**“Free?”**

Going deeper in Romans 7:14-25

**INTRODUCTION** Paul has just finished describing how we are free from sins and slaves to God because God’s amazing grace through faith. Part of the question he has been trying to answer is what role the commandments play now that we are under grace. He used an image of a marriage. In marriage we turn from other obligations and are bound to our spouse. In a similar way, in Jesus Christ, we are no longer bound to the sinful nature and somehow “trying harder” to obey the commandments of God. We gain new life through this new relationship. But the commandments still play a role.

**READ** – *Read (passage) aloud. Read it several times. Listen for what the Spirit of God is saying, don’t just think about it.* 14 We know that God’s commandments are spiritual, but apart from the grace and power of the Lord Jesus I am unspiritual and in the prison of sin. 15 I really don’t understand what I am doing. I don’t do what I want, but the things I hate I do. 16 And if I do the things that I do not want to do, I agree that God’s commandments are good and necessary since they honestly show me where I fall short of God’s good intentions for me.17 But I am not able to act on God’s good intentions because the power of sin is at work in me. 18 I know that I really don’t have what it takes to do good because even while I have the desire to do what is good, I cannot find it in me to do it. 19 For the good that I know I should do I really don’t do; but the evil I don’t want to do I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer the me who God envisioned that is doing it. It is the sinful nature at work in me. 21 So this is what is happening in me; When I want to do good evil is right there present with me. 22 I delight in God’s commandments, but it is pretty obvious that 23 something else is at work in me waging war against me. Waging war against my mind and holding me captive to sin which is at work in me. 24 What a miserable mess I am! Who will deliver me from this death? 25 Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then (without or far from Jesus) I am in my mind a slave to the commandments of God and in the sinful nature I am a slave to the law of sin.

**ENGAGE** – *Questions for going deeper. God is speaking… to you.*

1. What is the problem with following God’s commandments apart from the grace and power of the Lord Jesus Christ?

2. What impact does following all the “do’s” and the “don’ts” of God’s commandments have on the Apostle Paul? Have you ever felt like that?

3. Do you think Paul is describing his state before his conversion or his struggle to overcome sin now that he is a Christian? Why?

4. In all of this what is Paul’s hope?

5. What has been helpful to you when you have gone through those times of feeling far from God?

**PRAY** – *God has spoken. So, reply.*

\*Thank the Lord that no matter how you feel he is always faithful to you.

\*If you are feeling far from the Lord, ask him to help you grow in your trust in him regardless of what you feel.

\*If you are feeling close to the Lord, give him thanks and ask him to give you the opportunity to come alongside of someone who is far from the Lord.

**LIVE** – *This is where the rubber hits the road.*

There are times that we are aware of our inadequacies and we feel far from God. These are occasions when our faith has the opportunity to grow. Is the Lord calling you to grow in your trust in him or is he calling you to come alongside of someone who is far from God? Will you?