

Knowledge of Lust Intensifies Antiauthority Arrogance

All are presented as imperatives of prohibition which means that the believer obviously has the power to restrain himself from these various temptations. Paul concluded that these prohibitions must have a source. For him, the answer was revealed in the 10th Commandment: “*You shall not lust after anything that is your neighbor’s.*”

The source of lust was discovered to be in the flesh—the sinful nature, genetically encoded into the DNA of every cell; the source of personal sin was his own volition. Paul concludes that the propensity to submit to the lust pattern and the ability to resist its temptations are both within his power to control.

The key is the imperative mood. If God commands a person not to do a certain thing it becomes obvious that both the violation and its prevention find their origin in man. If God commands us not to do something then it is obvious, we have either done the deed or have the capability of doing so. If we are commanded to either stop or refrain from the act then it is obvious, we have the innate power fulfill the mandate.

The Tenth Commandment therefore becomes the vector which informs Paul that he not only has a problem but also the responsibility to solve the problem. However, the problem is a problem because the sinful nature's inherent propensity is to resist all authority.

Consequently, whenever a person is under the control of his sinful nature, he is by definition antiauthority. To give an order to the sinful nature only serves to invigorate its anti-authoritarian propensities, a condition Paul expresses in:

Romans 7:8 - But the sinful nature, having seized the opportunity through the 10th Commandment, produced in me every category of lust, for apart from the Law sin is unknown.

Here's the situation. As long as Paul was ignorant of the lust pattern within him, he was unable to control its production. He simply did what came naturally, i.e., he consistently sought to satisfy his lustful desires by submitting to the memory traces which had become paths of least resistance. In this manner, the sinful nature could operate surreptitiously within Paul's brain without him putting up any form of resistance. But once the presence of the sinful nature was known to Paul then he was able to identify the source of his lust but was under obligation to restrain its propensities. In order for the body to maintain control over the soul, the sinful nature must redouble its efforts and is thus reinvigorated.

Law revealed to Paul the trends of his first husband, gave orders to resist them, and made clear that he was involved in a bad marriage. The sinful nature must defend its position and therefore its anti-authoritarian instincts are intensified. A bad situation has been amplified by the knowledge of the Tenth Commandment. But you can't solve a problem until you know what the problem is.

Paul realizes from the imperative mood of the 10th commandment that the source of sin is within him. And if the source of sin is within him, then the source of his spiritual death must be within him. However, the Law is not the problem, its duty is to reveal the problem. Once the problem is uncovered then the tendency is for it to become invigorated.

Compliance with the demands of the imperative of prohibition is only possible through the inculcation of Bible doctrine. Without truth's power to override the sinful nature's power, the believer is left between Scylla and Charybdis without a paddle.