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CHRISTIAN FAITH

Many people think Christian faith is no more than a good attitude. Such people haven't really experienced Christian faith. They don't know how it works.

No one can write about Christian faith or know if others have written correctly about it unless he himself has been comforted by it. Whoever has been comforted by Christian faith in even the smallest way cannot cease to write, speak, think, or hear about it! This is why Christ calls faith "a spring of water welling up to eternal life"(John 4:14).

Admittedly my faith is weak. I've been tormented by

many temptations. Even with such a weak faith, however, I will try to write something about it. If what follows is not well written, I hope it is easy to understand.

The faith of a Christian can be summarized with two statements:

**A Christian is the most liberated master of everyone,
and subject to no one.**

**A Christian is the most dutiful servant of everyone,
and subject to everyone.**

These statements seem contradictory, but they are not. They actually are in harmony. Both statements are from the Apostle Paul who wrote “For though I am free from all, I made myself a servant to all” (1 Corinthians 9:19) as well as “Owe no one anything, except to love each other” (Romans 13:8). To serve and obey whatever it loves is the very nature of love.

Christ was therefore free and enslaved. He was in the form of God¹ and the form of a servant.² Christ was Lord of all, but born of a woman, and born under the law.³

A Christian finds himself in much the same situation. A Christian has two natures: A spiritual nature and a bodily nature. When referring to the spiritual nature (which is also called the soul) a Christian is called the spiritual, the inner, or the new man. When referring to the bodily nature (which is also called the flesh) a Christian is called the body, the outer, or the old man.

The Apostle Paul refers to this two-fold nature of the Christian when he says: “Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16).

The reason why seemingly contradictory statements are often made in the Bible about Christians is due to the Christian’s two-fold nature. The simple fact is that within each Christian two natures constantly oppose each other. “The flesh wars against the spirit and the spirit wars against the flesh” (Galatians 5:17).

¹Cf. Philippians 2:6.

²Cf. Philippians 2:7.

³Cf. Galatians 4:4.

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1. What two statements does Luther use to summarize *I Corinthians 9:19-23* and *Romans 13:8-10*?
 2. How does Jesus describe faith in *John 4:13-14*?
 3. According to *John 8:31,32*, how is a Christian truly liberated?
 4. Whom ought the Christian’s life be lived like (*I Corinthians 9:19*)?
 5. What is the very nature of love (*I Corinthians 13:4-7*)?
 6. We know the difference between the non-Christian life (*Ephesians 2:12*) and the Christian life (*Ephesians 2:13, 19-22*). But what goes on *within* the Christian (*Galatians 5:13-26*)?