

Journal Notes from Bruce

I want to share before going on with some personal journals I've enclosed. To share a hope. I have now found masturbation misguided my sexual desires. This has proven true to me. The frustrations and sexual desires I have, I now express to God but rarely act on them only to them by erections, wet dreams, and sometimes touching. Sometimes, yes, I go to far if I'm too tired or something but 99% of the time God's Spirit catches me. This also has given me a whole identity in myself and allows me to look forward to the gift of a holy intimacy with a woman. Otherwise in abusing ourselves with full fledged masturbation and also taking Christ into that (I Cor 6:12), we are training our sexual desires to operate in dysfunction. By this act, we are setting our desires in bondage just as a heterosexual masturbating to woman. No difference. The hope is that in either case, there is a deeper life and sexuality God wants us to have. In BOTH cases, masturbating to men or women, God wants to transform us into something different. I encourage you to seek that journey.

Also there is an element of a diet that I had to change also which I don't speak of here we can talk about.

There are still questions about it, honestly. But for me, I still cannot prove masturbation to be a holy, beneficial act for my life.

Journal excerpts

Stripping and been a stripper will make me feel cool, masculine, and able. A stripper is cool, masculine, and able. Masturbation will make me feel like a stripper-cool, masculine, able.

These are all forms of trying to know through physical aspects. Nevertheless, it is experienced only through Christ and interaction-these other forms do not work. They are trying to feel it when masculinity is being-inside.

How is masturbation used for same sex need, identification?
I feel an erection is an essence of my man-hood.

False erections are a normal function of a man but is not a major aspect of masculinity. We are trying to fulfill sexually what we need to fulfill emotionally by interaction.

Why is my focus so much on myself, the largeness of erections, the whole focus penis centered?

Because I am trying to fulfill a masculine identity, that is my focus and masturbation is a pleasurable, easy way to try. But, when the trying is done, nothing has been obtained. I feel worse.

Conclusion: masturbation used as stated above--by the focus on this act as some means of male identity as some kind of proof within that I am a man--shows I need to refrain and get some hurts healed.

Whether other men have been evil or good, I have felt inadequate in comparing masculine traits. Whether they were men-evil men or good men--I have long for their man-ness. I have had no identity of my own and this has been a way to " feel " that but never to truly experience godly masculinity. Instead of agape love for another's soul, I lust and compare. Comparing is foolishness, God says.

Masturbation has been used as a way of meeting same sex needs! That is why each time I was devastated because the need was never met although expressed. I have confused feelings of same sex needs in emotions that were unmet. I found it as homosexual when I felt pleasure with same sex contacts.

My emotional needs have been so unmet there is a confusion I see to fulfill it sexually.

All the needs I have felt around males have not been totally sexual but unmet emotional needs that I was taking into the sexual realm to get met because I was too afraid to get them met in normal ways (due to rejection). This misinterpretation cause great fear for me around man and isolated me further.

The rejections I have buried and not dealt with or forgiven have left me hating men and their non-sexual expressions of masculinity and isolating me further. On top of it all, there is a worldly masculinity that is false. Its need to be exchanged for a Godly one that's even more satisfying than what most men pretend to have.

Masturbation and to be sexually active--it feels pleasurable. The false promise--it is fleeting. The images of others look good, looks pleasurable--I can admire to know that I am "hot," and to play.

Answers: God provides all fulfillment of all needs while flesh seeks to on its own and it cannot. All the ways I would fulfill myself really don't work--only momentarily because I *think* they will but soon I see they don't and I am sad. Masculinity is not tied up in extorted sexual expressions. 'Posers' in these sexual pictures are posing and are soon coming to the dead end that that road promises. They are usually only satisfied in the momentary pose but not in real life. With God I can be the best I ever could be--I am a unique creature, child of God that he loved.

One thing God has shown me is this. There is much symbolism in the Bible in regards to us that is beautiful. We are called temples, a bride, the apple of his eye etc. In regards to this area, let me share with you this. God being the gardener and us being his plants. Being under the care of the Vinedresser.



We are under the Vinedresser's care and united with a beautiful life from the Vine. Sustained and nourished and cherished by the Creator. When you look at plant life in a garden, a tree, a flower and such, you see a fragile piece of artwork reaching toward the heavens for rain, and air, and...also for being fertilized or pollinated. Plants are very dependent...very, in order to live.

The way it breaths is by the air provided, the way it grows and thrives is through the rain provided, and the way it reproduces and fulfills its purpose is by the fertilization provided.

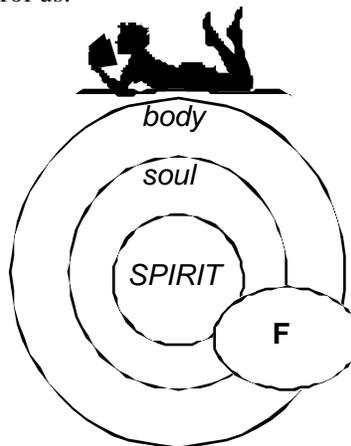
You might come to the conclusion that there isn't anything not dependent in order to survive here. You would be right...right down to YOU. We understand depending on air provided for us, and all our needs..., but when it comes to our sexual needs, we take things into our hands and control. This is where we differ from all sorts of life--the choice of control.

I encourage you as God's branch, as a plant in His garden, to pray to Him to fulfill sexually through dreams at night. Surrender involves giving everything---good and bad. So give orgasms to Him too. Just as the plants (i.e. your need to be fertilized!). He provides the air, He provides the rain, He can provide for this too. Pray for times where you can enjoy your sexuality without going into bondage. As you begin to see yourself as under His care, trusting not in the cries of the flesh but His care, your sexual feelings take on a whole new enjoyment--being directed in a most satisfying way by God. This totally changes your identity and how you relate to others because your sexual desires are no longer "tied" up in a different source other than God's.



This process for me felt like I was going to die. That is what the enemy was screaming in my head and body... If you don't stroke yourself, you will explode. You will be unhappy. You won't be fulfilled. My body and head would "ring" these words. But this isn't true. So I had to be willing to die--to the enemy's control. I counted it as the enemy with a gun to my head threatening my life, and I replied, "Go ahead and shoot, I will follow the Lord." Though times I fell, and times I am catching myself in the middle, the Spirit reminds me of His benefits verses the "works" of the devil. As you learn to know the difference, this fruit of the Spirit will develop in you too--the fruit of self control. Not an effort of your will or by law but by the Spirit. Continue to seek and learn that he is the Gardener and you His plant under His care.

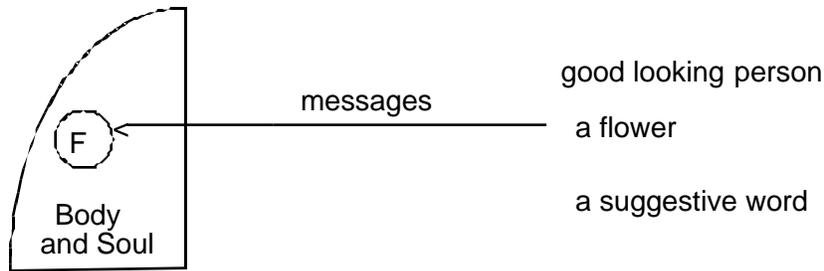
I like pictures so get ready for Disney's version of the Spirit-filled Life : 0) Anyhow brother, in all of my temptations--be it sensual or mental--the biggest key is separating spirit and soul life. Hebrews 4:12 talks about how God's word separates the two. So check this diagram out: I Thessalonians 5:23 states we are body, soul and spirit. As unbelievers we had the flesh, represented by the "F" here being empowered by Satan to control us.



Okay? Simple enough huh.

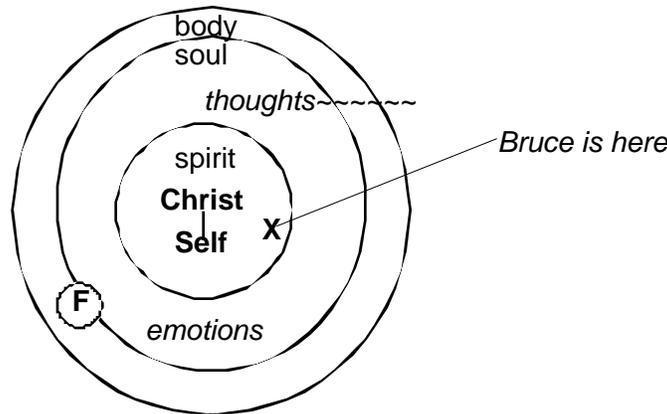
Our body is like a big satellite dish taking in signals that are going through the senses and in the soul. This stirs our emotions and according to how we learned to cope and receive the messages from the world, we make our decisions in the will. We then develop a belief system on the programming we've set.

Also notice that the F circle, the flesh, receives these messages. At one time, controlled by Satan, it was our primary responder.



Now, let's look at the what is happening inside you in temptation. To act out in the flesh is really carrying out the character of Satan. Its partaking of his character. Yet, we no longer have his nature (Eph.2:1-3). That's why the believer's true life in union with Christ is crying out to be recognized. Christ is working in the Christian to will and to do and reveal what is happening. Now notice the Spirit of the diagram...how self and Christ are united.

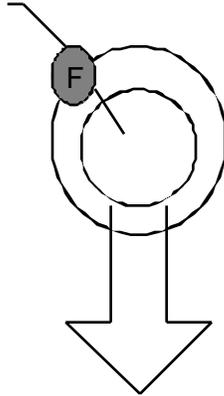
This represents our union with him. Doug is safe there. That is who you really are. Note the messages or disturbances going on in the soul Again all sorts of messages are coming into our soul drifting about--see the the "thoughts" in the diagram drifting into the soul based on images of the eyes and ears. As you know we have many thoughts based from many sources of our senses. Notice also how the "F" circle is smaller and separate from the Spirit(verses the first diagram. The flesh is still present responding and sending out its signals--indeed! But the connection of control to the spiritual realm of who Doug is, has been disconnected. So instead of relying on the past programming, we are called to learn of our new primary responder, the Spirit.



This is the importance of gaining intimacy and revelation on who you are. This is already happening with you. Ephesians and Romans and John are good books for this and also some books I can recommend if you ever need to get this hammered home more deeply.

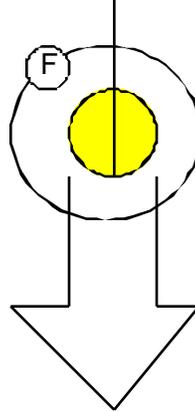
Now, this is what it looks like as to the question to whom will you obey? Death to sin or life to God? Messages will come, the soul will be stirred but is Christ still my Life even when these reactions enter my soul?

Example Messages:
I need a release now



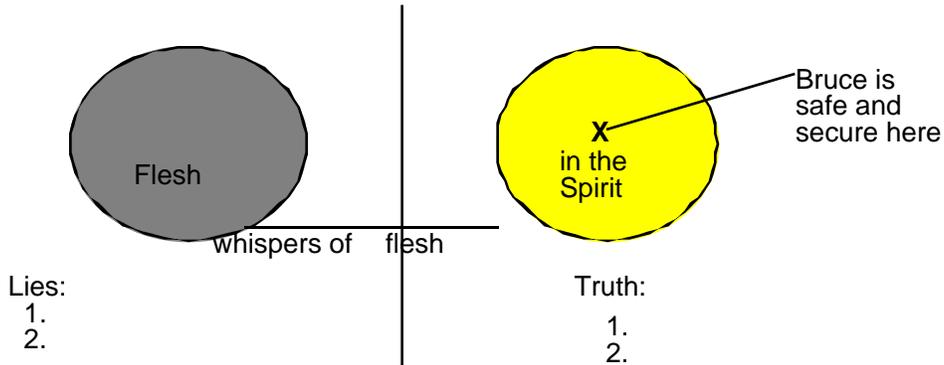
Deeds of the flesh

By faith, I believe God has a release for me



Fruit of the Spirit

List specifically the triggering thoughts that get you masturbating in the flesh realm and counter them with truth in the spirit realm, where you are. The whispers of the flesh come but you are safe God is the protector of your soul turn to the Spirit rather than wrestling with soul reactions:



There's some questions you want to consider when soulish responses are coming up.

First, note three reactions we can have;

1. Normal human reactions to things such as pain and the thoughts and feelings of that (ex. hammering your thumb, a friend dies, etc.)
2. Reactions of the flesh, old patterning responses coming to you.
3. Ground yielded to the flesh. Falsely believing in flesh responses. And you, as God's house, cannot stand divided by believing falsely.



Consider questions such as these:
Am I meant to live to by my soul feelings?

*Are my soul reactions telling me the truth?
Am I living like they are the truth?
Where is the real me when I think and feel these things in my soul?
Do I live from the thought and emotions that come into my soul
or do I live from who I am in Christ?
Am I complete and whole even when these rampaging thoughts and
emotions enter my soul?
What is Christ doing in and me through me when the reactions come?*

Brother, I sent you that study on Romans 6, that there are four areas of walking in the spirit; knowing by revelation, reckoning, yielding and obeying. As we consider whom we will obey in the midst of temptation and reflect on God and His word to divide the soul and spirit, we find Him giving us that way of escape. From the inner cry of the flesh that says "Masturbate! Feed your self image and needs because God sure isn't," we have a period from the point of that cry to the doing of it. The flesh cries but there is that pause, we all have before carrying out sin to its completion. For me, sometimes its just as I am acting out. It is here, brother, that its time to reflect on who to respond to, and what is truly good for us. A big question that I ask is this one from Romans....

"What benefit have you received from the things you are now ashamed?" One day I listed the positives and negatives in masturbation and found the negatives outweigh the positives to a great extent! So when this cry of the flesh comes up to get satisfaction, I remember even if in the middle of masturbating, "This really isn't going to satisfy you in the end." Its a lie. Then we don't panic or condemn ourselves for having beginning to stroke ourselves...No, we stop and see that we've only followed that bully again. The enemy is a liar, this isn't best for me. God will satisfy me sexually. List below the benefits or positives and the negatives honestly. For me it had a moment of pleasure but it also took health away from body, decreases sexual performance by training me to prematurely ejaculate, destroys fruit produced spiritually, makes me feel unloving and undesirable, enhances looking at men in a way I don't want, feeling controlled in a way I don't want.....

Now your turn!

Positives | Negatives

As you know, a primary walking with sexual desires (because they don't go away) is expressing them to God. I know you know this. We can't fight this fight through will power alone, principles or suppress it. Masturbation is controlling. Not just the act and addiction to it, but our very selves are set up to be controlled. Through the rest of our days up to our next "session", our eyes, our minds, our desires---they all are being set to respond through our and Satan's control. We've set ourselves up as the "Master" of our self image and sexual pleasure via the world's way, thus "Master"-bation. So its important to break the cycle of control. We know it;

Masturbation---->Guilt-->Anger---->Fear---->Depression...and then right back round again.

I sent that study to you on Law but a first key is that we are not good apart from God. He just wants us to see through this not that He hates us but that sin is deadly to us. He wants to graciously show us a deeper way of life. This deeper way begins here in Romans 8 which says "by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the flesh". What does that mean? How are we involved in this process? Here, I refer you to the article by Watchman Nee "Deliverance" so read on brother....



LESSON TWENTY-SIX

DELIVERANCE

NOT I, BUT CHRIST--A BOOK BY WATCHMAN NEE

**Watchman Nee was a missionary who suffered in China and killed for his faith. In this portion from his book, he uses some examples of cities in China that may have foreign names to the reader.

For that which I do I know not; for not what I would, that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do. But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good. So now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. For the good which I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I practise. But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law or sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I of myself with the mind, indeed, serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me flee from (he law of sin and death. Romans 7:15-8:2

NOT I, BUT Christ

The Desire for Deliverance from Sin

A person who believes in the Lord may immediately be delivered from sin. This experience, however, is not necessarily shared by all new believers. Many are not delivered from sin after- they first trust in the Lord. Instead, they often find themselves falling into sin. There is no question at all that they have been saved, that they belong to the Lord and have eternal life. Yet the great difficulty remains that they are frequently disturbed by sin. Because of this, they are unable to serve the Lord as they would like.

It is most painful for a saved person to be disturbed by his continuing sins. Since he is enlightened by God, his conscience is sensitive. In him is the life which condemns sins; so he has the consciousness of sin. He deeply feels his corruption and he abhors himself. This is really an exceedingly painful experience.

Out of this experience comes a problem: many believers do not really know what sin is. Some believers say that sin can be avoided by resisting it. Thus they exert all their strength to resist the temptation to sin. Others contend that sin needs to be overcome. Hence they fight with sin all the time, hoping that they may overcome it. Still others declare that since sin has bound us and robbed us of our freedom, we may be delivered from its enticement if we really struggle hard. Therefore, they do their best to struggle. But these three ideas are only men's thoughts; they are neither God's Word nor God's teaching. None of them can succeed in bringing people to victory

I hope you will take special note of this matter. I personally believe that as soon as people believe in the Lord they should be shown the way of deliverance. I do not agree that they must turn many corners before they can be delivered. They should walk this way of freedom from the beginning of their Christian life.

The Word of God does not tell us that we should overcome sin; it does tell us, instead, that we must be delivered from sin, freed from sin. These are the words of the Bible. Sin is a power which holds people. We are to be delivered from its grip, not to destroy its power. We cannot put it to death, but the Lord has removed us from it.

The Law of Sin

For that which I do I know not: for not what I would, that do I practice; but what I hate, that I do. . . . for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice. But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I

that do it . . . I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me in to captivity under the law of sin which is in my members . . . So then I of myself with the mind, indeed, serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Rom. 7:15-25

You need to find the key to Romans 7. In verses 15 through 20, such words as these are used: "I would," "I would not," "I hate," "to will is present with me," "the good which I would," "the evil which I would not," and so forth. The thoughts constantly repeated are "would," "would not," or "will." But verses 21 through 25 show us another point. The emphasis is no longer "would" or "would not," but is repeatedly seen in words like "the law," "a different law in my members," "into captivity until the law of sin which is in my members," "I of myself with the mind serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." If you keep these two points of emphases before you, you will be able to solve the problem.

In this section of Romans 7, Paul is thinking of overcoming. He thinks it would be best if he could sin no more and please God by doing that which God can accept. He does not want to sin nor does he like to be defeated. Yet he acknowledges that to will is present with him but to do that which is good is beyond him. He wills to do good, but he cannot do it. Though he tries not to sin, he still does sin. He delights in the law of God, yet he is unable to practice it. In other words, he cannot do what he would do.

In verses 15 through 20, though Paul wills to overcome, yet he suffers total defeat. This shows that the way of victory does not lie in "would" or "would not." Victory is not to be found through man's will. Paul wills and wills, but he ends up in defeat. Therefore, do not think that everything will be all right if only you have the will to do good. To will is with you, but to do is not. All you call do is to will; there is not much use in it.

However, after verse 21 Paul himself finds out why his will to do good is unsuccessful. The reason is that sin is a law. Since sin is a law, it is futile to will. Paul shows us the reason for his defeat. He explains that though he would do good, evil is present with him. He delights in the law of God after the inward man, but with the flesh he serves the law of sin. Whenever he decides to delight in God's law, a different law in his members—the law of sin—brings him into captivity. Any time he wills to do good, evil is present. This is a law.

Many who have been Christians for years still do not see that sin is a power which seems to be quite authoritative. They do not see sin as a law. I hope newly saved brothers and sisters will see this: sin in human experience, as well as in the Bible, is a law. It is not only an influence, a power, but it is also a law. Paul discovered how useless it was for his will to battle against a law.

The Inability of the Will to Overcome the Law

Will is the inner power of man, while law is a natural power. Both are powers. I like to use an illustration to help people understand this matter of law. We know that the earth exerts a gravitational force. This force of gravity is a law. Why do we call it a law? Because it is always so. That which is not incidental is a law. That which is occasional is an historical incident, not a law.

Why is earth's gravitation a law? If I drop my handkerchief, it goes downward. It happens in Shanghai as well as in Foochow. Wherever the handkerchief is dropped, the same thing happens. Gravity pulls it down, so this is called the law of gravitation. Not only is gravity a force; it also is a law. If the handkerchief is only occasionally pulled to the earth, then this force could not be reckoned as a law. A law is something which always acts in the same way. If I throw my Bible upward, it will fall down. If I throw a chair up, it too will fall down. If I jump upward, I will also come down. No matter where or what, what goes up will come down. Then I realize that not only is there a gravitational force exerted by the earth, but there is also a law of gravity. A law simply means it is always so. It permits no exception. If something happens once one way and another time a different way, it is a matter of history. But if something always happens the same way, it is a law. If a person commits a crime on the street, he will be taken into custody by the police. He commits this crime at home, he

still will be taken into custody. Whoever murders, regardless of whom or where he murders, he will be taken by the police. This we call a law. A law applies to every person; there are no exceptions. If a man kills someone today, he is taken into custody by the police. But if he kills someone tomorrow and is not taken, kills again the day after tomorrow and is taken, then the matter of taking people into custody cannot be considered a law. A law needs to be consistent. It must be the same yesterday, today, and even tomorrow. The term "law" implies that it continues unchanged.

Every law has its natural power-something not manufactured by human effort. We may use the earth's gravitation as an example. Wherever I drop something, that thing gravitates downward. I do not need to press it down for there is a natural force which causes it to go down. Behind the law is the natural power.

What, then, is the will? Will is man's determination, man's decision. It speaks of what man decides or desires or wills. The exercise of the will is not without its power. If I decide to do a certain thing, I start out to do it. If I decide to walk, I walk; if I decide to eat, I eat. As a person I have a will, and my will produces a power.

However, the power of the will and the power of a law are different. While the power of the law is natural power, the power of the will is human. Gravitational force does not need the installation of some electrical appliance behind it in order to attract things downward; it acts naturally. If you light a lamp, the heat will naturally rush upward; this too is a law. When air is heated, it rises and expands; this is a law. In rising and expanding, it demonstrates a power, but its power is natural power. The power of the will, however, is something of man. Only that which is living has a will. Neither a chair nor a table has a will of its own. God has a will; man has a will. Only a living being has will. Though man's will does possess some power, it is nonetheless a limited power. It is in direct contrast to the power of a law which is a natural power.

The question before us is: when the will and the law are in conflict, which will emerge as conqueror? Usually the will overcomes in the beginning, but the law conquers in the end. Man first overcomes, but the law eventually emerges as victor. For example: I am now holding up a Bible which weighs about half a pound. The force of earth's gravity is operating on this book and is trying its best to pull the Bible to the ground. So the law is working. But I as a person have a will. My hand is lifting the Bible and I will not allow it to fall. I succeed in holding it up; I have overcome. My will is stronger than the law.

Right now, at 8:17 in the evening, I have overcome. But wait till 9:17, and I will start to sigh that my hand will not listen to me. By tomorrow morning at 8:17, I will have to get a doctor to treat me! Man's power cannot overcome natural law. The law of gravitation continues to pull; it pulls without will or thought. I will not let the Bible fall; I forcibly hold onto it. Still the time will come when I can no longer hold on. When I cease to lift up the Bible, it will drop to the ground. The law works twenty-four hours a day, but I can not.

Eventually the will of men will be defeated and the law will overcome. All of men's will cannot conquer natural law. Human will may strenuously resist natural law and may at the beginning seem to overcome, but finally it will have to give in to the law. Do not despise the law of earth's gravitation. You are battling with it daily. All who are now in their graves, if able to speak, would have to concede that they are not as strong as the law. For decades you appear to be daily in ascendancy over gravity. You almost forget the great power of earth's gravity; you live as if there were no death. You are active from morning till night. But there will come a day when you too will be pulled down by the law of sin and death. At that moment, your activity will come to an end. There is nothing you can do; the law has conquered. Can you imagine a person who by force of will could hold onto a Bible so that it never falls? It is impossible. Sooner or later he has to yield; the law will come forth as conqueror.

In Romans 7 the subject is the contrast between law and will. Its theme is very simple, for it deals only with the conflict between will and law. At an earlier time, Paul was not conscious that sin is a law. Paul is the first one in the Bible to discover this truth. He is also first to use the term "law." People know that gravitation is a law, that heat expansion is also a law, but they do not know that sin is a law. At first even Paul did not know this; only after repeatedly sinning did he discover that

there was a power in Iris body which gravitated him to sin. He did not sin purposely, but the power in his body pulled him to sin.

Sinning is more than historical; it is a law. When temptation comes, we try to resist, but before long we fail; this is our history of defeat. Again temptation comes and again we resist and fail. This happens the tenth time, the hundredth time, the millionth time. It is the same story: Temptation comes, we resist; and before we realize it, we are defeated. As this occurs time after time, we begin to see that this is not just an historical fact. It has become a law. Sinning is a law. If one were to sin only once, he might consider it an historical event; however, we cannot say sinning is historical for it is not limited to once. It has become a law.

Temptation comes and I am defeated. I have no way to overcome. Each time it comes, I fail; thus I come to realize that my defeat is more than just defeat; it is the law of defeat in me. Defeat has become a law to me. Brethren, have you seen this? Paul saw it. In verse 21 he tells us his great revelation—a revelation about himself. He says, "I find then the law." This is the first time he realizes it that way. He senses a law. What is it? "That to me who would do good, evil is present." Whenever he wants to do good, he finds evil is present in him. This is the law. When I would do good, sin is present. Sin follows closely after good. Not just once, not just a thousand times, but it is always this way. I now understand it to be a law.

A GREAT REVELATION

It is not that I sin accidentally or occasionally; it is not that I sometimes sin and sometimes do not; sinning is a law to me, for I constantly sin. Because this occurs all the time, I know it is a law. Whenever I would do good, evil is present. When Paul's eyes were opened to this, he realized that all his own efforts were futile. What had he tried? he had tried to do .

good. When Paul's eyes were opened to this, he realized that all his own efforts were futile. What had he tried? He had tried to do good. He had thought his will could overcome sin, not knowing that no one will can ever overcome a law. As soon as he saw sin as a law, not just a conduct, he immediately concluded that to will was useless. His will could never conquer the law. This, indeed, was a great discovery, a very great revelation.

When through God's mercy, anyone is brought to see that sin is a law, he instantly knows how ineffective any method of overcoming sin with the will must be. Before he sees this, he is always making resolutions. When tempted, he bites his teeth and determines to overcome, but eventually he fails. The second time he is tempted he surmises that his first resolution was not strong enough, so this time he makes a firmer resolution not sin again for any reason. But let me tell you, however strong his resolution is, he still fails again. he may yet conclude that something is wanting in his resolution, so when again tempted, he once more resolves before God and asks the Lord to help him. Since he is not sure of his resolution, he prays, "O Lord, please have mercy on me. Help me that I may not sin this time." After he gets up from his knees, he once again fails. He wonders why he cannot overcome sin by making resolutions. The answer is that it is because no amount of will effort can ever conquer a law.

This hand of mine may be quite strong; it may be able to lift fifty pounds. I have a watch here which weighs only five ounces. It should not be difficult for a hand that can lift fifty pounds to hold up this five ounce watch. However, there is also a law here exerting its gravitational force on my hand. It pulls every second, every minute, and every hour. It keeps on pulling till I cannot hold this five-ounce watch. The hardship in bearing a load is that the longer you bear it, the heavier the object seems to become—not that the load itself has been increased, but that the law begins to overcome the bearer. The law overcomes the man. Nature overcomes man. This power operates so constantly that it incapacitates you.

Another illustration is losing your temper. This is a common and easily recognized sin. Everyone has committed this sin several times. When you hear some unpleasant words, you feel uncomfortable, as if churning inside. If the same person says rude, unpleasant words, you may answer in kind. But should he continue to say such unkind words, you may be so stirred that you scold him and beat the

table. You have lost your temper. You feel badly afterward because as a Christian you should not lose your temper. So you resolve that next time you will not. You are quite sure you will not. After prayer, you believe you are forgiven. Your heart is full of joy, for you say you will not lose your temper again. But later on, you again hear people say distasteful words. How uncomfortable you feel. You hear further words a second time, and your insides churn like a machine. The third time, you burst. You are, of course, conscious of your fault. How can a Christian lose his temper? You ask the Lord to forgive your sin, and you promise that hereafter you will not lose your temper. But after some time, the experience is repeated all over again. What, then, do you call this? It is not just sinning; it is the law of sin.

Sinning is not accidental; it is a law. If a person kills another person, this is sin. But if he kills every day, there is the law of killing. If a man loses his temper daily, his bad temper has become a law to him. It is not by chance that people sin, nor do they sin only once. People sin countless times throughout their lives. The liars in the world keep on lying; the unclean keep being unclean; the adulterers keep on committing adultery; the stealers keep on stealing; the ill-tempered keep on losing their temper. It is a law within men which cannot be conquered.

It is a great discovery when the Lord has mercy on you and opens your eyes to see that sin is, indeed, a law. If you see this, victory is not far away. Should you consider sin merely a matter of conduct, you will no doubt try to pray more and to resist more in order to overcome the next time. But it is futile. As the power of sin is strong and constant, so our strength is weak and untrustworthy. As the power of sin is always triumphant, so our power is always yielding. Sin's power is victorious and our power is defeated. The victory of sin is a law, even as our defeat is a law. When I would do good, evil is present. Paul says he has found this to be a law, an unconquerable law.

I do hope that you will be clear on the nature of sin. If you see this law, you will be delivered from many hardships and sorrows. If you are willing to accept God's Word, you will know that sin is a law and that you cannot overcome it with your will. Then you will be able to see the real way to victory. It is a great blessing to find this law. It may take many defeats, possibly hundreds or thousands of defeats, to discover for yourself this law of defeat. You have to be so utterly defeated that one day you realize you can never overcome sin by your will. Sooner or later, sin will rise up and declare that it is a law, so what can you do? Let me tell you, all who trust in their own willpower will have to acknowledge that they can do nothing about it. Since sin is a law, what can you do? You cannot resist it; the power of your will can never overcome the power of a law.

The Way of Victory

We know man is not delivered by exercising his will. When he is using his willpower, he is unable to trust God's way of deliverance. He has to wait for the day when he submits himself to God and confesses that he is utterly undone. Then he will pray, "Lord, I am not going to try again." Whenever one has no way but still thinks of finding a way, he will draw upon his will to help. It is only when he acknowledges that he has no way and is not going to find a way that he forsakes calling upon his will for help. Then he will begin to see how to get real deliverance. Then he will read Romans 8.

Brothers and sisters, do not despise Romans 7. Many believers are unable to get out of that chapter. Romans 7 captures more Christians than any other passage in the Bible. Many Christians keep their address in Romans 7! That is where they may be found, for they dwell there. It is useless to preach Romans 8 alone. The question is not whether you know the teaching of Romans 8, but whether you have come out of Romans 7. Many preach on Romans 8 but are still buried in Romans 7. They are yet trying to deal with the law by the power of their will. They are still being defeated. Because they fail to see that sin is a law and that the will cannot overcome the law, they are imprisoned in Romans 7 and cannot enter Romans 8.

New believers should accept what the Word of God says. If you have to wait to find out for yourself, you may have to commit many sins. Even after sinning repeatedly, your eyes still may not be opened. You will have to come to the point where you see that all your battles are futile. Paul said in Romans 7 that it is useless to battle, for who can overcome a law? Thus, at the start of Romans 8 he says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of

life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death" (vv. 1~2). You have seen that sin is a law. You have also seen that it is not possible for man's will to overcome that law. Where, then, is the way of victory, the way of deliverance?

The way of victory is here: "There is therefore now *no condemnation* to them that are in Christ Jesus." The word "condemnation" in the original Greek are two different usages, one legal and the other civil. If the word is used legally, it means "condemnation" as found in the English translation. But in its civil usage, the word means "disabling" or "handicap." According to the context of this passage of Scripture, probably the civil usage is clearer.

We are no longer disabled. Why? Because the Lord Jesus Christ has given us deliverance. It is something the Lord has done. But How does He do it? It is very simple, for it is explained by the second verse: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death." This is the way of victory. Can you alter Romans 8:2 and read it this way: "The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from sin and death"? I suppose ten Christians out of ten would read the verse this way. But what does it say? It says that "the *law* of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the *law* of sin and of death." Many have seen only the Spirit of life setting them free from the law of sin and death, but have failed to see that it is the *law* of the Spirit of life which sets them free from the *law* of sin and of death.

To learn the lesson that sin and death is a law may take years. But even as it may take a great deal of time and resolution and failure to realize that sin is a law, so it may take years for believers to discover that the Spirit of life is also a law. Sin has followed us for years and we have had a close association with it; yet we still do not know that it is a law. Likewise, we may have believed in the Lord for many, many years and have known the Holy Spirit in our lives, yet not known Him as a law.

It is a day of great discovery when our eyes are opened by the Lord to see that sin is a law. It is a day of even greater discovery when we are given the revelation that the Holy Spirit is also a law. Only a law can overcome another law. The will cannot overcome the law, but a higher law can overcome a lower law. We can never overcome the law of sin by our human will, but the law of the Spirit of life can set us free from the law of sin and of death.

We know that earth's gravity is a law which holds us. We know too that there is a thing called density. If the density of a thing is exceedingly low, such as in the case of hydrogen, then earth's gravitational force cannot hold it down. By filling hydrogen into a balloon, we can make the balloon rise. the law of earth's gravitational force is a fixed law, but it only operates within a certain range or degree of density. if the density is too low, the law of gravity does not apply. Then another law takes over, even the law of buoyancy, which sends things upward. This upward surge needs no hand to push, no fan to stir. You just let go, and up it ascends. This law overcomes the other law. It is equally effortless. In a similar manner, the law of the Holy Spirit overcomes the law of sin.

Let us say it another way. To see sin as a law is a big thing, for it makes you decide against battling sin with your willpower. Likewise, seeing the law of the Holy Spirit in your life is another big crisis. Many seem to understand how the Spirit of life gives them life, but have yet to learn that the Holy Spirit in them, that is, the life which God has given them through Jesus Christ, is also a law. If you let this law operate, it will naturally deliver you from the law of sin and death. When this law delivers you from the other law, it does not require an ounce of your strength. You need not make one resolution, spend any time, nor even lay hold of the Spirit. How so?

Well, May I ask, does anybody need to hold onto the earth's gravitational force? Does someone need to pray that this force will quickly pull things down? No, there is no need to pray, for the earth most spontaneously attracts things downward. It is a law. All one needs to do is to remove his hand, to not purposely hold onto things. When the will is not working, then the law is manifested. When will is not interfering, the law operates. In a similar way, the Spirit of the Lord in us does not need our help. If you are afraid that the Spirit of the Lord in you may not be responsible and so you rush to help when temptation comes, it shows that you have not seen that the Spirit of the Lord in you is a law. May new believers see that the Holy Spirit in them is a spontaneous law. If anyone is to be delivered from sin, he has to come to that deliverance naturally. Should he try to get deliverance by exercising his willpower, he will again be defeated. But now those who are in Christ Jesus are no longer handicapped, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made them free from the law of sin

and of death. It is all so simple and so natural. We have been given another law which naturally delivers us from the law of sin and of death.

Someone may ask how this comes about. I do not know, but have you not had some such experience? For example:

Someone comes to you; he scolds you, quarrels with you, and even beats you. He is utterly unreasonable in all that he does. You should be very angry with him, but somehow you let everything go without knowing why. Afterward you begin to wonder why it was that when you were scolded you forgot to get angry. After that person did so much, you ought to have lost your temper. If you keep on remembering all that he did to you, you will no doubt be very angry. Yet, to your own amazement, you just unconsciously let everything pass. Let me tell you, victories are all won unawares.

Why is it that you overcome without being conscious of it? It is because a law is working. If it were a matter of your will, you would have to think and hold on. But what the Lord does is to give the victory without your awareness. Such victories are real victories. If you have experienced this even once, then you will understand the revelation that the indwelling Holy Spirit is able to keep you from sin. He is able to make you victorious without the help of your resolves. You do not need to make resolutions, for the law in you will deliver you from sin if you really see before God that since you are in Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit of life is also in you, then you will find that the Lord puts His Spirit in you in order to carry you through to victory quite naturally. You do not need to will or to grasp: you will surprisingly be brought into victory.

To overcome sin does not require an ounce of strength, for it is the work of the law. There is one law which makes me sin without my effort, and there is another law which sets me free from sin--also without my labor. Only that which requires no exertion is true victory. I have nothing to do. Let me tell you, we now have nothing to do but to raise our heads and tell the Lord, "Nothing of me." What happened before was due to law; what is now happening is also due to law. The former law did a thorough work, for it made me sin continuously; this new law does an even better work because I am no longer handicapped by sin. The law of the Spirit of life has manifested itself; it is far superior to the law of sin and death.

If new believers can be brought to see this from the first day of their Christian life, they will then walk the road of deliverance. The Bible never uses the term "overcome sin"; it only uses the phrase "made free" or "delivered from sin." It is said here in Romans, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death." the law of the Spirit of life has pulled me out of the realm of the law of sin and death.. The law of sin and death is still present but I am no longer there for it to work upon. The earth's gravitational force is present, but if things have been removed to heaven, there is no object for it to act upon.

The law of the Spirit of life is in Christ Jesus and I am also now in Christ Jesus; therefore by this law I am set free from the law of sin and of death. "There is therefore now no disabling to them that are in Christ Jesus." "The man in Romans 7 is labeled, "disabled." But this disabled person who is so weak and always sins is now, Paul says, no more disabled in Christ Jesus. How? By the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which has set him free from the law of sin and of death. Therefore, there is no longer-e disabling. Do you see now how this problem of deliverance is completely solved?

The Way of Deliverance and Freedom

The earlier a new believer knows the way of deliverance, the better it is for him. There is no need for a delay of several years before he can know deliverance and freedom. Within a few months he can have many experiences of learning. It is not necessary for him to suffer many wounds before learning. It is possible for a Christian not to be defeated. So, when you are faced with a difficulty, do not strive, using your willpower. If you are defeated, do not turn back. Learn the way of deliverance step by step. The first step is to see that sin is a law to you; second, to see that the will cannot overcome the law; and the third, to see that there is another law which does overcome the law of sin. Upon experiencing these three steps, the problem is wholly solved.

May all Christians be able to sing the victory song of praise. How many miles are walked unnecessarily; how many tears are shed because of defeat. If believers see this is way of deliverance and freedom from the beginning of their Christian lives, they will be saved many sorrows and tears. What is the way of deliverance? It is that the law of the Spirit of life has set me free. It is a law, perfect and powerful. That law is able to deliver me to the end. It does not require my help. As the law of sin in the world causes everybody to sin, so now the Law of the Spirit of life in us naturally leads us into complete victory over sin . It naturally makes us holy, full of life, and full of its power.

You have already received life. Never think that the Holy Spirit sometimes manifests life and sometimes not. If this is your case, you do not know the Holy Spirit as a law. Since He is a law, He is always the same. He is the same wherever, whatever, and whenever it may be. He is the same, not because you make Him so, but because he is so. Do you believe He is a law? I have no way to persuade you to believe. If you have not seen this, you will not believe what we have said. May God open your eyes that you may see this. We have in us not only the Holy Spirit, not only life, but also a law. Thus we shall be delivered.

Having seen this law, our problem is resolved. It is not enough to see the indwelling Holy Spirit; we must see Him as a law in us. Then we shall begin to praise. Hereafter, we shall live a transcendent life. How wonderful it is.

December 31, 1998