

THE LAWS WITHIN US

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

At any early age, the instruction we usually receive from parents and teachers is on what is right and good, but the reality is we often find it more fun to do what is wrong. In school, for instance, we mustn’t tie the girl’s hair in front of us to the back of her chair. That is wrong, but we’re tempted and may do it anyway. Yet in a normal course of upbringing, no one teaches us to do what is wrong. We have a natural instinct for it, and this is because there’s a natural law, says Paul, which he calls the law of sin at work within us. That is our natural selves apart from God.

The battle is within us because our hearts are corrupt. Every sin we commit we commit because we actually want to at the time, and that is born out of an inherently corrupt nature, which we cannot change. But there is also another law Paul talks about and that is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. When we become Christians, the Holy Spirit comes to live a life in us that is the complete opposite of what we are by nature.

1 John 5:18 says, “We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin.” That doesn’t mean the real evidence of being a Christian is that we will not sin. We know this isn’t true. In fact, in the same letter, John says, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). So how do we reconcile these verses? The only satisfactory answer is found in asking the question, “Who is born of

God?” The only person born of God is His Son, Jesus Christ. And His life is a life that does not sin, will not sin and cannot sin, and it is His life that is born in us the moment we become Christians.

Paul writes, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:1-2). The Christian life is not about reforming our old nature, but about replacing it with the nature of Jesus Christ. The best way to understand this is that we have the indwelling life of the Holy Spirit counteracting our corrupt natures, and at the same time, transforming us into the righteousness of Christ.

PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, I pray that your Holy Spirit grow deeper in me to counteract the law of sin within me, so that I may grow increasingly more into your likeness. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: In what areas of my life is the indwelling Spirit of Christ working to overcome the law of sin in me?