

Romans 7

Kairos Questions

Read Romans 7

1. In the first six verses of Romans 7, Paul reminds us that we died to the law through the body of Christ. Why? So that we might bear fruit to God (v. 4). If you had a religious upbringing, what were some of the rules you grew up with? Looking back, do you think those rules were emphasized in order to help you bear fruit to God or to make you more adept at managing your sin? As you grew older, did the incessant demand to keep the rules help or hinder your faith? Did it frustrate or further the work of God in you? How so?
2. In Romans 7:4-6, Paul paints a stark contrast between bearing fruit to God and bearing fruit for death (v. 4-6). As you think about that contrast, what comes to mind? As slaves to righteousness (6:18), what might it mean for us to bear fruit to God (see Galatians 5:22-23)? As you think about your own life, which of the nine virtues that characterize the fruit of the Spirit do you find most elusive? Controlled by the sinful nature we have but one choice—to bear fruit for death. According to Galatians 5:19-21, what does that look like?
3. According to Paul, the law was given to elucidate our struggle with sin (v. 7). By means of its inherent goodness (v. 12), combined with our inability to follow it perfectly (v. 18), the law brings an awareness that highlights the war going on inside of us (v. 21-23) and increases our desperation for a better way to be reconciled to God (v. 24). Prior to reading Romans 7, how would you have described the purpose of the law to an inquisitive friend? How has Paul's description of the law's primary function as "sin-illuminator" (v. 7-9) changed or enhanced your own understanding of why the law was given by God in the first place?
4. Many of us are familiar with the conflict Paul describes in Romans 7:14-23. We know what it is to have the desire to do what is good while simultaneously struggling to carry it out (v. 18). It's a tension that's only remedied by grace (8:1-2). As a follower of Jesus, how do you reconcile your ongoing struggle with sin with your status as a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17)? What part of Paul's story, particularly as it's told in Romans 7:14-23, resonates with your own? Do you find yourself as desperate for "rescue" as Paul was in verse 24?

5. Apart from Christ, we are intrinsically incapable of bearing fruit to God. As the law highlights our struggle with sin, we begin to recognize that we need help—what author Philip Yancey describes as “radical outside intervention”—which is exactly what Paul suggests in verses 24 and 25. The only way to live outside the “axis of evil”—sin, law, and death—is to be rescued. When were you rescued and how has that rescue shaped the life you now live, especially in terms of bearing fruit to God?

6. In Romans 8:1-2, Paul describes this rescue in terms of being set free from the law of sin and death. Have you known or tasted the kind of freedom Paul’s describing? If so, and you feel comfortable sharing it, tell us more about it. If not, and you find yourself wondering why, feel free to share that as well.