
The Vestibule of the Heart

By Dr. Sam Wolfe
Huntsville, Alabama

KEEP YOUR HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE, FOR OUT OF IT ARE THE ISSUES OF LIFE.
(Proverbs 4:23)



Introduction:

What Paul called "*Sin that dwells in me*" in Romans 7:20 is the Self-Life, the nature of corruption we inherited from Adam. I borrowed the title of this article from James McConkey who called the Vestibule of the Heart the mind. Both the old corrupt nature of Adam and the mind exist in our lives. It is extremely dangerous to underestimate the presence and power of this corrupt nature in our lives.

Because of the presence of the Self-Life in us, there is a danger of a Satanic infusion from the sin nature into the mind and then into the heart. Therefore it is mandatory that we obey the exhortation of Proverbs 4:23 because the mind is open to whatever is allowed. Due to the ungodly aspects of our culture, we are experiencing a Satanic takeover of almost every segment of our society. Spiritual darkness has settled in on us like a dense fog. This is the subtle work of Satan through the carnality of multitudes of God's people, who tolerate the dominance of the Self-Life and who offer little if any resistance to Satan. As a result, the issues from out of the heart become the evil of the flesh. To disregard the danger and ignore the biblical exhortation is very serious. *Allow me to describe the sin that exists next door to our hearts.*

- ❖ People think that sins from the old nature can do no harm, but they will drive you insane.
- ❖ They think that sin gives them a position of advantage in life, but it will destroy your career.
- ❖ Sin may make you the life of the party, but afterward it will leave you lonely.

❖ **Fatal in its Fascination**

I read about a tree somewhere on which beautiful crimson blossoms appear before the leaves. Under the tree, the ground was covered with dead insects. The blossoms produce a fatal opiate.

❖ **Paralyzing in its Power**

Dims the sight,
Dulls the sensibilities,
Distorts moral judgment,

❖ **Disappointing in its Delusion**

❖ **Dissatisfying in its Deception**

❖ **Cruel in its Control** – Consider Israel in Egypt under the control of a tyrannical Pharaoh.

A Chinese proverb reads:

Sin will take you farther than you want to go;
Make you stay longer than you want to stay
Make you pay more than you want to pay.

*Sin in the Vestibule of the Heart Is....***A. Pervasive in its Presence**

The Apostle Paul, the greatest Christian who ever lived, could not in his own strength withstand the pervasiveness of the self-life. He wrote: *“For that I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that I do. Now it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me”* (Romans 7:15-16).

Consider this quote from Octavius Winslow: *“The deepest sorrow for sin is that which springs from the consciousness of its indwelling presence and power. This should be our profoundest humiliation before God. To think of the depraved nature, evil heart, corrupt mind, poisoned and impure fountain, body of sin and death constantly borne about us—lying down and rising up with us—carried into our most hallowed engagements—constantly inseparably, ever prompting to evil.”* Paul wrote...*For the flesh lusts (strives) against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would* (Galatians 5:17).

B. Penetrating in its Power

If we allow the Self-Life to dominate, it will penetrate our hearts with evil. Untested and impure blood is not allowed in a transfusion. Nor should we allow the impurities of the Self-Life to be infused into our minds. They grieve the Holy Spirit and impede His work of revealing Christ, and the old nature of Adam will dictate the *“issues of the heart.”* Can you not see that the Self-Life constitutes the greatest problem in our lives? It is causing a world-wide pandemic. *It...*

Deafens Spiritual Ears – Disrupts Fellowship with God – Destroys Testimony – Distorts Vision – Disturbs Our Peace – Devastates Our Walk – Demands Deviate Behavior.

**An unguarded mind will tolerate sinful thoughts and the imagery of lust,
creating a stream of evil passion.**

C. Perverse in its Practice

While counseling someone regarding a certain practice, he suddenly stated, *“I am grown.”* He thought he could do whatever he wanted to do and still be a spiritually healthy Christian. This was the Self-Life striking back in resistance of the truth about himself. Maturity, imagined or true, does not excuse one for perverse living. You cannot grow out of the influence of the sin nature. No good thing can come from it. When Jesus went to the cross, He took the sin nature—*the body of sin*—with Him. Romans 6:6 states: *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

Its motives, as well as its practice are impure and ungodly. Regardless of how sincere one may be, God will have nothing to do with works or service rendered in the energy of the flesh. Why should He approve what He nailed to the cross? So don't try to Control, Conquer, Consecrate, or Change the Self-Life. It cannot be improved, but **it can be consigned to the cross** where God crucified it in the death of Christ. By faith, claim Christ's Victory—**the only way of victory over it.** The flesh cannot overcome, cancel out, nor in any way defeat itself.

Victory begins in confession of sins. I John 1:9 says, *“If we confess (agree with God) our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*