



Ephesians

Finding Joy in Serving God

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“[The Gentiles] are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.”

“And since [the Gentiles] did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with **all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice.** They are **full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness.**

They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them"

- Romans 1:28-32



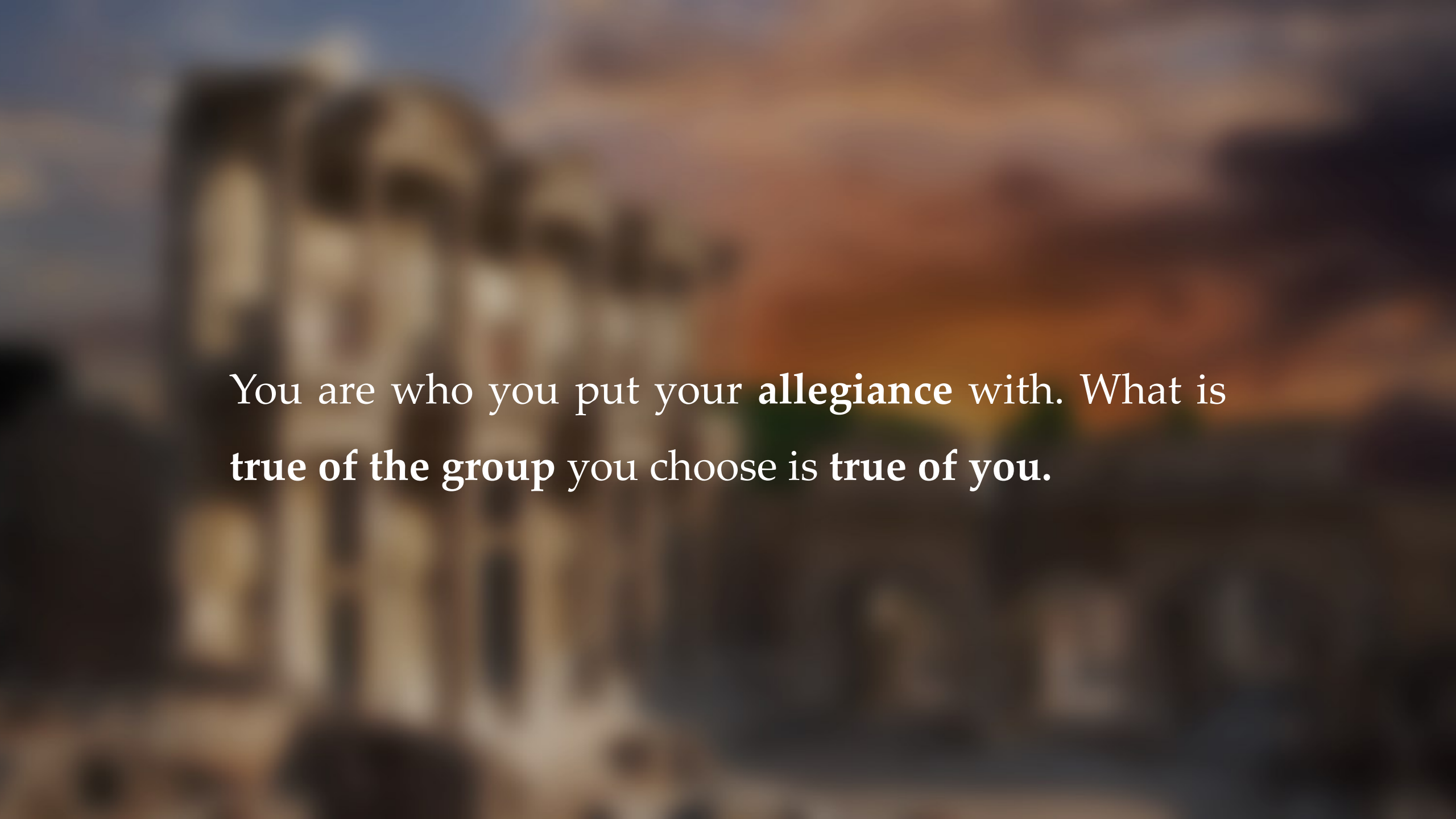
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“In the Mediterranean world, individual accomplishments **did not define the significance of a person.** Instead, a person’s identity was wrapped up in the reputation of his or her family, community and people group. Scholars call this a “dyadic personality.”

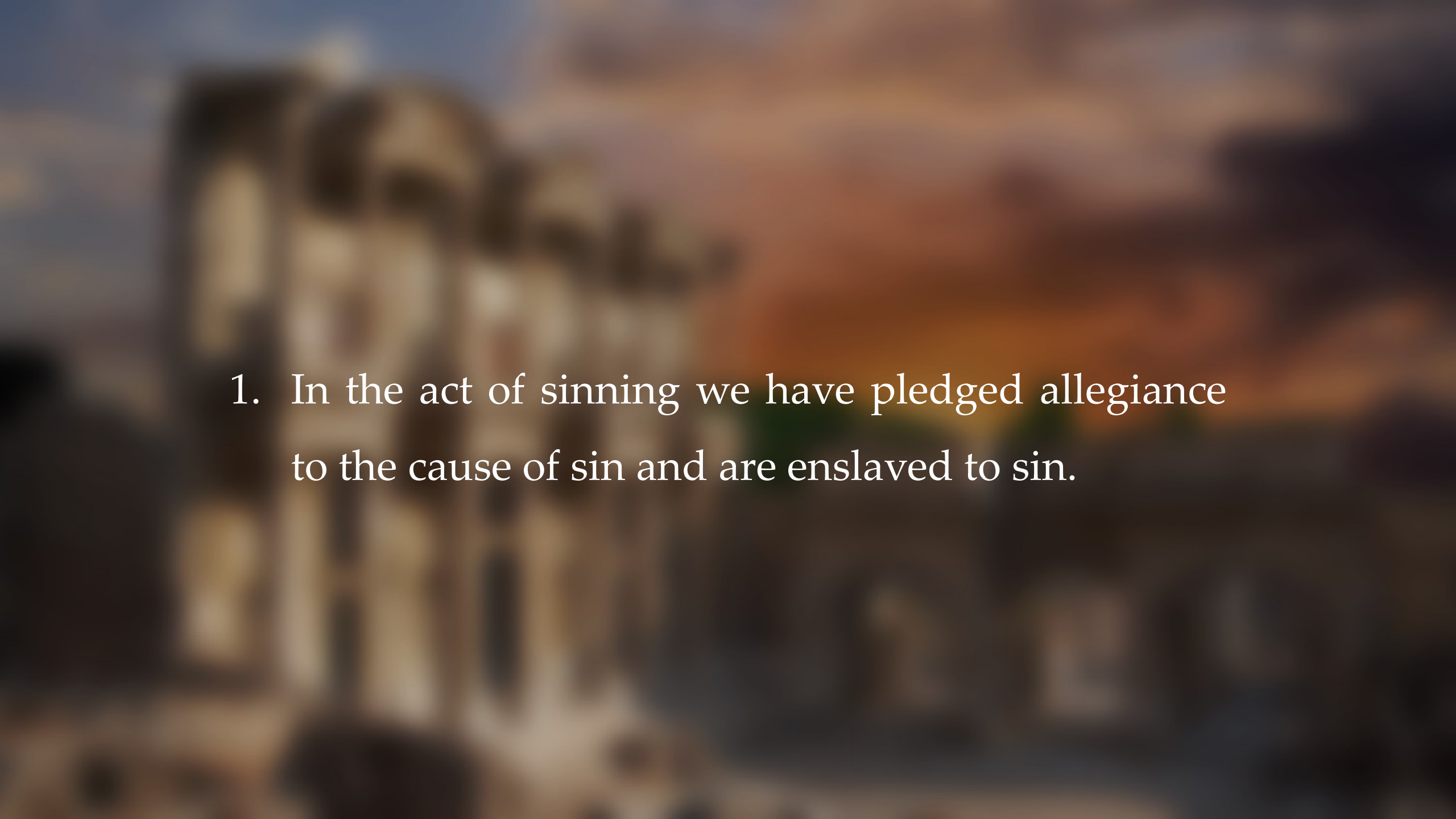
Self-discovery came from the opinion of others, not from self-reflection. The family you were born into, the village of your nativity and the **alliances you maintained with other groups established your individual identity.**"

- E. Randolph Richards, *Rediscovering Paul*



You are who you put your **allegiance** with. What is
true of the group you choose is **true of you.**

Sin, according to Scripture, is not just something we do once in a while. It is a **destructive force, God's enemy**, that we align ourselves with when we partake in it. And once we do that, as we all have, **our fate is sealed**. Sin has made its home in us and **enslaved us to its will**.

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1. In the act of sinning we have pledged allegiance to the cause of sin and are enslaved to sin.

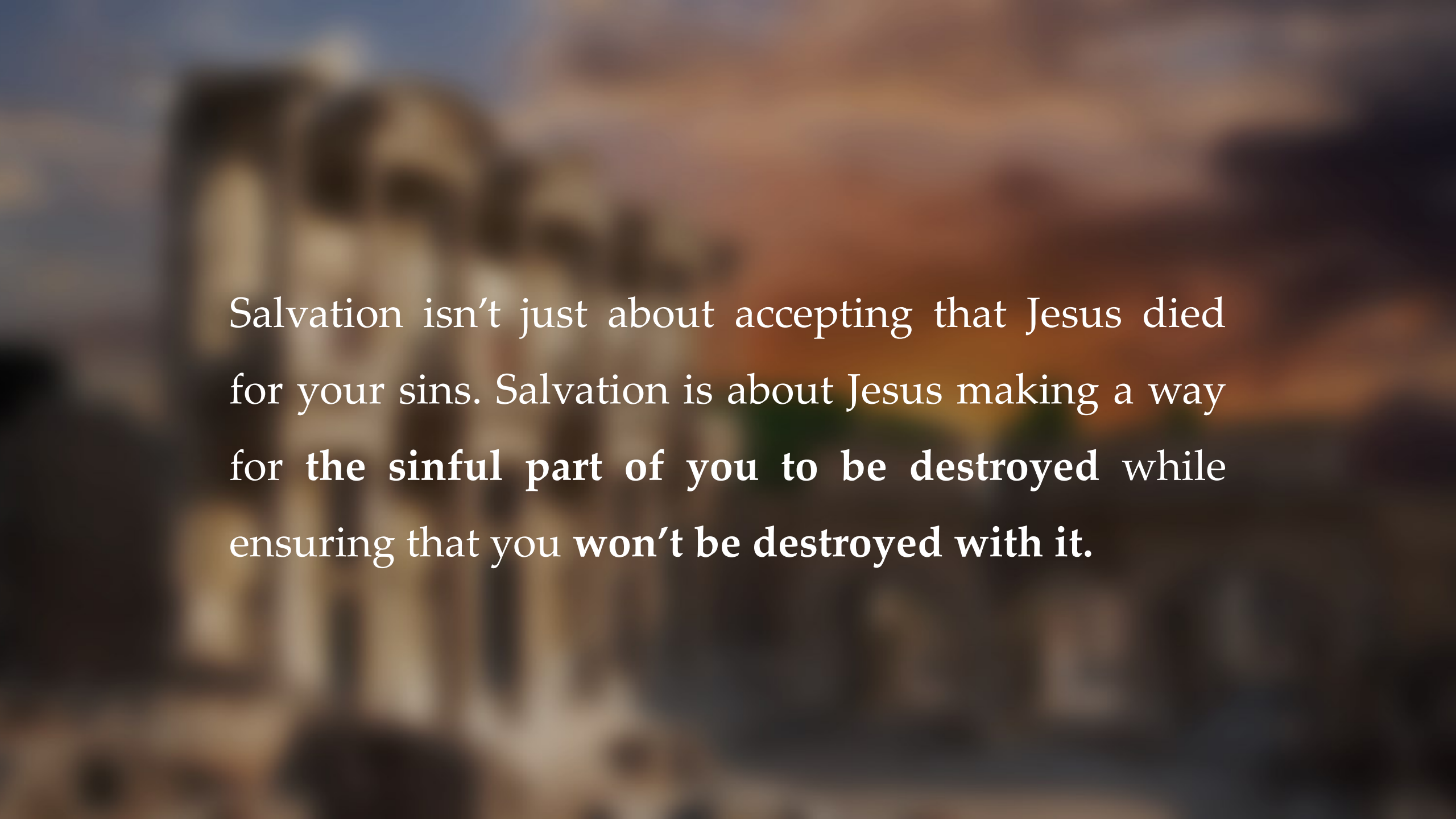


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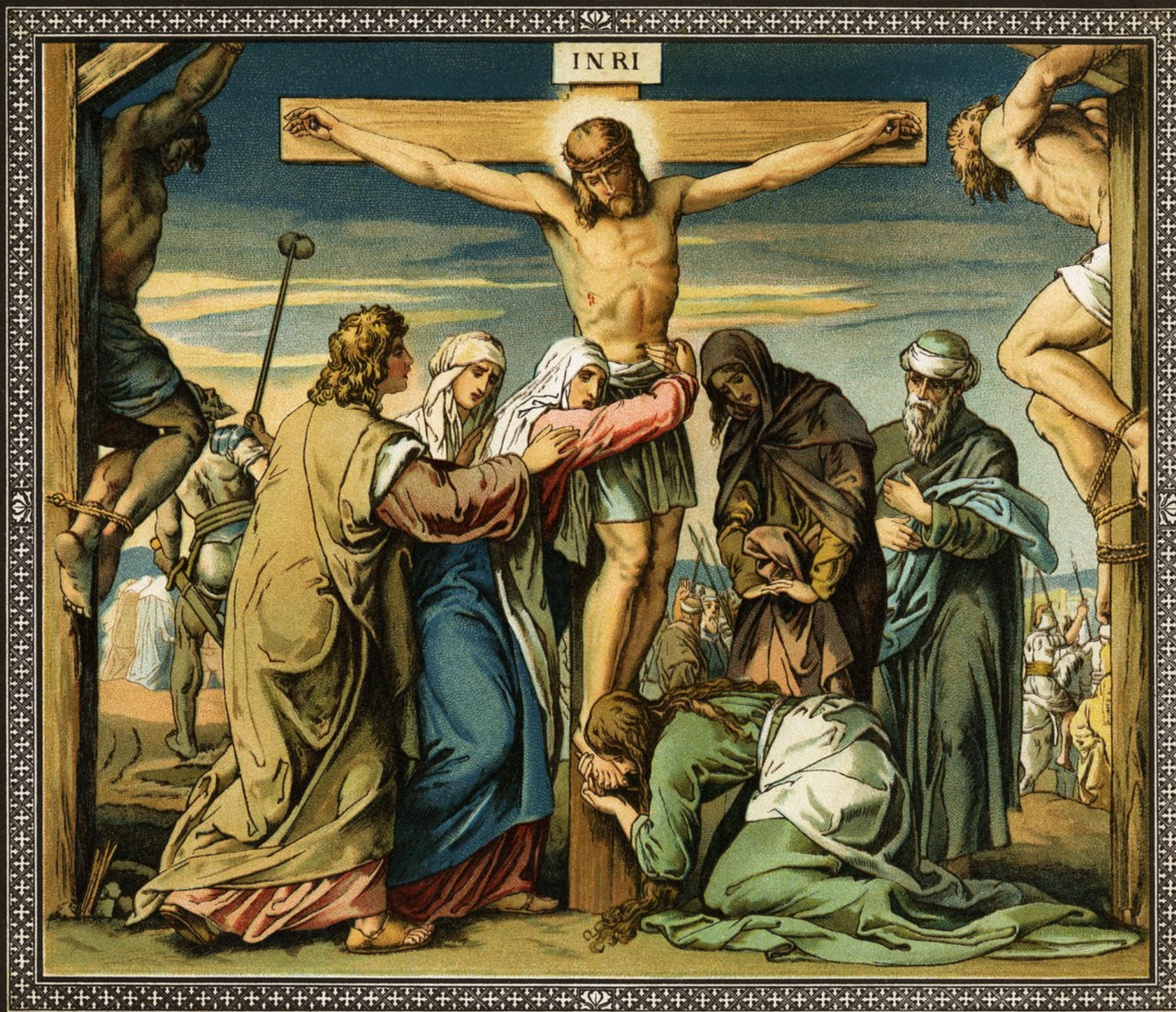
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“What comes out of a person is what defiles him.
For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil
thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,
coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy,
slander, pride, foolishness. **All these evil things**
come from within, and they defile a person.”

- Mark 7:20-23

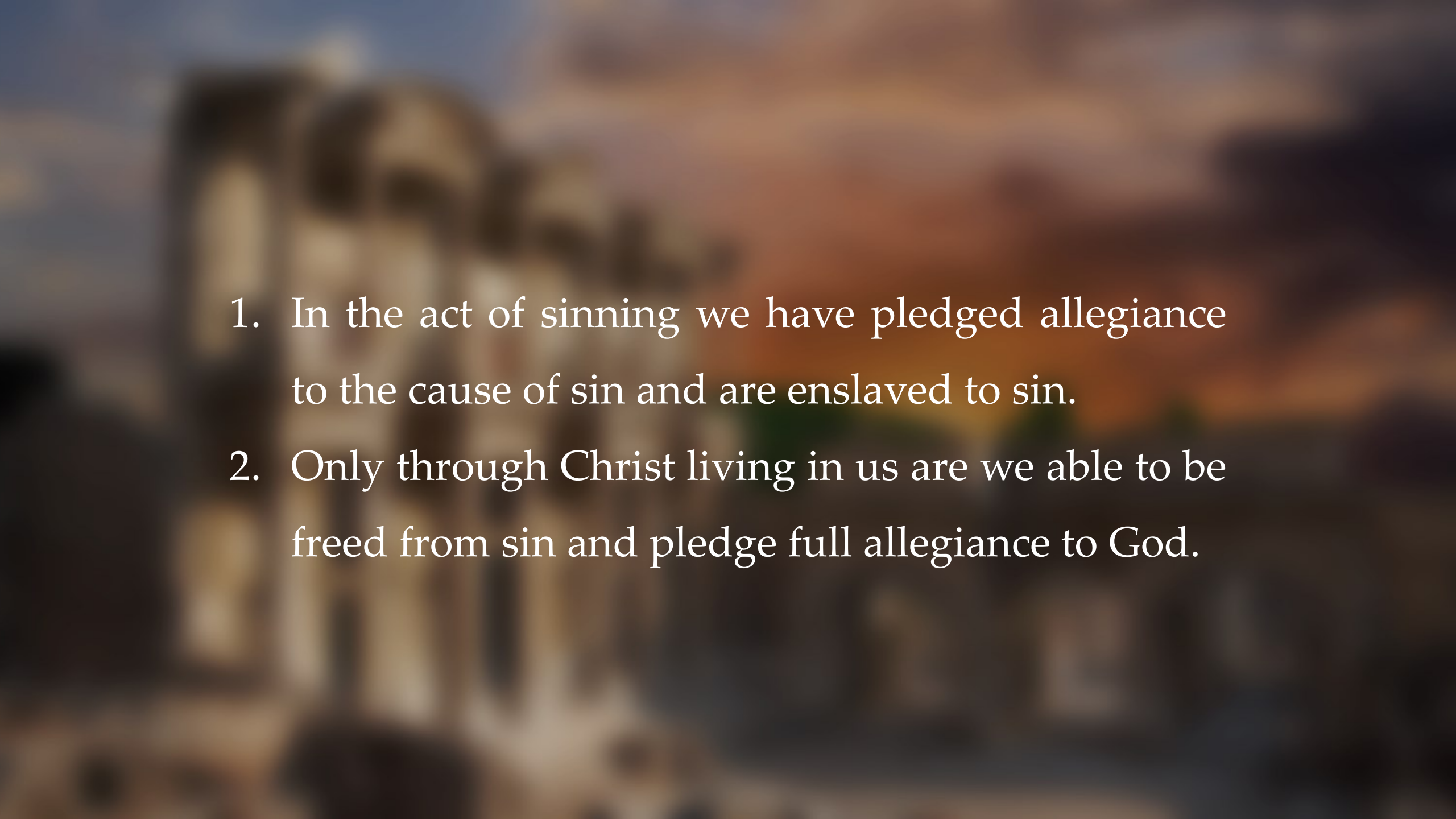


Salvation isn't just about accepting that Jesus died for your sins. Salvation is about Jesus making a way for **the sinful part of you to be destroyed** while ensuring that you **won't be destroyed with it.**



“I have been crucified **with Christ**. It is **no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me**. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and **gave himself for me.**”

- Galatians 2:20

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1. In the act of sinning we have pledged allegiance to the cause of sin and are enslaved to sin.
 2. Only through Christ living in us are we able to be freed from sin and pledge full allegiance to God.

“But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead **dwells in you**, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also **give life to your mortal bodies** through his Spirit who **dwells in you**.”

- Romans 8:10-11

“What was the joy that Jesus had?...The joy of Jesus was his **absolute self-surrender and self-sacrifice to his Father** - the joy of **doing that which the father sent him to do.**”

- Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost For His Highest*

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3. It is Christ living in us that enables us to have joy in serving God.



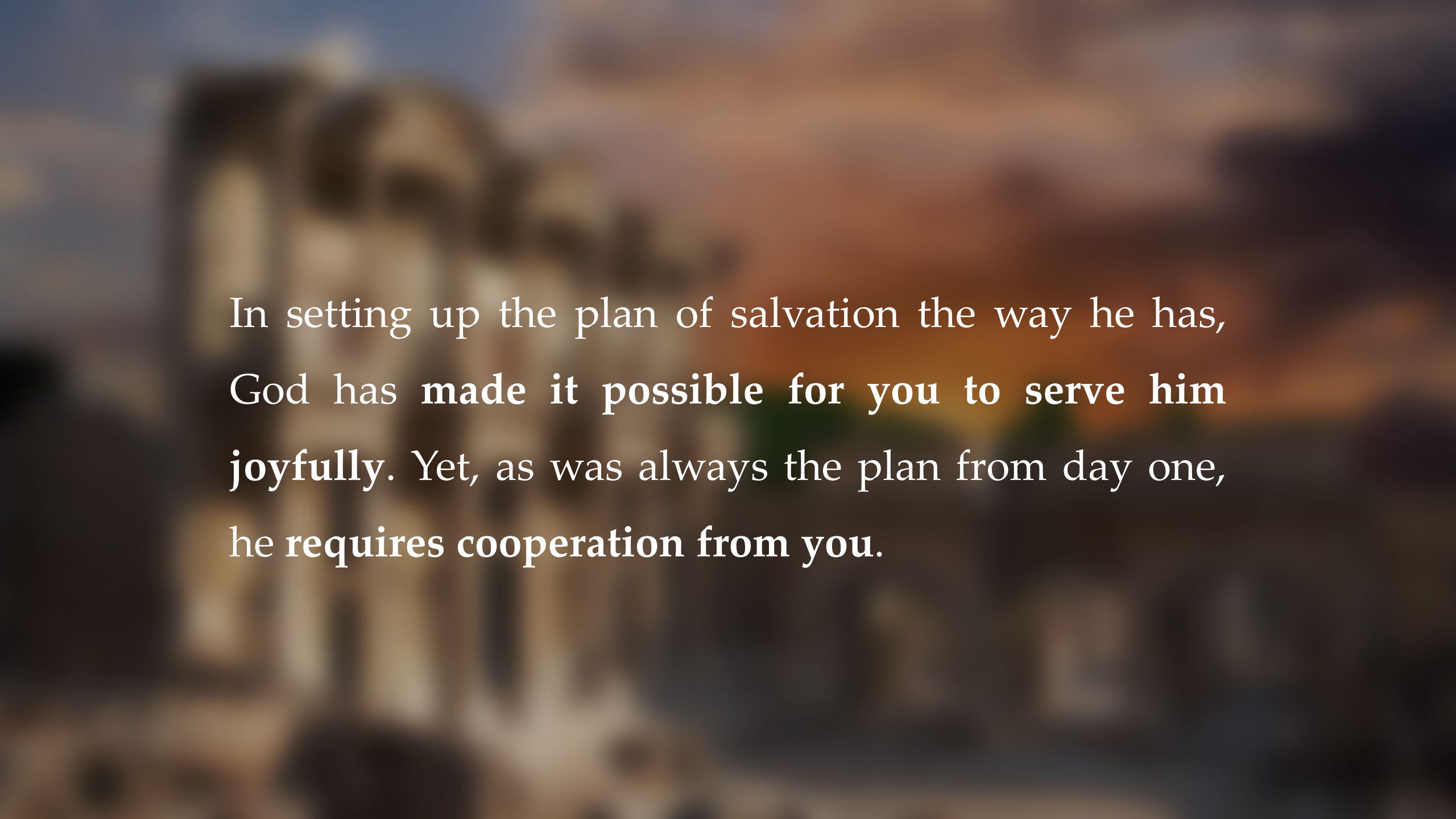
“For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,
but I see in my members another law **waging war**
against the law of my mind and making me **captive**
to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 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.**"

- Romans 7:22-25



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2. Only through Christ living in us are we able to be freed from sin and pledge full allegiance to God.
3. It is Christ living in us that enables us to have joy in serving God.
4. But we must invest into our relationship with Jesus - renewing our mind - to find joy in serving God.



In setting up the plan of salvation the way he has,
God has made it possible for you to serve him
joyfully. Yet, as was always the plan from day one,
he requires cooperation from you.

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling, **for it is God who works in you**, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”

- Philippians 2:12-13



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