



Romans

From Flesh to Spirit

Interpreting the Text:

1. Paul uses the metaphor of marriage to understand one's relationship to the law. How do you imagine this metaphor was received by the recipients of Paul's letter? What does the choice of this metaphor tell us about the original audience?
2. How effective is Paul's use of the first person, "I" in chapter 7? Does it matter that when he reaches chapter 8, he always refers to "we" instead? How does this shift in voice affect our reading of this letter?

Applying the Text:

1. While Paul clearly meant for Romans 7:7-25 to describe a past reality, before the onset of faith ("while we were in the flesh" in 7:5), many Christian readers through the ages have recognized their own experience in those words. E.g., "the good that I wish I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not wish (7:19)." Do you experience Christian life more in a Romans 7 or a Romans 8 way? How might each speak to a different aspect of your faith?
2. Have you ever experienced the Spirit doing what Paul references in chapter 8: guiding your everyday life (8:4) and helping you pray (8:26)? What was this experience like for you?
3. What role does "hope" of an afterlife as Paul describes it with God play in your Christian belief and practice? Important? Not so much? Sometimes yes, sometimes no?