

# Small group optional guide: Romans series: “The Law, the Mirror and the Mess”

## UP; we grow in our love for Jesus through the word & worship

**WORD: Romans 7:7–13**, shows that the problem is not God’s law, but human sin. Paul asks, “Is the law sinful?” and answers emphatically, “**Certainly not!**” The law is described as “**holy, righteous and good**” (Romans 7:12). The law reveals what sin is; it acts like a mirror that shows us the mess in our hearts. Without the law, we would not even recognise sin for what it is (Romans 7:7).

Examples of laws in society show that laws themselves are good. They bring order and protect life. In the same way, God’s law was given as a gift to guide His people. In the Old Testament, God gave the law through Moses to form Israel’s life with Him and with one another. These laws were never meant to save people but to show them how to live as God’s redeemed people.

Paul’s personal story illustrates how sin can twist something good into something deadly. Before meeting Jesus, Paul (formerly Saul) was a strict Pharisee who used the law as a weapon. Though outwardly “blameless,” inwardly he was full of rage, pride, and violence. The law, which was meant to bring life, became an instrument of death because sin used it to produce legalism and condemnation. As Paul says, “**sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment... deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death**” (Romans 7:11). The law was never the problem; sin was.

The turning point came when Paul encountered Jesus. He realised that we are not saved by keeping the law, but by grace through Christ. Jesus fulfilled the law perfectly and took the penalty for our sin on the cross. As **Jesus Christ** taught, “**Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets... but to fulfil them**” (Matthew 5:17).

- **The law still matters**, but now it functions differently: it leads us to repentance, gratitude, and transformation rather than despair.
- **the law as a mirror**: When we look into the mirror without Jesus, we see only failure and shame. Sin then compounds our guilt, leading to fear and more sin. **But when we look into the mirror with Jesus beside us, we see not only our sin but also our Saviour.** The law still exposes what is wrong, but now it drives us toward grace, forgiveness, and change. As Paul writes, the law helps “**sin to be recognized as sin**” (Romans 7:13), so that we can repent and be transformed.
- **God’s laws also reveal His character.** Each command shows us something about who God is and how deeply He loves us. For example, the command not to covet teaches us that God is a generous provider who wants our hearts to rest content in Him. The call to truth points us to a God of truth (John 16:13), and the call to rest points us to a God who invites the weary to come to Him (Matthew 11:28). (...continued)

(...continued) The law, then, is not a cold list of rules but a loving guide that shows us God’s heart. When read through the lens of grace, the law becomes a gift that draws us closer to God and shapes us to live in ways that reflect His goodness. As the psalmist celebrates, “**The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul**” (Psalms 19:7). Obedience, flowing from grace, becomes an expression of love for the One who saved us.

## Discussion Questions

- How have you tended to view God’s law in the past—more as a burden of rules or as a gift that reveals God’s heart? What has shaped that view?
- Paul says the law is “holy, righteous and good” (Romans 7:12). Where do you see God’s goodness and care reflected in His commands today?
- The law acts like a mirror that reveals sin. How can we learn to look into that mirror with Jesus beside us—so that conviction leads to repentance and transformation, not shame and despair?

## Worship songs from Sunday:

No one like the Lord / Same God / King of my heart / Worthy / Before the throne

## IN; we connect and learn to love one another

On Sunday we shared that we have planned that Dan will take a sabbatical for 3 months from June this year. And briefly explained that his sabbatical will be an intentional, extended period of leave designed for spiritual, physical, and emotional restoration. It will be a structured season of "ceasing" from ministerial duties to ensure long-term health and fruitfulness. We are full of faith for the blessing that Dan’s family will experience and the blessing we will receive too. A blog will follow!

We also spoke a little more about the safeguarding alert that went out last week about the Youversion bible app; bringing awareness that scammers (through impersonation and fraudulent charitable financial requests) and paedophiles are using the app to contact users. We will share our next steps this week. Please try not to get drawn into conversation but pray that God would bring light and wisdom to how we move forwards.

## OUT; we reach out to show people outside of JCC that God loves them

Where did you land for outreach and ways to love the community around you over the next half term? What shops or services could you bless? What litter picks or care homes could you visit? What socials will you open up to friends and neighbours? Luke 10:2: Jesus says, 'The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest.'