nee instead of Mr. Lindsey. But he says that the first husband is the Law, so this woman is married to a very ferocious, perfectionist type husband. And she's an imperfectionist, which creates some real problems. You know, she just doesn't know how to do things very well; she just can't do things right, and he wants ^{every} things done exactly right. I mean, he wants his supper at six o'clock, not at six:01, you know. And he wants the dishes washed in a certain way, and the beds made in a certain way. And when he comes in and all six of the kids aren't perfectly dressed and spotlessly attired, standing in perfect obedience waiting for him to come sweeping through the door, then he gets upset. That's a little more than Mr. Nee said, but the point is, he's a perfectionist, you see. He wants everything just right. Now, you see, there's nothing wrong with his demands. What the Law demands is right. In fact, it's just

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perfection. The problem is with the poor wife. She just can't perform, and anything she tries to do goes astray. I mean, she tries her best, but her best isn't enough, she keeps goofing up. And so she lives a very miserable, defeated life. Now, there happens to be another fellow around, who would really make a great husband. Now, he is not any less of a perfectionist, in one sense of the word, than is the first husband, but the difference is that this particular husband, or this particular man is the kind of man that really helps with all the needed chores, and all the needed demands that are placed upon the wife. And, how the wife longs to be free from that first tyrant to whom she is married. But, obviously, as long as the husband is alive she's bound to him by the Law. And so, perhaps, her hope is that something might happen to set her free, but the husband seems to be in very perfect health. In fact, in this case, the husband will live forever, because it says the Law will never pass away. So what's the answer. Well, the answer is that the wife has to die. Well, of course, obviously, there is no way for us to die. We're the wife, you see, in this analogy. And so God deals with us by putting us into Christ, and we participate in His death and in His resurrection. And once a person has died, they're set free from the jurisdiction of the Law, as Paul said in verse 1. And so, now that the woman has been able to die, she has been buried and raised again, she is free to be married to this new husband, the Lord Jesus Christ. And, of course, through Him she is able to bear fruit unto life, whereas before, she was not able to bear fruit for God. But rather, all of her fruit was not unto God but was unto death. And so the problem here is simply that it's through the body of Christ that we can die and be set free from the Law. And in verse 4 we find the statement made, "Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God. For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death." So this is what the Law does. Every time this old husband would tell the poor wife something to do,

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if just made her mad, and made her less capable of doing what she was supposed to do. You know, in a good marriage relationship, the husband doesn't go around and tack up little rules on the door facing and say "I want you to do this and this by such-and-such an hour; I want my meals at such-and-such an hour; and I expect this to be done, and this to be done." No, they do not live by law, they live by love. And the wife gladly, if she loves him, wished to do these things for him, and he, in turn, gladly wishes to do things for her. And it is not a matter of a legalistic relationship. And so it is with our relationship to Christ. We have been made to die to the Law. Suppose we carry this analogy a little further. Suppose that after this dear woman has died in Christ and been buried and raised again; now she's free to be married to a new husband. Suppose that one day, after she has been enjoying this new relationship for a while, the old husband comes and knocks at the door, and says, "Woman, get back over to my house and fix me something to eat." Now, the tendency might be to obey the old husband after having lived in legalism and bondage for such a long time, but, of course, she doesn't have to. Legally she doesn't have to; she may willingly do so only because of her fear from past experience. But she is not bound to do what the old husband tells her to do; and neither are we. Once we have died with Christ, and been buried with Him, and been raised with Him, we are no longer bound by the old law, or by the law at all, in any way. We are set free from it; it no longer has jurisdiction over us. We may find ourselves, the old flesh, because it desired to be rigidly controlled. Actually it is a fleshly desire to have our spiritual life well defined, everything spelled out, told exactly what to do and when to do it and how to do it and so forth. Even though we can't do it, we still want to be told how to do it. And so we may put ourselves back under the law, but it's not necessary. "For while we were in the flesh," the Bible says in Romans 8:5, "the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death." And so, that's the result of living under the law. Watchman Nee says the Law is, in a sense, the same as the will of God. Let me just read a paragraph here to you from