

- (3) Paul says that the Law was intended to bring life, but that the Law brought only death.

Suggestion: The Law was never intended to be used by sinners to earn a right standing before God, but rather to show justified sinners how to live; Paul once used it to justify himself. The Law now showed that Paul's attempts to justify himself led to condemnation.

- (4) Paul says that he was once alive, and then he died.

Suggestion: Paul once considered himself spiritually alive, and worthy of eternal life; now he realized that he was a dead man, dead in trespasses and sins, and worthy of eternal death.

2. The second motif in this aspect of Paul's teaching may be expressed in the statement: We now live lives of internal spiritual conflict.

Paul develops this motif in Romans 7:13-8:2.

In 7:13-20 the apostle describes this internal conflict in the life of the justified believer. Of course, there are interpreters who believe this section is dealing with Paul's self-experience as an unregenerate man rather than as a regenerate person. In this connection it is useful to look at those statements in this passage that could be used to argue in favor of taking this as referring to his unregenerate state, and then at those statements that argue in favor of his regenerate state. For this purpose we look at verses 14-25. The key questions to be asked are: Could the first set of statements refer to a regenerate person? and Could the second set of statements refer to an unregenerate person?

It would appear that the two sets of statements could refer to a regenerate person who is experiencing internal spiritual conflict.

On the one hand we see God's perfect Law of righteousness being written into our hearts, in the form of a principle of innate righteousness, so that the righteous requirements of the Law of God are being reflected in righteous desires and righteous conduct.

On the other hand, the innate sin principle is striving to entice, overpower, and rule us, in order to produce unrighteous desires and conduct.

These two principles -- the principle of innate righteousness and the principle of innate sin -- are constantly struggling within us. Which is stronger? Which will gain the victory?

In Romans 7:21-8:2 Paul gives us a remarkable insight into the internal workings of these two principles -- a kind of spiritual psychology. Nowhere else in Scripture do we find such a deep insight into the heart of a believer and the internal spiritual conflict he or she is experiencing.

The sheet on six uses of NOMOS and the correlated heart diagram serves to elucidate this insight.