



The Invisible Threat – March 28, 2020

The Enemy Within (Sin) [#1 - Evil at My Elbow]

(RBC Weekly Meditation) **Romans 7:21**

Tend to Our Souls

I and my family are well but...

- I wish we could gather with you right now...

"If we are not spiritually wise in managing our souls, how can we help making a wreck of ourselves?"

But many people live in darkness and ignorance about their own hearts. They keep careful track of how their investments are doing on Wall Street and get frequent checkups at the doctor; they watch what they eat and work out at the gym three or four times a week to keep their bodies finely tuned. But how many people give the least thought to their souls?"ⁱ

Book Study, "*The Enemy Within: Straight Talk About the Power & Defeat of Sin*" by Kris Lundgaardⁱ

Notes:

Part One: The Power of Sin in What It Is

Part Two: The Power of Sin in How It Works

Part Three: The Power of Sin in What It Does

Part Four: Nailing the Lid on Sin's Coffin

Evil at My Elbow

Romans 7:21

²¹ So I find it to be a *law* that when I want to do right, *evil lies close at hand*.



What is Paul's Point?

I. Justification & Sanctification

Romans 5:1–5

¹ Therefore, since we have been *justified* by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only that, but *we rejoice in our sufferings*, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts *through the Holy Spirit* who has been given to us.

[Death through Adam – Life through Jesus]

Accusation: Christians don't care about obeying the Law of God

Romans 6:1

¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?

Romans 6:15

¹⁵ What then? Are we to sin because we are **not under law** but under grace? By no means!

Paul's Answer: Christians are the only ones who have been freed to obey

Romans 6:22

²² But now that *you have been set free from sin* and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

II. The Spirit Gives Obedience & Life (not the Law)

Romans 7:7–8:2

⁷ What then shall we say? That **the law is sin**? By no means! Yet if it had not been for **the law**, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” ⁸ But *sin*, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, *produced in me* all kinds of covetousness. For apart from **the law**, *sin lies dead*. ⁹ I was once alive apart from **the law**, but when the commandment came, *sin came alive* and I died. ¹⁰ The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. ¹¹ For *sin*, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, *deceived me* and through it killed me. ¹² So **the law** is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

¹³ Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was *sin*, *producing death in me* through what is good, in order that *sin* might be shown to be *sin*, and *through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure*. ¹⁴ For we know that **the law** is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with **the law**, that it is good. ¹⁷ So now it is no longer I who do it, but *sin that dwells within me*. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For *I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out*. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but *sin that dwells within me*.

²¹ So I find it to be *a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand*. ²² For I delight in **the law of God**, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against *the law of my mind* and making me captive to *the law of sin* that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

8 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the *law of the Spirit of life* has set you free in Christ Jesus from *the law of sin and death.*

Paul's Main Point:

The Roman Christians need to be ready to fight their flesh with the Spirit.

Beginning to Prepare for the Battle

To understand indwelling sin is to arm yourself against it.

Romans 7:21

²¹ So I find it to be *a law* that when I want to do right, *evil lies close at hand.*



4 Key Truths:

1. Sin living in us is a “law.”

“a moral rule that directs and commands” ¹

“laws of nature” ¹

2. We find this law inside us.

“Believers are the only people who ever find the law of sin at work in them. Unbelievers can’t feel it. The law of sin is a raging river, carrying them along; they cannot measure the force of the current, because they have surrendered themselves to it and are borne along by it. A believer, on the other hand, swims upstream—he meets sin head-on and strains under its strength.” ¹

3. We find this law when we are at our best.

“when I want to do right...”

“He didn’t stumble onto it in a time of great backsliding, or when he was indifferent about the things of God. He was aware of it even when he most wanted to serve God, when he set his mind to obey his Savior and King, when Christ ruled his heart.” ¹

4. This law never rests.

“The “law of sin and death” is in a constant tug of war against the believer’s overall desire to please God (verses 14–25). But sin goes further: when the believer sets his jaw to even the simplest duty to God, sin fights him right at that point (“Evil is right there with me”—

verse 21), making him drowsy or distracted when he would pray, or stingy and ambitious when he would tithe.

Don't you sometimes feel like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde? Every believer who is also a sinner (which is every believer) does.”ⁱ

Galatians 5:17

For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for *these are opposed to each other*...

Wise Up:

“To understand these four truths about indwelling sin is to arm yourself against it. In your struggle against sin, there is only one thing more important to grasp than these four facts: the free, justifying grace of God in Christ's blood. The grace of God in Christ and the law of sin are the two fountains of all your holiness and sin, joy and trouble, refreshment and sorrow. If you are to walk with God and glorify him in this world, you need to master both.”ⁱ (mark-up mine)



[TURN OF RECORDING]

Questions for Reflection and Discussionⁱ

1. Read through **Romans 7:14–25**. Which phrase or phrases best describe your own experience?
2. Can you think of ways the law of sin offers rewards for obeying it and threatens punishment for ignoring it? (This anticipates the next chapter.)
3. Think of a time when you “found” the law of sin in you—when it seemed to take over and bend you to its will even, as it were, against your will. Describe that time to your group, if you can.
4. What do you think is the most frustrating thing about the sin in your heart?
5. If it is true that the law of sin in you never rests, what hope do you have?
6. Read **Luke 12:15** and **Matthew 26:41**. In light of this chapter, describe the daily diligence you need in order to heed Jesus’ warnings.
7. What do you hope to gain through studying this book? Write a prayer in the space below, asking God to make it so in your life.

ⁱ **Lundgaard, Kris.** The Enemy Within: Straight Talk About the Power and Defeat of Sin. P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.