

## Romans: Verse-by-Verse

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### Romans 7:6B

\*Student Notes:

- **Background:** With Christ's death and resurrection, a new order came about. After striving to keep and maintain God's holy, good, and righteous requirements, "... We serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter."
- **An Old Covenant Experience:**

Paul compares the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. He is showing how one led to the other.

1. The Old Covenant focused on outward conformity to an entire set of rules, regulations, codes, and decrees. 2. The New Covenant focuses on "serving in the newness of Spirit".

Spirit is capitalized: Paul means "the newness of the Holy Spirit". The vast majority of Old Testament believers lived and died without ever having an inward experience of the Holy Spirit. Primarily, only four groups of people had an inner working of the Holy Spirit: Prophets, Priests, High Priests and Kings. See: Numbers 11:24-25; Deuteronomy 34:9; Numbers 27:18; 1 Samuel 10:10; 16:12-13.

The Old Testament pattern: The Spirit came upon certain Old Testament individuals for a specific task – and in some cases, once the task was completed, the Spirit departed from that person.

- **A New Covenant Experience:**

"... We serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter". The "Oldness of the Letter" = The Mosaic Law. The Israelites had primarily had an external religion with external laws, rules, regulations, and decrees.

The "Newness of the Spirit" – is possible because of a New Covenant that

has a remarkably different approach:

2 Corinthians 3:5-6: "Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

This is the closest parallel to Romans 7:6 we can find, and it makes the outcome of the old pattern very obvious: "...For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

- **A Predicted Transition:**

The greatest Old Testament text on the purpose and reality of the New Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-34. It is quoted several times in the book of Hebrews. It directly intersects with Romans 7:6.

The fundamental difference between serving God in the Old and New Covenant is the change between **external obedience** and **internal empowerment**.

The Old Covenant obedience was primarily an external obedience (Letter of the Law). The New Covenant is NOT external. Jeremiah: "*I will put My law in their minds and inscribe it on their hearts.*"

**A mirror prophecy:** Ezekiel 36:26 -- "I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart."

The foundation of the ability to "... serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.":

1. The Law [the Moral Law] is no longer a demand from outside; instead, God writes it on our minds and inscribes it in our hearts.

2. Our ability to keep God's Moral Code is no longer limited to an external experience. Ezekiel 36: "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances."

- **Paul's Conclusions about the Mosaic Code:**

Was the Mosaic Code bad? Not at all! It wasn't bad; it was weak. How was it weak? It was weakened by our inability to keep it. 1. It was external, and our obedience was external. 2. It was external – and we didn't have the inward power of the Holy Spirit to keep it.

John Piper:

*God planned the inadequacy of the "old covenant" with a view to the great superiority of the new covenant in Christ – so that Christ would get greater glory. The old covenant was designed to lead us to Christ and to his Spirit and to faith. If we want to honor Christ the way we should, and enjoy him the way we should, then we need to see the greatness of the work of God in the new covenant beneath our salvation like an ocean of depth and majesty.*

1. Under the New Covenant, God has given us that new Spirit he promised.
2. We don't relate to God on the basis of a "letter written in stone" but as a "Spirit-given" relationship.
3. The "Moral Law of God" has been transferred to our hearts, but we have been given an inward power to keep it. By the Spirit we can actually, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love you neighbors as yourself."

John Piper:

"The will of God does not crush you from outside with its demand for unattainable perfection. That Law is satisfied in Jesus. Now the will of God rises in your heart as the Spirit transforms your desires and makes you free."