

NOTES AND QUESTIONS FOR INDUCTIVE STUDY OF PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS - PART SEVEN

The second part of the good news is that by putting His Spirit within our hearts, God has made it possible for us to live on earth as He wants. The big question in chapter six is 'Why bother?' If we are already forgiven and guaranteed a place in heaven then there seems no point in living a godly life on earth. If we go on the way we were, God's forgiveness just goes on showing His grace.(6:1) This seems like a repeat of the silly excuse of chapter 3:5-8 which Paul dealt with very sharply.

Chapter six answers this question by three illustrations. The first is in the picture from baptism of death and resurrection. Our old life died with Christ on the cross. We were buried with Him in the same tomb. When He was raised up we were given a new life also.(6:2-5) The old life which used to have a habit of sin was crucified therefore it has no place exerting its influence in sinful behaviour any longer.(6:6) We have escaped from sin which once trapped us.(6:7) The new life, His resurrection life inside us, is the life we can now enjoy. Just as death is permanent so the new life is meant to be permanent.(6:8-10) Let us therefore live in the light of the two great facts of Christ's death and resurrection.(6:11)

The second picture is that of an instrument, a tool or a weapon which has been placed in the hands of an expert, God Himself. Why go back to putting our lives in the hands of the clumsy novice, self, when God's management is so wise, loving and skilful?(6:12-14)

The third picture is that of a slave who has come to belong to a new owner. The old master was sin, showing himself by lawlessness, weakness, and impurity. His pay was death. The new master is the Lord Himself who demonstrates grace, righteousness, sanctification and gives teaching which requires obedience. He freely gives us eternal life. Why go back to the misery of being controlled by the old master?(6:15-23)

So we do want to live the Christian life, but the next problem is why do we fail so miserably when we try to do so? In chapter 7 Paul uses one of his most fanciful illustrations to answer this question.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER SEVEN

7:1-6 Q.1 What is Paul's illustration here and how does it fit the problem of why we still sin as Christians?

7:1-6 Q.2 What then is our basic mistake when we fail in our efforts to live the Christian life?

7:1-6 Q.3 How can we live as Christ wants us to? What practical steps must we take? Why are we reluctant to take them?

7:1-6 Q.4 What does this section teach us about God's view of marriage, divorce and remarriage?

7:7-13 Q.5 Is failure in our Christian lives caused by the Old Testament rules? Would it have been better if God had not given us the Ten Commandments?

7:7-13 Q.6 Give practical examples of how the Law seems to make the problem of our behaviour worse?

7:14-20 Q.7 Why does wanting to do good not lead to good behaviour? What do we need to understand about ourselves?

7:21-23 Q.8 Paul now changes his illustration to explain why our intentions and our actions are in conflict. What is his new illustration and how does it fit our experience?

7:24,25 Q.9 What escape is there from the civil war within? What do we have to do to escape from the prison of our failure?

7:1-25 Q.10 In the light of this chapter what do we have to say to the alcoholic who cannot stop drinking, the husband who cannot stop beating his wife or the wife who cannot stop nagging her husband?

