

3. The third motif in this aspect of Paul's teaching may be expressed in the statement: We are to live in a new relationship to the Law of God.

Although God's perfect Law of righteousness is being written into our hearts so that it is becoming part of our very nature, this does not mean that we can dispense with or set aside the objective standard of righteousness and simply and passively let the Holy Spirit write God's will on our hearts.

Rather, we are called to active obedience to the revealed will of God for our obedience. How can we obey if there is no command or requirement? We are called upon to offer our faculties as instruments of righteousness; what does God want us to do with those faculties? We are called upon to live, not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit; this involves denying expression to certain specific forms of sin and giving expression to certain specific forms of righteousness. What are these forms? We are called on to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves, especially our brothers and sisters in Christ. How do we do that? Do we decide what love is and what forms its expression will take? Are we left without direction or guidance in these important matters?

The pursuit of holiness is not a passive "standing aside" to let the Holy Spirit produce holiness in us, but an active seeking to bring our character and conduct into ever greater conformity with God's revealed will, the meanwhile realizing that it is the Holy Spirit who is constantly working in us both the willing and the doing of His good pleasure.

If we are going to do God's will, we must know it, and in order to know it, we need God's objective revelation of His will.

The internal principle of righteousness communicated to us by the Holy Spirit does not reveal to us a knowledge of the will of God; it disposes us toward righteousness, but we need to know what righteousness is so that we can do it!

Thus we need both the outer standard of righteousness and the inner dynamic of righteousness; we need the revealed will of God as our objective standard of obedience, and we need the inworked principle of righteousness as a subjective wellspring of obedience.

Thus we have a new relationship to the Law of God.

In the first place we are dead to the binding authority of the Law of God to demand from us perfect obedience upon penalty of condemnation. There is no condemnation to those who are in union with Christ Jesus! Christ has taken all of my condemnation upon Himself, and there is none left over to fall upon me! Thank God:

Payment He will not twice demand;  
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,  
And then again at mine.

In the second place, although there is an intense spiritual conflict going on inside every believer, we have God's own Word for it that the principle of righteousness communicated by the Holy Spirit is stronger, and that it prevails over the principle of innate sin.

God's grace is greater than our sin, not only in justification but also in sanctification!