

THE LAW OF SIN

“For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.”
—ROMANS 7:22-23

The Christian life is not so much about God changing us as replacing us. It is what Hudson Taylor, a great pioneer missionary of the 19th century, said: “The secret of a changed life is in discovering it’s an exchanged life.” I give my life away to Christ in all its weakness and poverty, and He gives His life away to me in all its richness and power.

Paul talked about this when he said, “For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me.” (Romans 7:18-21). Paul is saying there is an ongoing battle taking place in his heart and this is a battle we all face.

We know what is good and right, yet we keep giving in to sin. As Paul says, there is a law of sin living in us. To illustrate, if we throw a pen in the air, it is going to fall, not because of the push we gave it, but there is a physical law of the earth called ‘gravity’ that says, “what goes up must come down”. We cannot change that law

anymore than we can change the law of sin within us. But there is another law, says Paul. In verse 24, he writes, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?” He then answers, “Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!” And this is the law of the Spirit of Christ who gives life and sets us free from the law of sin and death.

The problem for many of us is that we are trying to battle the power of the law of sin in our hearts under our own steam. We take responsibility for it, pleased with any progress we make in becoming more Christ-like, but again and again, become frustrated and disheartened when we give in to our sinful natures. We can no more step out of the law of sin than we can step out of the law of gravity. That is not what an exchanged life is about. It is allowing Jesus to be Jesus in our lives, and whatever progress we make is the life of Christ revealed in us.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, I ask for a deeper work of your Spirit, so that your life may be increasingly reflected in me. Thank You.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I battling with sin in my own strength?