

Heureka! Paul Discovers a Law

We just learned in verse 20 that Paul is able to deduce from his own behavior pattern that it is the presence and function of the sinful nature within him which produces the fruit of sin:

Romans 7:20 - Now if, as a result of my personal volitional decision, I am doing what I do not desire to do (and I am), then I am no longer the one producing the sinful act but the sinful nature which continuously resides inside of me.

Now as we move into Romans 7:21, Paul brings out the discovery of a Law of Evil present within him. What made Paul aware of the presence of the sinful nature was a statement of absolute truth from the Tenth Commandment.

However, from that point, Paul began to deduce from personal observation that his behavior pattern was based on trends of the sinful nature which progressed from sin, to human good, to evil. This was a heuristic process:

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. "heuristic":

Exploratory problem-solving techniques that utilize self-education to improve one's performance.

Once Paul learned he had a sinful nature he then began to observe his behavior patterns. From this he was able to solve the problem of why he acted the way he did: the Law of Evil residing within him.

Romans 7:21 - Consequently, I discover...

heurisko:

present - Historical; views the past discovery of the sinful nature and its trend toward evil with the vividness of a present occurrence.

active - Paul discovered this phenomenon of human good and evil coexisting in conflict with himself. The bromide that there is a little good in all of us is true if stated, "*There is a little human good in all of us, (if not a whole lot of it).*"

indicative - Declarative; viewed from the standpoint of absolute reality.

Next comes Paul's explanation of what he discovered—the accusative singular direct object from the noun: *nomos* - Along with the definite article which is used as a demonstrative pronoun: *ton* translated idiomatically, "*a rule governing one's actions.*" It can be translated with one English word: "*principle.*" "*Consequently, I discover this principle...*"

This principle can be stated with the same degree of certainty as can Archimedes' principle of displacement. This law becomes evident once the believer accumulates a certain amount of doctrine.

Because human good and evil exist inside the members of the body, it means that God is not free to bless a believer until he learns doctrine. Knowledge of God's plan and purpose is required before a believer can gain the capacity for blessing. Only through knowledge of doctrine can the believer identify the presence of human good and evil within him.

It is also only through doctrine that the believer is able to override these wheel-tracks of wickedness. Without doctrinal capacity and orientation to grace, no person can successfully handle the kinds of blessings God is able to bestow. The imputation of wealth, promotion, success, prosperity, and historical impact become a source of discipline and adversity without doctrine to give them meaning and purpose.

The inner conflict rages as a result of the ongoing struggle for control of the soul. Remember that Satan's plan is to counterfeit everything which God proposes to do in grace. Works accomplished through God's system of grace are classified as divine-good production. Works which are accomplished through human energy, talent, and ability are classified as human-good production.

In Satan's attempt to be like the most High God, it is imperative that he control the souls of men. Sin grants him that control therefore the sinful nature becomes Satan's inside agent in the life of the believer. Sin is necessary so that the believer can be neutralized with regard to life inside the divine power system. Once this occurs then the sinful nature, whose trends are promoted by demon influence, is able to manipulate the carnal believer into acts of human good and evil.