

Section One, Lesson Four – Freedom from the law helps us grow.

1. Answer: True obedience comes “from the heart,” so it starts in the heart (v. 17); it is measured by a form or pattern of teaching or doctrine (v. 17); its opposites are uncleanness (impurity) and iniquity (literally *lawlessness*, v. 19); and its result is holiness (vv. 19, 22), meaning progressive sanctification or Christian growth into the image of Christ. Suggestion: Point out that so often believers like to talk about a choice between slavery to the law or freedom from it. Paul clarifies that our choice is really between slavery to sin and slavery to God. Slavery to God calls for obedience that is measured by doctrine, and that doctrine is found in God’s law (see Eph. 6:1-3, where believer-children are commanded to obey God’s law to obey their parents).
2. Answer: What is new in the life of a widow is not that the authority of the law in her life has passed away. Clearly, she is free to marry another man only because God’s law says she is free to do so. For the same reason, it might be noted that she is not free to be married to another woman, or to two other men. What has changed is the way the law applies to this woman in view of the change in her status. She is still under the authority of the law, but that authority applies to her in a different way now. Suggestion: Emphasize that freedom from the law for the believer does not mean that the law no longer has authority over the believer. Lawlessness is still a real problem to be avoided (translated *iniquity* in 6:19). What freedom from the law means for the believer is that the authority of the law now applies to him differently than it does the unbeliever, because the believer’s status has changed. Dead and risen in Christ, the justified believer is one who can never again be legally condemned before the law of God (8:1). This means that when and if we sin, that sin can no longer use the law of God to destroy us as it once did (7:8-11). Freedom from the law’s condemnation means that our sin has a certain impotence now. We always have the resources we need in Christ to make it right, and we will never experience the condemnation of the law our sin deserves. Christ experienced that already for us.
3. Answer: The righteousness of God’s law should be fulfilled in us (Rom. 8:4). Our lives should be the kind of lives that obey God’s laws—lives that are subject to God’s law (Rom. 8:7). This is the way we please God (Rom. 8:8). Suggestion: Give assurance that once God’s law is written upon our hearts, we have the capacity to delight in God’s law (Rom. 7:22). Delighting in God’s law should find us meditating in it day and night (Psalm 1).
4. Answer: We fulfill the righteousness of God’s law, obey God’s law, please God and delight in God’s law, only by the power of God’s Spirit in our lives (Rom. 7:6, 8:1-2, 4-6). More will be said about the importance of the Holy Spirit to our Christian growth in the next lesson. Suggestion: Challenge students to ponder whether or not they truly delight in God’s law because it is written upon their hearts. If not, it may not be written there, or the problem may be that we are walking in the impotence of the flesh rather than in the power of God’s Spirit (7:18, 5-6). Delighting in God’s law goes hand-in-hand with meditating in God’s law (Ps. 1:2), because that is the tool God’s Spirit uses to empower our walk.

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