

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR MAN FROM START TO FINISH
Part IV: God's Righteousness Granted In Sanctification, Romans 6:1-8:39
C. Answering If The Law Is Sinful And Destructive Since It Arouses Sin
(Romans 7:7-13)

I. Introduction

- A. When Paul explained that the Law of God was given to define sin as sin (Romans 5:13-17), his critics might react by claiming he was teaching that the Law itself was sinful and destructive due to its effects on people.
- B. Paul countered these charges in Romans 7:7-13, and we view his teaching for our insight and edification:

II. Answering If The Law Is Sinful And Destructive Since It Arouses Sin, Romans 7:7-13.

- A. Paul addressed the question of the Law being sinful, showing that man's sin nature is what is sinful, v. 7-11:
 - 1. In voicing his critics' charge that he taught the Law was sinful for arousing sin in men, Paul asked, "Is the Law sin?" and answered, *me genoito*, a "vehement denial," Rom. 7:7a; Bib. Know. Com., N. T., p. 466.
 - 2. Rather, he claimed that all the Law did was expose sin in sinful man as sin (Romans 7:7b), and gave as an illustration the sin of coveting, Romans 7:7c-8 NIV (as follows):
 - a. The Law prohibited the sin of coveting, Romans 7:7c with Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21.
 - b. However, knowing that God prohibited coveting only makes sinful man motivated to covet all the more because sin in man takes advantage of the opportunity given through knowing what is righteous to violate that righteousness with every kind of covetous desire, Romans 7:8a; *Ibid.*
 - c. In other words, the problem is not in the Law itself, but in what it exposes -- the sinfulness in man himself as lodged in his sinful nature (that Paul discusses at length in Romans 7:14-25); *Ibid.*
 - d. Indeed, apart from the Law, Paul wrote that "sin is dead" in the sense that it "is less active, for the Law arouses 'sinful passions' (7:5)," Romans 7:8b; *Ibid.*
 - 3. To clarify, Paul noted that "(o)nce I was alive apart from Law" in the sense that in "his personal experience as a child and perhaps even a youth prior to his awareness and understanding of the full impact of God's commandments" (*Ibid.*), meaning he once was not keenly aware of sin in himself, Romans 7:9a.
 - 4. Yet, "when the commandment came," when the significance of the commandment against coveting came to him prior to his salvation, the sin nature within him made its presence clearly evident by its reaction of increased lust to covet, so Paul "died" in his own realization of his great condemnation, Romans 7:9b; *Ibid.*
 - 5. Thus, the problem was sin in Paul, not sin in the Law, Rom. 7:10-12: the Law only exposed the power and wickedness of the sinful nature by means of asserting righteousness that was opposite that sinful nature!
- B. Paul addressed the question of the Law being destructive, countering that the sin nature is the culprit, v. 13:
 - 1. Taking his just-mentioned "quality of the commandment ("good")" about the Law's command against coveting in Romans 7:12, Paul asked another question by his critics, "Did that which is good, then, become death to me?" meaning, "Did the Law that was good become death to me?" (Romans 7:13a NIV)
 - 2. Paul again gave an emphatic negation, *me genoito*, "By no means!" (Romans 7:13b; *Ibid.*, p. 467)
 - 3. Rather, he explained that the sin nature within himself might itself be exposed to be sinful, worked death in him by the Law of God that was good, that sin by the commandment might become visibly very sinful for Paul himself to observe, Romans 7:13c.
 - 4. This argument perfectly fits Paul's claim back in Romans 3:19-28 that the Law of God was designed in all of its goodness to stand in stark contrast to the sin in man that man's sin might become exposed to his awareness that he might face his need for God's delivering salvation and thus be driven to trust in Christ!

Lesson: Paul defended the Law of God as being righteous and good though it aroused sin in him and though it condemned him to death for violating the Law, for the REAL cause of the sin and death was NOT the LAW, but the SIN NATURE in man that God's righteous and good law EXPOSED. The EXPOSURE of this SIN NATURE by MEANS of the LAW was absolutely NECESSARY to convict lost man of his need for God's deliverance that he might come to faith in Christ versus seeking in futility to justify himself before God by his own works.

Application: (1) May we realize that the Law is perfectly righteous and good, but that its perfect righteousness and goodness irritates man's sin nature into reacting more wickedly against the Law, exposing its sinfulness so that the sinner might be driven to seek God's solution to his sin by faith in Christ versus futile self-help works! (2) May we then realize as BELIEVERS that WE need GOD'S HELP to live above the SIN NATURE sin in our OWN lives, that we be DRIVEN to rely on the HOLY SPIRIT for righteous living, Romans 7:24; 8:3-4!