

Now that I'm a Christian, IN Christ, a saint, how do I walk? Is it by keeping laws (even God's) and/or in my own strength? 'No!' to both. **Read 3:20, 5:20, 6:14, Gal. 2:16.** Law wasn't helpful in becoming a Christian (I was justified by faith in Jesus and His work on the cross alone), AND, law isn't helpful in walking as a Christian! Any law is incapable of making us right/just with God OR keeping us right with God. "A Christian putting himself under law and failing to avail himself of the resources of the Spirit is a defeated Christian."

From **Rom. 5:11-6:23** I understand: I'm not IN Adam any longer, a sinner by nature. I'm now IN Christ, a holy one by nature. "Jesus, You've done so much for me. I want to live for You. Just give me the rules; I'll never fail You!" But, the apostle says, there's a major problem! The 'new me IN Christ' still lives in a body of flesh. We lived in these fleshly bodies before we were Christians. And, even as Christians, we still inhabit these fleshly bodies, where sin still dwells! Then Who, not what, will deliver us? **Read 7:1-8:13.** Who is the apostle describing in **:7-25?** Clearly a person who's a non-Christian, AND, a Christian trying to walk according to the flesh, after the Law, in his/her own strength. **Rom. 7-8** TEACH US HOW WE CAN WALK AS THE CHRISTIANS WE ARE!

**7:1-25** how NOT to walk. **8:1-13** God's glorious solution! **Romans 7** is a commentary on Paul's great declaration of **6:14 (read)**. **7:1-3 :1 Or do you not know (agnosco, ignorant), brethren [brothers and sisters] (for I am speaking to those who know [ginosko, understand] law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he/she lives?** Paul refers to law over 25 times in **7:1-8:7!** Any law, lit. to those who know law. Law can't make us Christians, and, it's not the way to live as Christians. Whether Jews or Roman citizens, they knew law: a standard of conduct expected of people. But God means law to define the issues, not to deliver. Jurisdiction = have authority over. However, if a person dies, it doesn't matter what the law is, the law's jurisdiction is over. "Let me illustrate: **:2 For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living [As long as the husband is alive, the wife is permanently bound]; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband [but, if the husband dies, she's released from the law of marriage]. :3 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.**" This means that if in her husband's lifetime she gives herself to another man, she'll be called an adulteress. (Under the Mosaic Law, if a Jewish husband/wife was unfaithful, he/she was to be stoned to death!) But, if her husband dies, she's free from the law of marriage, even if she marries another. Nothing but death can break the law's jurisdiction. If there's no death and either join with another, it's results in an immoral relationship. Note: Divorce is not the subject here; other Scriptures address divorce (**Mt. 19:3-9**). Paul's point: THERE'S NO RELIEF FROM THE LAW UNLESS SOMEONE DIES. The problem is not the law, so how can we as Christians be freed from the law's authority?

**:4-6** Law will help us define the problem, but it is no help at all when it comes to delivering us. What a predicament! **:4-6 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ [SO, YOU were made**

to die (aorist passive) to the law through Christ's death] so you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that (hina) we might bear fruit for God. Remember **6:2-4?** We died with Christ. We died to sin and its power (**6:2,6**). Now we learn we also died to the Law (**7:4**)! Even as Christians, we can't handle life with the Law hanging over our heads. We must be free from its jurisdiction and we are!! We were 'made to die' to the Law (final, complete). The law is not God's way of walking as a Christian. Why? We can't keep it in our own strength even as Christians!! Yet death ends obligation to and jurisdiction of the law. SO, WE DIED TO THE LAW. God Himself initiated this death (lit. **you were made to die**). Who died? We did! Choose to believe it! And, WE HAVE BEEN JOINED TO THE RISEN LORD JESUS, our triumphant Savior! Understand, we couldn't join our risen Lord Jesus until who we were IN Adam died. And that's what happened! Our old man in Adam did die! And, as we have also shared in Jesus' resurrection (**6:4-5**), so we are now united to Him who was raised from the dead. His name becomes ours; it's a permanent, forever relationship! Why? So that (hina) we might bear fruit for God (best explained in **Gal. 5:22-23, Jn. 15:1-11, Eph. 5:19-21**)! The IN-Adam death had to take place so we could (1) be released from the Law, (2) be joined to our risen Lord Jesus, (3) bear fruit for God, and (4) serve in newness of the Spirit! Incredible!! Know these truths! There's something wrong if we're not bearing fruit for God—either we're not Christians or don't know our identity or don't understand how to walk or just plain disobedient.

**:5 For while we were IN the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work (power, energizing) in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.** [Before our conversions, the sinful passions/desires/impulses of the flesh (which were aroused and stimulated through the Law) were working in our body members (including mind) to bear the rotting fruit of death!] (**See Eph. 2:3**) Wow! Just as the Bible makes a distinction between being IN Adam and being IN Christ, so the Bible makes a distinction between being IN the flesh and IN the Spirit. Know your spiritual identity as a Christian!

IN Adam is who we were in our natures/identities: we were sinners by nature, the lords of our own lives, independent of God. So in order to be justified, that old man IN Adam had to die; that was the only solution. And he/she did when by faith we received the living Jesus as Lord (**5:11-6:23**)! IN the flesh was the sinful thinking, choices, and behavior reflecting the IN-Adam sinful nature. We had discovered earthly techniques to try to get our needs met apart from God. They took shape in the form of fame, fortune, power, or pleasure.

When we by faith received Jesus as Lord, when we received God's gift of righteousness (being made right/just with Him), we changed identities/natures/hearts. God's solution to the problem of man was to begin a whole new race! Instead of being IN Adam, sinners by nature, we are now IN Christ, saints by nature. However, we still live in these fleshly bodies (what the Bible sometimes calls the flesh), and sin still dwells in these bodies. So, even as Christians, the flesh has no capacity to follow the injunctions of law (**8:7-8 read**). We once were 'IN the flesh' but *are now* new 'IN the Spirit' (**8:9-11**). "Freedom for the first time to do what is right, serve in newness of the Spirit."

**:6 But now(!) we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness [quality] of the Spirit and not in oldness (worn out) of the letter.** We were bound by the Law, inadequate, but now we've been released from it, no longer limited to our own fleshly resources. Why? So we can serve God and others, not by trying to obey some set of rules in our own strength, but willingly relying on the Spirit to produce Jesus' life in and through us. As non-Christians, the Law drove us to Jesus. As Christians, the Law drives us to the Spirit. The Christian life is serving the risen Lord Jesus in the power of His indwelling Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the only one: who can live the life of Jesus through us, who can fulfill the requirements of the Law, who can produce fruit for God. It's the Spirit's fruit, in/through us. We have presented our bodies to God (remember **6:13**), and as we trust, the Spirit will reveal Jesus' life through us. It's as simple yet profound as saying, "I've presented my body to You, Father. I believe that as I walk in obedience, in Your truth, that Your Spirit is the power, the strength, behind my actions." "Believers who walk in the power of the Spirit find the law fulfilled, yet not by them, but by Him in/through them." Beware of people who think they are still obligated to the Law. Ray Stedman states, "There are certain signs you can detect in people who are still under the Law: They are proud of their own record. They are always reluctant to admit any error or fault in their own lives. Finally, they invariably are subject to times of inner boredom and depression." THAT is not God's plan for walking! We serve in newness of the Spirit, not because the Law is our master and we have to, but because we're united with Jesus and we want to. We've presented our bodies (**6:13**). He produces! **7:1-8:30** The Christian walk: we can't live it by the flesh nor can we do it by law. Only the Spirit through us can produce a walk pleasing to the Father. If we don't see law obeyed, the need is to ask the Spirit to fulfill it through us. Walk by the Spirit, be led by the Spirit, be filled with the Spirit (**Gal. 5:16,18, Eph. 5:18**). While on earth, Jesus (who became flesh) lived the same way (**Lk. 4:1**)—filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit!

We've died to the Law, so we could be joined with Christ, to bear fruit for God, and to serve in newness of the Spirit. Released from the Law, joined to the Lord Jesus, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. That's the Christian's walk! Now IN Christ and IN the Spirit, how do we walk? Walk by the Spirit! **Gal. 5:16** says, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." **Gal. 5:18** says, "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law." **Gal. 5:25** says, "If we live by the Spirit (and we do if we're Christians), let us also walk by the Spirit." Also see **Eph. 5:18**. The Spirit fulfills the requirements of the Law; He does it, through these fleshly bodies of ours. It's the Spirit of God living the life of Jesus through these mortal bodies of ours! What a God! We have new natures and God's own Holy Spirit to empower our obedience.

**Reflecting on Romans 7:1-6:** From this passage, what are particular lessons you need to know and act upon? What does this teach you of God and His plan for walking as the Christian you are? In what ways do the teachings of these six verses impact your walk with God and others?

**Read 7:7-13.** The Christian walk is serving the risen Christ (not by law, not by the flesh, but) by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. One becomes a Christian by faith in Jesus alone but then many understand the Christian walk to be by rules, laws, trying hard (the opposite of faith: faith, the only thing that pleases God). So in **Rom. 7:1-6** we learned that we died to law, even God's Law, released from the law. Why? Because by our flesh we're not capable of living up to the Law's perfect demands. We've been delivered from the Law to be joined to Jesus, bear fruit for God, and serve in newness of the Spirit.

Is Law the problem? No! In **:7-13** we learn that God's Law is good and has purposes: to reveal, stimulate, and condemn sin. The Law calls us into account for sin and exposes the sinfulness of our flesh. We'll also see the power, deceit, and utter sinfulness of sin which dwells within every person's body, even a Christian's. SO law can't deliver from sin, either before or after justification (**:14-25**). BUT, it can be fulfilled in believers' lives by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (**8:1-4**). So the Law reveals sin **:7b**, arouses sin **:8**, deceives us **:9-11**, and exposes the absolute sinfulness of sin **:12-13**.

In **:8-11** Paul chose the most obviously 'internal' command of the 'Big 10' to illustrate his personal experience—just like the 2 greatest commandments, "to love God with everything we are and to love our neighbor as ourselves" illustrate our inability to follow God's laws in our own strength.

**:7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."** What is our conclusion? That the Law itself is sinful, that God's law is responsible for our sin? No way! Away with the thought! "I just wasn't aware of the real character of sin until the Law made it clear." Just try to follow one of God's 10 Commands, describing what humanity ought to be like!

Paul says, "Let me give a personal example, the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment. I wouldn't have really known what it is to covet, to strongly desire things, if the Law had not said, 'You shall not covet' (**Ex. 20:17, Dt. 5:21**). When I heard, 'Don't desire what another person has', like a magnifying mirror, that law revealed sin in my own life." Apart from the Law, we would have no way of accurately judging our sinfulness. Paul came to see that inward coveting was as wrong as stealing or murder. We won't truly understand sin—its power, its deceitfulness, how utterly wrong it is—until we're exposed to the Law. *What sin does the Law reveal in you?* How about "Don't be greedy/prideful? Do be humble, patient, forgiving?" What are your 'flesh urges/desires/patterns'?

**:8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.** Paul says "The Law says 'Don't do it!', but sin, making that law its base of operations, produced in me strong desires of every kind. Apart from the Law of coveting, I seemed to have no problems; but once I found out it was a law, I strongly desired everything I saw: my neighbor's wife, house, field, anything! The trouble arose, not because of the Law, but because of sin using the law."

Sin is so powerful (in the extreme), it produces (accomplishes, works) sin of every kind. Opportunity means a starting place, base of operations, like a

launch pad. **God's Law** was the headquarters from which sin launched its evil campaign in my flesh (my physical body where sin still dwells)!! Results? Death-fruit (:5)! All sin is waiting for is the right opportunity to spring into action. The Law requires perfection and our flesh is powerless. I'm always a loser to sin if I try to handle any law, even God's, on my own. "Keep the 10 Commandments. Don't walk on the grass. Don't touch the wet paint." The Law was added so the sin would increase (5:20)! True for the non-Christian and the Christian! "You shall not covet." We suddenly discover all kinds of desires are awakened. Sin 'springs into life' as the Law comes home to us.

**For apart from the Law sin is dead** (unidentified or unrevealed, dead in the sense of dormant and not fully active, 5:14). "It's when you ask me to DO or NOT DO something that my sinfulness comes to light. The problem is not with the Law, but with sin which dwells in my body.

**:9-10 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; :10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me.** "In the absence of Law, I was fully alive, but when the commandment ("don't covet") came, sin sprang to life and I died, condemned by the very law I was trying to keep! **:10** This commandment, which if I had kept it would have resulted in life (**Lev. 18:5**), proved to result in the opposite, death, for me. Instead of a pathway to life, I found it was the way of death." So the law not only reveals and arouses sin, it also condemns sin. You can't stop yelling at your kids. You can't deal with lustful thoughts. The harder you try in your own strength, the more you sin! He began to understand how far short he came of God's righteous standards. Remember **Phil. 3:7-8**, Paul's evaluation of his religious accomplishments.

**:11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. :8** sin's power. **:11** sin's deception. "Sin, making the Law its base of operations, without my realizing it, deceived me and killed me. Don't be deceived! Because of sin in my fleshly body, the Law can never justify me! It also can never sanctify me (set me apart for God's exclusive use)!"

**:12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.** Is the Law sin (:7)? No, the Law is holy (a perfect reflection of God's character), and this specific commandment (referring to coveting) is holy & righteous (fair, just) & good (excellent, beneficial). The Law shows up sin for what it is. For the Christian, it is sin in the flesh which exploits the Law.

If we don't understand the nature of sin, we will never see why we had to die to the Law, why Jesus had to come and die, why we need Someone stronger than ourselves and indwelling sin to walk in victory. We need a power, actually a Life (the Holy Spirit!), who is greater than the power of sin within our bodies. Only He can live the Christian life, and He will as we trust Him!

**:13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful. Therefore:** both a summary and a transition. The power of sin, the deceitfulness of sin, now the utter

sinfulness of sin. Did God's good Law cause death to me? No way, unthinkable! Just because a person can't live up to something doesn't mean it's bad. No, the Law isn't the issue; it is sin, as revealed, stimulated, and condemned by the Law. The Law shows the utter sinfulness of sin (Paul couldn't think of a more vivid way to describe it!). Sin becomes sinful in the extreme (a throwing beyond) so that we might be horrified by what we see in our walks, even as Christians, when trying to live the Christian life by the flesh and the Law. The extreme sinfulness of sin is made utterly clear in the way it exploits a good thing (the Law) for an evil purpose (death). Getting rid of or changing the Law will not solve the problem. Again, "the end result of attempting to live on that basis is that we become defensive, self-righteous, critical of others, even proud of our own record."

The Christian is FREE FROM THE LAW! The Law has its purposes: to reveal, stimulate, condemn sin, and to drive us to Christ (**Gal. 3:19-22,24**), but it is not the way of life for the Christian. Because sin uses even God's Law as its base of operations, the Law is a cause of grief, not sanctification. It condemns failure and produces a sense of guilt, shame, & despair. The Law simply can't deliver us from sin. The only way to deal with it was for you and me to die to it, and we did! (We still need continual exposure to God's standards in order to see more clearly when we're sinning and when we aren't, when we are trusting the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life and when we aren't.) **Ps. 119:11.**

In **7:14-25** Paul will describe how it 'feels' to be under the Law as a Christian.

Now we're permanently joined to Jesus to bear fruit for God and serve in newness of the Spirit. Just think, God made it possible for His character (fruit) to be seen through us! But if not by the Law, how can we live the Christian life? How can we bear fruit for God? How can the requirements of even God's perfect Law be fulfilled in us? It seems with sin dwelling in our flesh and the Law doing its revealing work, we're helpless captives. God's answer: **8:1-13.**

Wrapping up: We can't walk pleasing to God or in line with our new identity (IN Christ) by law. How could we with powerful/deceitful/condemning sin residing in our bodies and even using the Law as its base of operations? No, we (1) had to die to the law (any law) and (2) be joined to the Lord Jesus before we could even have the opportunity to walk victoriously in God's sight. The Law reveals our need for both the Lord/Savior Jesus and the Spirit.

Here's the moment of choice, the action step! "I've presented my body to You, God. I believe, based on the facts of Your Word, that as I walk by faith in obedience to Your truth, the Spirit is the Life/Power/Strength behind my actions. The Spirit will fulfill the requirements of the Law through me!" Begin by faith. Continue by faith. We trusted Jesus alone for justification. We trust the Spirit alone for walking as God intends, which is known as sanctification.

**Reflecting on Romans 7:7-13:** In what areas has the Law done its work in you? How does this help you better understand God's purposes for the Law? How does this help you understand why you had to be freed from, died to, the Law? For what would you like to thank God from this passage? What are two points you will make as you share this passage with another?

Now that I'm a Christian, IN Christ, a saint, how do I walk? Is it by keeping laws (even God's) and/or in my own strength? 'No!' to both. **Read 3:20, 5:20, 6:14, Gal. 2:14.** Law wasn't helpful in becoming a Christian (I was justified by faith in Jesus and His work on the cross alone), AND, law isn't helpful in walking as a Christian! Any law is incapable of making us right/just with God OR keeping us right with God. "A Christian putting himself under law and failing to avail himself of the resources of the Spirit is a defeated Christian."

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We've died to the Law, so we could be joined with Christ, to bear fruit for God, and to serve in newness of the Spirit. Released from the Law, joined to the Lord Jesus, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. That's the Christian's walk! Now IN Christ and IN the Spirit, how do we walk? Walk by the Spirit! **Gal. 5:16** says, "**But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.**" **Gal. 5:18** says, "**But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.**" **Gal. 5:25** says, "**If we live by the Spirit** (and we do if we're Christians), **let us also walk by the Spirit.**" Also see **Eph. 5:18**. The Spirit fulfills the requirements of the Law; He does it, through these fleshly bodies of ours. It's the Spirit of God living the life of Jesus through these mortal bodies of ours! What a God! We have new natures and God's own Holy Spirit to empower our obedience.

**Reflecting on Romans 7:1-6:** From this passage, what are particular lessons you need to know and act upon? What does this teach you of God and His plan for walking as the Christian you are? In what ways do the teachings of these six verses impact your walk with God and others?

**Read 7:7-13.** The Christian walk is serving the risen Christ (not by law, not by the flesh, but) by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. One becomes a Christian by faith in Jesus alone but then many understand the Christian walk to be by rules, laws, trying hard (the opposite of faith: faith, the only thing that pleases God). So in **Rom. 7:1-6** we learned that we died to law, even God's Law, released from the law. Why? Because by our flesh we're not capable of living up to the Law's perfect demands. We've been delivered from the Law to be joined to Jesus, bear fruit for God, and serve in newness of the Spirit.

Is Law the problem? No! In **:7-13** we learn that God's Law is good and has purposes: to reveal, stimulate, and condemn sin. The Law calls us into account for sin and exposes the sinfulness of our flesh. We'll also see the power, deceit, and utter sinfulness of sin which dwells within every person's body, even a Christian's. SO law can't deliver from sin, either before or after justification (**:14-25**). BUT, it can be fulfilled in believers' lives by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (**8:1-4**). So the Law reveals sin **:7b**, arouses sin **:8**, deceives us **:9-11**, and exposes the absolute sinfulness of sin **:12-13**.

In **:8-11** Paul chose the most obviously 'internal' command of the 'Big 10' to illustrate his personal experience—just like the 2 greatest commandments, "to love God with everything we are and to love our neighbor as ourselves" illustrate our inability to follow God's laws in our own strength.

**:7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."** What is our conclusion? That the Law itself is sinful, that God's law is responsible for our sin? No way! Away with the thought! "I just wasn't aware of the real character of sin until the Law made it clear." Just try to follow one of God's 10 Commands, describing what humanity ought to be like!

Paul says, "Let me give a personal example, the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment. I wouldn't have really known what it is to covet, to strongly desire things, if the Law had not said, 'You shall not covet' (**Ex. 20:17, Dt. 5:21**). When I heard, 'Don't desire what another person has', like a magnifying mirror, that law revealed sin in my own life." Apart from the Law, we would have no way of accurately judging our sinfulness. Paul came to see that inward coveting was as wrong as stealing or murder. We won't truly understand sin—its power, its deceitfulness, how utterly wrong it is—until we're exposed to the Law. *What sin does the Law reveal in you?* How about "Don't be greedy/prideful? Do be humble, patient, forgiving?" What are your 'flesh urges/desires/patterns'?

**:8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.** Paul says "The Law says 'Don't do it!', but sin, making that law its base of operations, produced in me strong desires of every kind. Apart from the Law of coveting, I seemed to have no problems; but once I found out it was a law, I strongly desired everything I saw: my neighbor's wife, house, field, anything! The trouble arose, not because of the Law, but because of sin using the law."

Sin is so powerful (in the extreme), it produces (accomplishes, works) sin of every kind. Opportunity means a starting place, base of operations, like a

launch pad. **God's Law** was the headquarters from which sin launched its evil campaign in my flesh (my physical body where sin still dwells)!! Results? Death-fruit (:5)! All sin is waiting for is the right opportunity to spring into action. The Law requires perfection and our flesh is powerless. I'm always a loser to sin if I try to handle any law, even God's, on my own. "Keep the 10 Commandments. Don't walk on the grass. Don't touch the wet paint." The Law was added so the sin would increase (5:20)! True for the non-Christian and the Christian! "You shall not covet." We suddenly discover all kinds of desires are awakened. Sin 'springs into life' as the Law comes home to us.

**For apart from the Law sin is dead** (unidentified or unrevealed, dead in the sense of dormant and not fully active, 5:14). "It's when you ask me to DO or NOT DO something that my sinfulness comes to light. The problem is not with the Law, but with sin which dwells in my body.

**:9-10 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; :10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me.** "In the absence of Law, I was fully alive, but when the commandment ("don't covet") came, sin sprang to life and I died, condemned by the very law I was trying to keep! **:10** This commandment, which if I had kept it would have resulted in life (**Lev. 18:5**), proved to result in the opposite, death, for me. Instead of a pathway to life, I found it was the way of death." So the law not only reveals and arouses sin, it also condemns sin. You can't stop yelling at your kids. You can't deal with lustful thoughts. The harder you try in your own strength, the more you sin! He began to understand how far short he came of God's righteous standards. Remember **Phil. 3:7-8**, Paul's evaluation of his religious accomplishments.

**:11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. :8** sin's power. **:11** sin's deception. "Sin, making the Law its base of operations, without my realizing it, deceived me and killed me. Don't be deceived! Because of sin in my fleshly body, the Law can never justify me! It also can never sanctify me (set me apart for God's exclusive use)!"

**:12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.** Is the Law sin (:7)? No, the Law is holy (a perfect reflection of God's character), and this specific commandment (referring to coveting) is holy & righteous (fair, just) & good (excellent, beneficial). The Law shows up sin for what it is. For the Christian, it is sin in the flesh which exploits the Law.

If we don't understand the nature of sin, we will never see why we had to die to the Law, why Jesus had to come and die, why we need Someone stronger than ourselves and indwelling sin to walk in victory. We need a power, actually a Life (the Holy Spirit!), who is greater than the power of sin within our bodies. Only He can live the Christian life, and He will as we trust Him!

**:13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful. Therefore:** both a summary and a transition. The power of sin, the deceitfulness of sin, now the utter

sinfulness of sin. Did God's good Law cause death to me? No way, unthinkable! Just because a person can't live up to something doesn't mean it's bad. No, the Law isn't the issue; it is sin, as revealed, stimulated, and condemned by the Law. The Law shows the utter sinfulness of sin (Paul couldn't think of a more vivid way to describe it!). Sin becomes sinful in the extreme (a throwing beyond) so that we might be horrified by what we see in our walks, even as Christians, when trying to live the Christian life by the flesh and the Law. The extreme sinfulness of sin is made utterly clear in the way it exploits a good thing (the Law) for an evil purpose (death). Getting rid of or changing the Law will not solve the problem. Again, "the end result of attempting to live on that basis is that we become defensive, self-righteous, critical of others, even proud of our own record."

The Christian is FREE FROM THE LAW! The Law has its purposes: to reveal, stimulate, condemn sin, and to drive us to Christ (**Gal. 3:19-22,24**), but it is not the way of life for the Christian. Because sin uses even God's Law as its base of operations, the Law is a cause of grief, not sanctification. It condemns failure and produces a sense of guilt, shame, & despair. The Law simply can't deliver us from sin. The only way to deal with it was for you and me to die to it, and we did! (We still need continual exposure to God's standards in order to see more clearly when we're sinning and when we aren't, when we are trusting the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life and when we aren't.) **Ps. 119:11**.

In **7:14-25** Paul will describe how it 'feels' to be under the Law as a Christian.

Now we're permanently joined to Jesus to bear fruit for God and serve in newness of the Spirit. Just think, God made it possible for His character (fruit) to be seen through us! But if not by the Law, how can we live the Christian life? How can we bear fruit for God? How can the requirements of even God's perfect Law be fulfilled in us? It seems with sin dwelling in our flesh and the Law doing its revealing work, we're helpless captives. God's answer: **8:1-13**.

Wrapping up: We can't walk pleasing to God or in line with our new identity (IN Christ) by law. How could we with powerful/deceitful/condemning sin residing in our bodies and even using the Law as its base of operations? No, we (1) had to die to the law (any law) and (2) be joined to the Lord Jesus before we could even have the opportunity to walk victoriously in God's sight. The Law reveals our need for both the Lord/Savior Jesus and the Spirit.

Here's the moment of choice, the action step! "I've presented my body to You, God. I believe, based on the facts of Your Word, that as I walk by faith in obedience to Your truth, the Spirit is the Life/Power/Strength behind my actions. The Spirit will fulfill the requirements of the Law through me!" Begin by faith. Continue by faith. We trusted Jesus alone for justification. We trust the Spirit alone for walking as God intends, which is known as sanctification.

**Reflecting on Romans 7:7-13:** In what areas has the Law done its work in you? How does this help you better understand God's purposes for the Law? How does this help you understand why you had to be freed from, died to, the Law? For what would you like to thank God from this passage? What are two points you will make as you share this passage with another?

## Word studies

Law. 3551 nomos. 197X in NT 39X in Romans 2-6, 23X in Rom. 7, 5X in Rom. 8, 7X in Rom. 9-13

Flesh. 4561 sarx and sarkikos 4559. 161X in NT. 5X in Rom. 1-6, 4X in Rom. 7, 13X in Rom. 8, and 6X in Rom. 9-15.

Body. 4983 soma. 146X in NT. 13X in Romans. 2X in Rom. 6, 2X in Rom. 7, 4X in Rom. 8, and 3X in Rom. 12.

Members. 3196. melos. 34X in NT. 10X in Romans. 4X in Rom. 6, 3X in Rom. 7, 3X in Rom. 12.

Spirit. 4151 pneuma. 385X in NT. 34X in Romans. 1X in Rom. 5:5, 1X in Rom. 7:6, 22X in Rm. 8, 8X in Rom. 9-15 (see Rom. 15:13,16,19)

I came across these quotations by John Lennox which I think are quite good:  
“Faith is not a leap in the dark; it’s the exact opposite. It’s a commitment based on evidence!” Another quote from John: “Faith is believing because we have evidence.”