

Why you can't do what the flesh prompts you to do

"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish" (Galatians 5:16, 17).

As sons of God, these have the mind of the Spirit, the mind of Christ. So, with the mind they "serve the law of God" (Rom. 7:25).

Accordingly, whoever is led of the Spirit of God and has the mind of Christ fulfills the law, because by that Spirit there is shed abroad in the heart the love of God, which in itself is the fulfilling of the law.

On the other hand, whoever is led of the flesh

and so has the mind of the flesh, does the works of the flesh, and so serves the law of sin. Whoever is led of the flesh cannot do the good that he would; he serves the law of sin, and so is "under the law" (Rom. 3:19).

Note in the text now under consideration that the flesh, in its true fleshly sinful nature, is still present with the one who has the Spirit of God; and that this flesh is warring against the Spirit.

That is, when one is converted and thus brought under the power of the Spirit of God, he is not so delivered from the flesh that he is actually separated from it with its tendencies and desires, so that by the flesh he is no more tempted and has no more contest. No, that same degenerate, sinful flesh is there, with its same tendencies and desires.

But the individual is no longer subject to these. He is delivered from subjection to the flesh with its tendencies and desires, and now is subject to the Spirit. He is now subject to the power that conquers, brings under, crucifies, and keeps under,

the flesh, sinful as it is, with all its affections and lusts. [1]

Note:

1. Lessons on Faith, pp. 132, 133.