

B. Step Two in sanctification is recognizing and acting upon our new relationship to the Law of God: that of both death and life

Paul develops this step under three motifs:

Motif 1 -- We are dead to our old relationship to the Law

Motif 2 -- We now live lives of internal spiritual conflict

Motif 3 -- We are to live in a new relationship to the Law of God

1. The first motif may be expressed in the assertion: we are dead to our old relationship to the Law of God

This motif is expressed in three verses:

Romans 6:14 -- "you are not under law, but under grace"

Romans 7:4 -- "you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ"

Romans 7:6 -- "But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter."

In our old relationship to the Law, from God's point of view we were under the demands of God's perfect, spiritual standard of righteousness; and because we were sinners we were under the Law's condemnation.

From our point of view we viewed the Law as a formal, external set of rules by which to make ourselves presentable to God, and by which to earn God's approval on our lives.

But now having been united to Christ, we are no longer under the Law's demands and its condemnation. We are delivered from and are dead to the binding authority of the Law to require perfect obedience from us on pain of condemnation and eternal death for failure.

To be "under law" means to operate within a system in which perfect obedience is demanded and rewarded, and disobedience is condemned and punished. For a sinner, it means to stand under the sentence of condemnation, because of guilt; and to be bound over, as a slave, to the sin-principle, because of depravity.

To be "under grace" means to operate within a system in which perfect obedience is required, provided through Christ (Christ for us, the Holy Spirit in us), and rewarded; and disobedience is condemned and punished in Christ. For a Christian, it means to stand under the sentence of justification, because of Christ's imputed righteousness; and to be bound over, as a slave, to the righteousness principle, because of regeneration.

To be under law means to be under the jurisdiction of the Law's requirements and judgments. The Law requires perfect reparation for all past offenses and perfect obedience in all future actions. Its judgment upon non-fulfillment of its requirements is condemnation, including a guilty status and the penalty of death; its judgment upon fulfillment is justification, including a non-guilty status and the reward of life.