



# LEARNING TO POSSESS YOUR POSSESSIONS

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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# Learning to Possess Your Possessions

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Romans 7:1-4

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #2060

There seems to be a gap between what the Bible says we are in Christ and what we are in reality. We are called to be victors, yet so many of us live as victims.

Adrian Rogers says, “We need not to make the Bible match our lives but to make our lives match the Bible.” We must appropriate what God has already provided for us and learn to possess our possessions.

Romans 7:4 says, “Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.”

By nature, we're married to the law, and it makes demands upon us that we cannot meet, no matter how hard we try. But when Jesus Christ died, we died with Him and became dead to the law. His death, burial, and resurrection had our name on it, and now we have a new life as the Bride of Christ.

**The first step is to learn how to die and start living.** We will never possess our possessions until we come to the end of ourselves.

Adrian Rogers says, “The reason that so many of us are not filled with the Spirit is we're so stuffed full of ourselves, there's not room for the Spirit.” We must go through something to get to something; we must go through death to ourselves to get to the victorious life.

**The second step is to stop trying and start trusting.** Even after we are saved, we cannot keep the law of God in our own strength. We will fail over and over again, because it is in our nature to sin. But because we are the Bride of Christ, every demand upon our life is a demand upon Jesus, who lives in us. He is able to cover the multitude of our sins and deliver us from the law of sin and death. We can quit crying and start praising, for now in Jesus, we have the law of the Spirit.

## Life Application

What would your life look like if you learned to possess your possessions—to appropriate what God has already provided? Learn dying and begin to live; stop trying and start trusting; quit crying and start praising!



# Learning to Possess Your Possessions

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## 1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Many Christians are not living up to their profession in Christ.
  - i) Many people are saved, but they don't act like it.
  - ii) They're not living victorious lives.
  - iii) There seems to be a contradiction between what the Bible says they are in Christ and what they are in reality.
    - (1) The Bible says that we are complete in the Lord Jesus Christ.
      - (a) Colossians 2:10
      - (b) We don't have need of anything in the spiritual realm.
    - (2) The Bible says, concerning those of us who are saved, that we are overcomers.
      - (a) 1 John 5:4
      - (b) Yet, most believers live as though they are overcome, not overcomers.
        - (i) They are victims rather than victors.
    - (3) The Bible says that when we're saved, we have peace that passes understanding and joy unspeakable and full of glory.
      - (a) Philippians 4:7
      - (b) 1 Peter 1:8
      - (c) John 4:14
      - (d) Are you completely satisfied in the Lord Jesus?
    - (4) The Bible teaches that in Christ we are more than conquerors.
      - (a) Romans 8:37
      - (b) Are you more than a conqueror?
- b) Where is the problem between the Bible and our reality?
  - i) Do you think that you're right, and the Bible is wrong?
  - ii) Many of us want to dumb down the Bible to match our lives rather than bring our lives up to the Bible.
- c) In our Christian lives, we need to bring our lives up to the standard that God has for us.
  - i) We are overcomers.
  - ii) We do have peace that passes understanding.
  - iii) We need not make the Bible match our lives but to make our lives match the Bible.
- d) The answer to this problem is found in two key words:
  - i) Provision
    - (1) This is what God does.
    - (2) God has made provision for us.
  - ii) Appropriation



- (1) God's provision for us does us no good until we appropriate what He has done for us.
- e) What is the difference between provision and appropriation?
  - i) When Jesus Christ died on the cross, He died for the world.
    - (1) 1 John 2:2
      - (a) "Propitiation" means "satisfaction."
      - (b) Jesus is the satisfaction for our sins and the sins of the whole world.
    - (2) John 1:29
  - ii) If Jesus died for the sins of the world, then why is there still sin in the world?
    - (1) Because people have not appropriated what Jesus did on the cross.
      - (a) They have not possessed their possessions.
    - (2) John 3:18
    - (3) Provision has been made, but people have not appropriated that which is theirs.
  - iii) Provision is on one hand, and appropriation is on the other hand.
  - iv) When we get saved, we are crucified with Christ.
    - (1) When Jesus died, His death had our name on it.
    - (2) Colossians 3:3
    - (3) Colossians 3:5
      - (a) "Mortify" means "put to death."
      - (b) This is not a contradiction from Colossians 3:3, which says that we are already dead.
        - (i) Technically, we are dead with Christ.
        - (ii) Practically, we must appropriate what we have in the Lord Jesus.
  - v) Joshua 1:3
    - (1) The children of Israel came out of Egypt and were going into Canaan.
      - (a) They were coming out of the land of bondage into the land of blessing.
    - (2) This verse does not say, "Will I give it to you," but it says, "I have already given it to you."
      - (a) The land was theirs, but they had to possess their possessions.
  - vi) As Christians, we have so much that we have not yet possessed.
  - vii) There is God's provision, but there must be our appropriation.
    - (1) It doesn't matter what God has done for us; if we don't appropriate it, then it won't be ours.
  - viii) If a person has books in their library at home that they haven't yet read, the books are theirs, but they haven't possessed our possessions.
    - (1) The books are there, but they're doing us no good.
    - (2) We haven't appropriated that which is ours.
- f) Romans 7:1-4
  - i) By divine inspiration, the Apostle Paul gives us an object lesson.
  - ii) Paul gives us the story of a woman who is married to a man; Paul is making an analogy.
    - (1) The woman is married to Mr. Law.
      - (a) The law of the Lord is perfect, so she's married to a perfect man.
        - (i) Psalm 19:7
      - (b) Mr. Law is a very rigid man with extremely high standards.
        - (i) Each day he tells her what to do and what not to do.



- (2) The woman's intentions are good.
    - (a) She intends to obey her husband and do everything that he tells her to do.
    - (b) But in the course of the day, she realizes that she did not do everything he told her to do.
      - (i) And she did some things he told her not to do.
  - (3) When the husband finds out that she did not do all that she was supposed to do and did some things that she wasn't supposed to do, he scolds her.
    - (a) She feels guilty and promises to do better tomorrow.
  - (4) He gives her instructions for tomorrow.
    - (a) When he returns home, he finds that she's failed again.
  - (5) After a while, she decides that she doesn't want to be married to a perfect man because she can't please him.
    - (a) She cannot get out of the marriage.
      - (i) God's plan is not that way.
      - (b) She is married to him as long as they live.
  - (6) She decides to wait until Mr. Law dies, and then she'll be free.
    - (a) She now wants to marry Mr. Love.
    - (b) But Mr. Law is not going to die.
      - (i) Matthew 5:18
  - (7) She then realizes that if she dies, then she can be married to Mr. Love.
- iii) Romans 7:4
    - (1) When Paul mentions the body of Christ in this verse, he is talking about the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.
  - iv) Paul is saying in this passage that by nature, we are married to the law.
    - (1) The law makes demands upon us that we can't meet, no matter how hard we try.
  - v) But when Jesus Christ died, we died with Him.
    - (1) We became dead to the law by the body of Christ.
    - (2) We died with Him, we were buried with Him, and we are raised with Him.
      - (a) We have a new life.
  - vi) We are the bride of Christ.
- g) Today's message will show us steps that we can take to possess our possessions.

## 2) LEARN DYING AND START LIVING

- a) We will never possess our possessions until we come to the end of ourselves.
  - i) The woman in Paul's analogy had to die.
- b) We have to die to the old ways.
- c) Matthew 16:24
  - i) A cross is for dying upon.
    - (1) It is the old man or old woman who dies so that we can become a new person.
- d) Mark 8:35
  - i) When we lose our life for Jesus' sake and the Gospel's, then we find it.
    - (1) Jesus says, "Keepers weepers, losers finders."



- e) Everyone wants to go to Heaven but nobody wants to die.
  - i) We have to go through something to get to something.
  - ii) We have to go through death to get to Heaven.
  - iii) And you have to go through death to yourself to get to the victorious life.
- f) The reason many Christians are not filled with the Spirit is because they are so full of themselves that there's not enough room for the Spirit.
  - i) We have to come to the end of ourselves and learn dying so that we can start living.
- g) John 10:10
  - i) Jesus came that we might have life and have it more abundantly.
    - (1) But we can't have this abundant life until we're sick and tired of that old life.
    - (2) We can't have this abundant life until we say that because Jesus died, we died with Him.
      - (a) And when He rose, we rose with Him.

### 3) STOP TRYING AND START TRUSTING

- a) Paul is giving his biography as an early Christian.
- b) Romans 7:7
  - i) We would not have known sin except by the law.
- c) In Romans 7:7-24, there are some words that stand out over and over again:
  - i) "I"
    - (1) The perpendicular pronoun "I" stands out more than any other.
      - (a) "I," "me," or "my" are used over 40 times in these verses.
    - (2) Romans 7:7
    - (3) Romans 7:9
    - (4) Romans 7:10
    - (5) Romans 7:11
    - (6) Romans 7:13
    - (7) Romans 7:14
    - (8) Romans 7:15
  - ii) "Law"
    - (1) "Law" is used in these verses
    - (2) The key in these verses is Paul and the law.
    - (3) In Paul's analogy, the woman is married to Mr. Law.
      - (a) She can't please Mr. Law.
      - (b) She then marries Mr. Love.
        - (i) Mr. Love is compassionate and not rigid like Mr. Law.
      - (c) But she finds that Mr. Love's requirements are higher than Mr. Law's.
        - (i) Mr. Law said to go one mile, but Mr. Love said to go two miles.
          - 1. Matthew 5:41
        - (ii) Mr. Law said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," but Mr. Love said to, "Love your enemies and do good to those who persecute you."



1. Deuteronomy 19:21
2. Matthew 5:44
- (4) A lost person cannot keep the law of God, and neither can a saved person by himself.
  - (a) Some believe that when they get saved, they won't sin anymore.
    - (i) But the old flesh rises up, and we fail.
    - (ii) We get caught up in a service and rededicate our lives and promise to do better; but we fail again.
  - (b) The devil will try to convince us that we weren't saved at all.
  - (c) Romans 7:18
- d) Romans 7:21-23
  - i) This is Paul's testimony as a young, carnal Christian.
    - (1) Paul wasn't a hypocrite; he loved God in his heart.
  - ii) Romans 7:23
    - (1) The law of his mind was the love that he had for God.
    - (2) But there was another war going on in his members:
      - (a) In his eyes, ears, tongue.
- e) Paul said that there are two laws:
  - i) The law of sin
    - (1) The law of sin is the law that makes us do what we do.
      - (a) We are sinners.
      - (b) There is a principle that's in us, and it's called "the flesh."
      - (c) We have a predisposition called the law of sin.
    - (2) The law of sin is like the law of gravity.
      - (a) It is working all the time.
      - (b) The law of gravity is that downward pull.
    - (3) Paul came to the place where he was almost brokenhearted.
      - (a) Romans 7:24-25
        - (i) In verse 24, Paul asks who shall deliver him from the body of death.
        - (ii) In verse 25, he provides the answer: deliverance comes through Jesus Christ our Lord.
    - (4) The way we live the victorious life is not by trying.
      - (a) It is not you and the law.
      - (b) God has provided a victory for us.
        - (i) That victory is with Jesus Christ.
    - (5) In the analogy of the woman who marries Mr. Love, she discovers several things:
      - (a) She and Mr. Love have a joint banking account.
      - (b) Everything Mr. Love tells her to do, he does it with her.
        - (i) Every demand of God upon our life is a demand upon Jesus Christ who lives in us.
    - (6) Deliverance comes through Jesus Christ.
      - (a) Romans 7:25
  - ii) The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.
    - (1) Romans 8:1-2





- (a) In Romans 7:24-25, the Spirit is not mentioned at all.
- (b) Beginning in Romans 8:1, there is a change.
  - (i) Romans 8:4
  - (ii) Romans 8:9
    - 1. In order to live the Christian life, it is the Holy Spirit of God in us.
  - (iii) Romans 8:2
- (2) The downward pull of life is like the law of gravity.
- (3) But there is a new law: the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.
  - (a) To those who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
- (4) We can't live the Christian life on our own; God never said we could.
  - (a) But God can and always said He would.
- (5) When we stop trying and start trusting the Lord, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death.

**4) QUIT CRYING AND START PRAISING**

- a) Romans 7:24
- b) We thank God through Jesus Christ.
- c) God didn't save us to have us live a failing life.
  - i) He saved us that we might live a victorious life.
  - ii) By His grace and for His glory, we will possess our possessions.

**5) CONCLUSION**

- a) Only Christians can possess their possessions.
- b) No unbeliever can live a victorious life.
  - i) No unbeliever can have the Spirit of God in Him.
    - (1) You must be saved.
- c) In order to be saved, you must receive the gift of salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - i) If you come to Jesus in repentance and faith and ask Him to save you, He will.
  - ii) He will save you today and will keep you saved if you trust Him.
    - (1) Romans 10:13
- d) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Acts 16:31
  - iv) John 3:16



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**SERMON REFERENCE:** Romans 7:1-4

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Would you take God's Word, turn to Romans chapter 7, and the title of our message today is, "Learning to Possess Your Possessions." Many of us are not living up to our profession in Christ. A little boy had a dog and somebody said, "Son, what kind of dog is that?" And really, the dog was just a mongrel, but the little boy, proud of his dog, said, "He's a police dog." And someone said, "Well, he doesn't look like a police dog." And the little guy said, "Well, he's in the secret service." Now I know a lot of Christians who are saved, but they don't act like it, they don't behave like it, they're not living victorious lives, and there's something wrong, there's something missing. There seems to be a contradiction between what the Bible says they are in Christ, and what they are in reality. There seems to be a gap. For example, the Bible says in Colossians 2:10, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, that, "We are complete in Him," that is, we don't have need of anything in the spiritual realm in the Lord Jesus. But how many Christians would remind you of somebody like that?

The Bible says in First John 5:4, concerning those of us who are saved, "We are overcomers." Most believers I know are overcome, they are victims rather than victors. In Philippians 4 verse 7 the Bible says that when we're saved we have the, "Peace that passeth understanding," and First Peter 1:8 says, "Joy unspeakable and full of glory." How many Christians would you say, I know a man, I know a woman, a boy and a girl, a great deal of them that have peace that passes understanding, that have joy unspeakable and full of glory? Jesus said in John chapter 4 verse 14, "If you'll drink of the water that I will give you, you will never thirst again." How many satisfied people in this congregation would say, "I am completely satisfied in the Lord Jesus?" The Bible teaches in Romans chapter 8 and verse 37, we're going to get to the first part of that chapter this morning, that, "In Christ we are more than conquerors." Well, I wonder if we're conquerors at all. And we could just go on and on and on and talk about what the Bible says we are and then what reality shows that we are.

Now where's the problem? I mean, what about this contradiction? Do you think you're right and the Bible is wrong? So what are we going to do, we're just going to dumb down the Bible? Are we just going to adjust the Bible and lower the Bible to match our lives? A bookstore manager told me in Florida one time, said, "Pastor, do you know what happened to me?" Said, "A lady came in here and wanted to know if I had a lavender Bible. She said next Sunday was Easter and she was going to wear a lavender dress and she wanted a Bible to match her dress." Now, nothing really wrong with that, but I got to thinking how many of us want a Bible to match our lives, don't we? We want to somehow bring the Bible down to our lives rather than bring our lives up to the Bible.

The flag got out ahead of the regiment in a battle and the man said, "Sergeant, the flag's out ahead of the regiment. Shall I bring it back?" He said, "No, bring the regiment up to the flag." And that's what we need to do in our Christian life. We need to bring our lives up to the standard that God has for us. The truth of the matter is that we are all of these things that I just described. We are overcomers, we do have peace that passeth understanding. Jesus Christ is made into this wisdom, righteousness, sanctification,



and redemption. But somehow we need to bring the regiment up to the flag and we need not to make the Bible match our lives but to make our lives match the Bible.

Now what is the key? What is the answer to this riddle, this problem? Well, you need to understand there are two key words and the first key word is, or the first key thing that we're thinking about is what God does; we'll call that **provision**. God has made provision for us. That's one key word. But the other key word is **appropriation**. Now God has made the provision for us but that provision does us no good until we appropriate what God has done for us. That's the reason I've called this message "Learning to Possess Your Possessions."

I think I can illustrate what I'm talking about, in the difference between provision and appropriation. For example, behind me are these crosses. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, represented by the center cross there, He died for the world. And the Bible says in First John chapter 2 and verse 2 that, "Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins," that's a doublejointed word which means satisfaction. He's the satisfaction for our sins, "And not for ours only, but for the sin of the whole world." John the Baptist saw Jesus coming and in John 1 verse 29 said, "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" Jesus died for the sin of the world! Yes, but is there still sin in the world? Of course! Why? Because people have not appropriated what Jesus did on the cross, right? They have not possessed their possessions. That's the reason the Bible says in John 3:18, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed." I mean provision has been made but he has not appropriated that which is his. See, provision on the one hand, appropriation on the other hand.

Or let me give you another example. Once you get saved, as we preached last Sunday, remember? In Galatians 2:20, the Bible says that we died with Christ. "We are crucified with Christ." That when Jesus died, His death had our name on it. And so the Bible teaches clearly in Colossians 3 verse 3, "For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God." Now that is true about every mother's child who's saved. You are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Jesus died you died with Him. Well that is true, that's Colossians 3:3, but Colossians 3:5 says, "Mortify, therefore, your members, which are upon the Earth." The word mortify means put to death. Well, wait a minute, wait a minute, doesn't the Bible say we're already dead? Is that a contradiction? No! What he is saying is, "Yes, technically, you are dead with Christ, but practically, you must appropriate what you have in the Lord Jesus Christ."

Or let me give you another example; I think you can understand this one. Remember when the children of Israel came out of Egypt, they were going into Canaan, they were coming out of the land of bondage into the land of blessing, and God told Joshua in Joshua chapter 1 verse 3, I love this, He said, "Joshua, every place, every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon," now listen to this, "every place have I given you." Not, will I give it to you, I have already given it to you. Every place that you put your foot down, it's yours, it's already yours, it's already yours, it's already yours. Now, it was theirs, but they had to possess their possession. God didn't say, "If you put your foot on it I will give it to you." God said, "I have given it to you. Now go in and possess your possessions." Are you following me, folks? Are you listening to me? Now what I'm trying to tell you is that you have so much that you have not yet possessed. There is God's provision but there must be your appropriation. And it doesn't matter what God has done for you, if you don't appropriate it, it won't be yours.

I think I can give you one more illustration about what it means to possess your possessions. How many of you, now be honest with me, have books in your library at home that you haven't read yet? That's



most of us. You've got books but you haven't read them yet. Now is that book yours? Well, yes, but you haven't possessed your possession. I mean, it's doing you no good. It is there, it's your book, but you have not appropriated that which is yours. So remember on the one hand, there is the word provision. On the other hand, there's the word appropriation.

Now, with that in mind, in Romans chapter 7, we're going to learn how to appropriate. We're going to learn how to possess our possessions. Now let's read in Romans chapter 7 verse 1 through verse 4, "Know ye not, brethren, for I speak unto them that know the law, how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth, but if the husband be dead she's loosed from the law of her husband. So then if while her husband liveth she be married to another man she shall be called an adulteress. But if her husband be dead she's free from that law so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Good night, Pastor, what does that have to do with living victoriously? Why did Paul, right in the middle of this passage, why does he start talking about marriage and divorce and dying and remarrying? What on earth is this? Well, he's giving us an incredible lesson, an object lesson. And I'm amazed at the genius of the apostle Paul, of course he did it by divine inspiration, as he gives this story.

Here's the story of a woman who is married to a man. Now don't miss the analogy that Paul is making. That man's name, we're going to call him Mr. Law. She is married to Mr. Law. Now you know that the law of the Lord is perfect, and so she is married to a perfect man. That leaves out every other woman here today, except Joyce. She's married to a perfect man. Now you might think it would be wonderful to be married to a perfect man. She thinks, "I've got the catch, man, I've got the best guy, I am married to a man, a gentleman named Mr. Law." And she says, "What a wonderful, noble husband I have, Mr. Law." And Mr. Law is a very rigid man. Mr. Law has extremely high standards. And each day before Mr. Law goes off to work, he tells his wife what to do. He says, "Do this and this and this and this." And he says, "Don't do this and don't do this and don't do this." She says, "Yes, beloved husband," gives him a kiss. Her intentions are so good. She's going to obey him and do everything that he tells her to do.

But in the course of the day she finds out that she did not do everything he told her to do and there's some things he told her not to do that she slipped up and did. When he comes home he checks up on her, he finds out that she did not do everything that she was supposed to do and she did some things she was not supposed to do, and he scolds her, and she feels guilty over it. But she says, "I'll do better tomorrow." And he gives her instructions tomorrow, "Do this, do this, do this, and don't do that, and don't do that, and don't do that." She says, "Yes, husband, you're so wise, you're so strong, and everything you've told me to do is right." And then when he comes home she's failed again and again and again and again and after a while she said, "I'm sick of being married to him, I don't want to be married to a perfect man. I can't please him!"

Like the woman who made up her mind one day she was going to please her husband no matter what he said. So she said, "Sweetheart, what would you like for breakfast? He said, "Eggs." She said, "How would you like them fixed, sweetheart." He said, "I want one fried and one scrambled." She said, "All right," went in the kitchen and fried an egg and scrambled an egg and put them on the table. He still had a pout, she said, "Now what's wrong?" He said, "You scrambled the wrong egg!" Now there's some people



that you just can't please. And she couldn't please Mr. Law. And so she says, "I wish I could get out of this thing, but I can't get out of it, I'm married to him, as long as we live. I'm not free to go off and marry some other man. God's plan is not that way. I'm stuck with this guy."

And then she says, "Oh, wait a minute, though. I'll wait till he dies. I'll wait till Mr. Law dies and then when Mr. Law dies I'll be free." Because she'd been looking at another man already. That man's name is Mr. Love. And she says, "I'm tired of Mr. Law, I want to marry Mr. Love. But I can't marry Mr. Love because I'm already hooked to Mr. Law. But I'll wait, when Mr. Law dies." But then it dawns on her, Mr. Law is not going to die. This man has an iron constitution. As a matter of the fact, in Matthew 5:18, the Bible says about him, "Till Heaven and Earth pass, not one jot or one tittle will fail from the law!" She says, "He's not going to die! I am stuck with him." And then she has an idea. "Maybe he won't die, but maybe I'll die. Maybe I can die, and then if I die, then I can be married to Mr. Love." I know what you're thinking, how can a dead woman marry anybody?

Well, here's a wonderful story. Here's what the apostle Paul is saying. Watch this, now, you're in Romans chapter 7, look in verse 4, "Wherefore my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law," now watch this, "by the body of Christ." He's talking now about the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. "That ye should be married to another, even to Him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Hey, is this getting through? Is this not a great illustration? What Paul is saying is this, that, yes, by nature we're married to the law, and the law makes demands upon us that we cannot meet, no matter how hard we try. But when Jesus Christ died, we died with Him! We became dead to the law by the body of Christ. His death had our name on it. His burial had our name on it. His resurrection had our name on it, and we died with Him, we were buried with Him, we are raised with Him, and we have a new life. And now, friend, we're the bride of Christ, we're the bride of Christ. Isn't that a good analogy?

All right, now, here's the first step in possessing your possessions. Are you ready for it? **Learn dying and start living.** That's not contradictory. Learn dying and start living. You will never possess your possessions until you've come to the end of yourself. Remember this woman had to die. Now, you say, "Well I don't want to die, Pastor." Well I'm not being morbid. I didn't say just learn dying, I said learn dying and start living. Die to the old ways. That's the reason Jesus Christ said in Matthew 16 verse 24, "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross." A cross is not for wearing around your neck, it's for dying on. You die! Well you say, "I don't want to die!" It's the old man that dies, it's the old woman that dies, so that you can become a new person. Jesus said in Matthew 16:25, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall find it."

When we were little we used to play finders keepers, losers weepers, did you ever play that? With Jesus it's keepers weepers, losers finders. When you lose your life for His sake and the Gospel's, then you find it. You say, "I'm sick and tired of the old life, I'm sick and tired of trying, I'm sick and tired of trying to please the law. I can't do it! Jesus, You died for me, I died with You, I come to the end of that old way." Learn dying and then you'll start living.

Now, I'll admit nobody wants to say, "I want to die." You know, everybody wants to go to Heaven, but nobody wants to die, isn't that right? But you've got to go through something to get to something. You have to go through death to get to Heaven, and friend, you have to go through death to yourself to get to the victorious life. The reason that so many of us are not filled with the Spirit is, very frankly, we're so stuffed full of our self that there's not room for the Spirit. We have to come to the end of ourselves and



learn dying, learn dying, so we can start living. I am not being morbid, I am being joyful, because Jesus didn't say, "I've come that you might have death," Jesus said, "I've come that you might have life and have it abundantly." But not until you're sick and tired of that old life. Not until you say, "Yes, Jesus, because You died, I died with You. And thank God, when You rose, I rose with You."

So, we're talking about possessing your possessions. Number one, learn dying so you can start living. Number two, second principle, you ready for it? Stop trying and start trusting. Learn dying and start living. **Stop trying and start trusting.** Now what the apostle Paul is going to do right here is to give you his biography as an early Christian. Begin now in Romans 7 verse 7, "What shall we say, then, is the law sin?" No, there's nothing wrong with Mr. Law. God forbid. "Nay I'd not known sin except but by the law?" He kept telling me to do this and not to do that.

And now I want you to notice something very interesting. From chapter 7 verse 7 on through verse 24 there are three words that stand out over and over and over again. One word that stands out more than any other, and it's the shortest word, it is the little perpendicular pronoun I. I've taken my Bible and every place that the word I is or me or my, I've done in lavender, over forty times. It looks like a polka-dotted dress. I'm just going to read a little bit, and I want you to listen to how many times he says I in verse 7, "What shall we say, then, is the law sin? God forbid. Nay I have not known sin but by the law, for I had not known lust except the law had said." Verse 9, "For I was alive and I died," verse 10, "I found to be," verse 11, "Deceived me and slew me," verse 13, "Me," verse 14, "I am carnal," verse 15, "That which I do I allow not, what I would, that I do not and what I hate, that I do." I, I, I, I, I; forty times! He's talking about himself.

The next major word is the word law. That's used in this passage some twenty times. Now what is the key? It's Paul and the law. Now he's already, he's already said, "All right, I'm married to Mr. Love." Well wait a minute, let me tell you what happens to this woman. She says, "I can't please Mr. Law. Now I'm married to Mr. Love, it's going to be wonderful. Mr. Love is so kind. Mr. Love is so compassionate. Mr. Love is not rigid like Mr. Law. Thank God, I'm now married to Mr. Love."

And then do you know what happens to her? She finds out that Mr. Love's requirements are higher than Mr. Law's requirements. Mr. Law said, "Go a mile!" Mr. Love says, "Go two miles!" Mr. Law said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth!" Mr. Love says, "Love your enemies, do good to them that persecute you!" She said, "Man, this is worse than before. I'm out of the frying pan into the fire. I thought it was going to get better married to Mr. Love.

And then she finds out, and here's what I want you to find out, here's what most of us don't understand: that a lost man cannot keep the law of God and neither can a saved man by himself. Now most of us don't understand that. We think when we get saved, "Boy, I came down the aisle, I gave my heart to Jesus Christ, I got baptized up there in that baptistry! I am saved, hallelujah! I won't sin anymore. I'm married to Mr. Love." We go along for a while, and then something happens, and that old flesh rises up. We do something, say something, think something, and we say, "Oh, I thought I was saved. Where'd that come from? Oh, God, I'm sorry, forgive me, Lord. I reconsecrate my life to You. I'll never do that again, Lord," and we fall flat on our face. We get in a preaching service and the preacher will preach. We get under conviction, and we'll say, "I haven't been the kind of a Christian I need to be and I ought to be," and we rededicate and reconsecrate our lives and we say, "I will do better!" And we fail again and again. Have you ever been there? I've been there. I think almost every new Christian has been there.



And then the devil, you know what the devil does? Boy, you've got a real buddy in the devil. If you were in quicksand he'd pat you on the head. The devil comes to you and the devil says to you, "Well, maybe you weren't saved at all. Maybe you don't have the real thing. But anyway, don't go down there to the church and be a hypocrite! Don't sit there and sing, because you know what a rotten life you're living! Why don't you just stay out of church! Why don't you just stop going for a while! Maybe you could never be like those other people!" And you find out that you don't have what it takes. Now, folks, I'm telling you that a lost man cannot keep the law of God and I'm telling you also that a saved man cannot keep the law of God in his own strength.

Here's what Paul found out, look in Romans 7 verse 18, "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing, for to will is present with me but how to perform that which I, which is good, I find not." You been there? Every one of us has. I want to serve God, I delight in the law of God in the inward man, but I find another law present in me. Now there are two laws that I want you to look at here, beginning in verse 21, and folks, listen, we are just hitting the top, we're skimming the surface. Listen, here's Paul's testimony now as a young carnal Christian, Romans 7 verses 21 through 23, "I find, then, a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me." Anybody say, "Been there, done that?" "I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." Paul wasn't a hypocrite, he loved God in his heart he did! "But I see another law warring in my members against the law of my mind," the law of his mind was the love that he had for God. But there's another war in his members, his eyes, his ears, his tongue, "a war bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members."

So Paul says there are two laws. First of all, there is **the law of sin**. Do you know what the law of sin is? The law of sin is the law that makes you do what you do. You are a sinner, there is a principle that's in you and in me and it's called the flesh and every one of us have it, there's not a one of us that does not have it, it's working in us. I don't care how pious you look and how nice you look, you have in you a law, a predisposition called the law of sin. It's like the law of gravity, it's working all the time.

You may not be aware of the **law of gravity** right now, but if it weren't for that, you wouldn't be held on that seat right now and you'd go spinning off this Earth. It's the law of gravity, it's that downward pull. That's what happens to us as we get older, that's the law of gravity. And if you really get sick, it really takes over. I mean, you won't be able to navigate, you'll get down flat. And if you die, it'll take over completely, you'll just keep on going down and down and down. That is the law of gravity. And so there are two sins, two laws that are working constantly in you.

Now what did Paul discover? Well, he came to the place where he was almost brokenhearted. And he says in Romans 7 verse 24, now here's the man who's no longer married to Mr. Law, he's married to Mr. Love and he says, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Well he asked the question, and thank God he gives the answer in verse 25, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." That is, deliverance comes through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now let me tell you what this woman discovered who married Mr. Law. Now listen, this is a little complicated, this is a little complicated, but it's worth it, folks, don't check me out. Now listen, you learn dying so you can start living. You stop trying and start trusting. Now the way that you live the victorious life is not by trying. It is not you and the law, but God has provided a victory for you, and that victory is with the new person that you're married to, that's Jesus Christ.





Now let's go back. This Mr. Love says go two miles. Mr. Love says do this and do this and do this. But you know what she discovers? They now have a joint banking account. Do you know what she also discovers? That everything Mr. Love tells her to do, he just turns around and does it with her or for her. She says, "This is wonderful!" He says, "I want the bed made this way," and He says, "Come, I'll show you how to do it, I'll help you to do it." He puts His hands on her hands and He guides her and everything she needs, every demand, oh, listen to me, precious friend, every demand of God upon your life is a demand on the Jesus Christ who lives in you; that was a good place for an Amen. Every demand upon your life is a demand upon Jesus who lives in you! Okay. Now, you see, listen, you can't do it. The sooner you throw up your hands and you say, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this dead body?" And then hear the answer. "I thank God deliverance comes through Jesus Christ."

Now I want to show you something else and we're running out of time, so listen in a hurry. Now, look in chapter 8. Notice how he says in Romans 7 verse 25, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind, I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin." But now, notice the change beginning in chapter 8 verse 1, "There is therefore no condemnation to those who in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh," that is the old nature, "but after the Spirit." And now here's a new word that you're going to find out. In Romans chapter 7 from verse 24 on, the Spirit is not mentioned at all. But now notice the change of atmosphere in chapter 8 verses 1 and 2, "There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, for the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." And then notice in verse 4, "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." Look down in verse 9, "For ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit. If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you, and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." So therefore, how do you live the Christian life? Friend, it is the Holy Spirit of God in you. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

Now remember there's the law of sin and death. There's the law of God, the righteous law of Moses, but there's another law, another law. Listen to me now. In Romans chapter 8:2, "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Now let me illustrate that to you. Have you ever seen an airplane, a big one, of course you have. You'd think it'd never get off the ground because what holds it to the ground is a law. It's called the law of gravity. But there's another law, and that is the law of aerodynamics and somehow the wind flowing over those wings gives a lift to that thing and you can get on that thing, it weighs tons and tons and tons. But there's another power that is greater than the law of gravity and lifts that monster off the ground.

Now, the downward pull in your life is like gravity, but there's a new law. It's the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. "Unto those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." When you say, "Oh, God, I can't. You never said I could, but oh, God, You can and You always said You would. And now, Lord, I stop trying and I start trusting." And when you stop trying and when you bow your head and say, "I can't, oh, wretched man that I am, I can't do it, but Lord I trust You." Then at that time, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes you free from the law of sin and death.

I'll just tell you the third point because time is gone. Learn dying and start living. Stop trying and start trusting. The third law is **quit crying and start praising**. "Oh, wretched man that I am," that's Romans 7 verse 24, will quit that crying and start praising. I thank God through Jesus Christ. Begin to say, "God, You





didn't save me to have me to live a failing life. Lord, You saved me that I might live a victorious life and Lord You have given all of this to me. And now by Your grace and for Your glory, Lord, I am going to possess my possessions." Do you know what? Look at this crowd this morning. What would happen if every one of us, in Christ, were to really lay hold of our possessions? And not bring the flag back to the regiment, but bring the regiment up to the flag. Not to get a Bible that will match our lives, but let our lives match the Bible.

Let me show you something and I'm going to give an invitation. Everything I've said today is for Christians, believers. This is not for an unbeliever; no unbeliever can live a victorious life. No unbeliever can have the Spirit of God in him. You've got to be saved, you've got to be saved. And to be saved, you must receive the gift of salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ. "Pastor, would Jesus save me this morning?" Oh, yes, He will. "Pastor, are you certain?" I'll tell you how certain I am. I am telling you, you listen to me; He will save you today and He'll keep you saved if you'll trust Him. For the Bible says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed, eyes are closed. And if you need Jesus, I want you to pray this prayer, "Lord Jesus, I need You. I'm tired of struggling and failing. I need to be saved. Thank You, Jesus, that You paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. My sin deserves judgment but I need mercy. Have mercy on me, forgive my sin, take control of my life, save me, Lord Jesus." Pray that from your heart. "Save me, Lord Jesus." Did you ask Him? Then pray this way. "Thank You for saving me, Jesus. I believe that You have. I've received it by faith like a child. Now, Lord Jesus, I'll make it public." Tell Him that right now. "I'll make it public. I'll not be ashamed of You because You died for me. In Your name I pray, Amen."



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