

Grace to You :: esp Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time

Strength for Today

“For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death” (Romans 7:5).

Four key terms characterize those who are not in Christ.

In our fallen, cursed world, disasters are commonplace. Fires, floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, tornadoes, and other natural disasters happen somewhere every day. Added to those natural disasters are the man-made ones, such as war, acts of terrorism, plane crashes, train wrecks, etc.

But far greater than any of those disasters, and the one from which they all stem, was the entrance of sin into the human race. Sin renders fallen men spiritually dead, cuts them off from fellowship with God, and consigns them to eternal punishment in Hell.

In today's verse Paul introduces four words that describe man's unregenerate state: *flesh*, *sin*, *law*, and *death*. Those four words are interconnected: the flesh produces sin, which is stimulated by the law, resulting in death. Let's consider each one individually.

The term *flesh* is used two ways in Scripture. It is sometimes used in a physical sense to speak of human existence. John used it to describe Christ's incarnation in John 1:14 and 1 John 4:2. But in its moral sense, “flesh” represents the believer's unredeemed body (Gal. 5:13; Eph. 2:3). While believers are no longer “in the flesh” (Rom. 8:9) as are unbelievers, the flesh is still in us. It is the seat of temptation, the beachhead from which Satan launches his attacks.

Sin (or “sinful passions”) energizes the flesh, which in turn produces further sin. Those “sinful passions,” Paul says, “were aroused by the Law”; they are exposed by *the law* because fallen man's rebellious nature makes him desire to do what is forbidden. The end result of this downward spiral is “*death*”—both physical and spiritual.

What a merciful God we serve, who “even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ” (Eph. 2:5).

Suggestions for Prayer

Pray for the unbelievers in your life, that God would open their hearts to respond to the gospel (Acts 16:14).

For Further Study

-What do the following passages teach about the Christian's relationship to the law—Romans 8:2-

4; 10:4; Galatians 3:13; 5:18; Philippians 3:9?

-Does that mean believers can live as they please? (See 1 Cor. 9:21.)

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