

The Destructive Principle
From Romans 7:14-25
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From Romans 7:14-25, THE DESTRUCTIVE PRINCIPLE
PART 1: THE IRRECONCILABLE BREACH v.14, 15.

#1. Irreparable and deep is the breach between the Law of God, which is a "spiritual" manifestation, and the phenomenon of the "flesh." "For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin" v.14.

#2. The apostle instructs that *the spiritual and the domain of the flesh exist in a perpetual state of contention*. No agreement between these two can be had. The flesh and everything that goes with it is "sold into bondage to sin." The chains of slavery to sin are too strong for the flesh to break.

#3. The Law of God wants one thing; but the flesh wants something very different. And it is not the good. Each side of the breach seeks its own outcome; both irreconcilable.

#4. This contradiction affects personal behavior. "For what I am doing" (v.15) is the immediate result of the spiritual or that of the flesh.

#5. Searching for an explanation the writer admits, "I do not understand" (v.15) the breach. "I am not practicing what I would like" - the spiritual; "but I am doing the very thing I hate" - the flesh.

#6. Politics, education, marriage, economics, reasoning, language and more all flow from this breach. "Just choose" is meaningless. It does not work. Paul "likes" the spiritual and he "hates" the flesh. Two strong impulses. Yet, the problem remains.

#7. There is no human solution to be found. This is our everyday dilemma. Every one of us.

From Romans 7:14-25, THE DESTRUCTIVE PRINCIPLE
PART 2: FAILURE TO MEASURE UP v.16-20.

#1. "The Law of God is good" (v.16) because it regulates the reach of the flesh. The spiritual law condemns and outlaws reliance on and inclination toward the outcomes of the flesh.

#2. "But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law..." v.16. Values are laughable in view of this extraordinary problem. Western values or enlightenment values

cannot guarantee the frontier between civilization and barbarism. Values explain nothing; best intentions do not measure up; the flesh is degradation, not just a tendency.

#3. The flesh is the problem. Men cannot solve it. So, therefore, "no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me" v.17. The relation between sin-->and flesh is the causal unity.

#4. Wanting to do good is not strong enough to control the flesh v.19. Paul reached a terrifying conclusion: "But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells me" v.20.

#5. What controls practice? The textual answer is *indwelling sin*. There then is the determinant problem. Indwelling sin-->shapes behavior. The entire world suffers constantly from this powerful agency.

#6. Can this unity be broken? Paul, the man, admitted that he was not strong enough to break it. We've painted ourselves into a corner.

From Romans 7:14-25 THE DESTRUCTIVE PRINCIPLE PART 3: THE PRINCIPLE ITSELF v.21-24

#1. "I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good" v.21. The destructive principle holds across all humanity. It is effective in everyone and at all times. This most significant human aspect lays over all human differences, distinctions and across all human likenesses.

#2. The destructive principle is *rooted in the individual, the person and not in the collective*. In fact, it is the aggregate that suffers from the spiritual condition of the individuals who compose it. Philosophies of collectivism have no *theory of sin*.

#3. Personal recognition of the principle leads a believer to "joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man" v.22. The spiritual development of the individual is the key to the profile of the collective. Not the other way around. Karl Marx was dead wrong.

#4. Leaders should seriously contemplate the *hidden reality* that explains so much. "..But I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind.." v.23. This verse associates mind with the spiritual. The law of the flesh is the law of sin.

#5. The mind (there is no such thing as the collective mind) is the realm of spirituality and is always at war with the flesh.

#6. The law of the flesh captures me "making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members" v.23. This destructive principle is the problem. We better have a solution.

Romans 7:14-25, THE DESTRUCTIVE PRINCIPLE
PART 4: THE SOLUTION v.24, 25

#1. No one, on his own, can transcend the destructive principle. "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?" v.24. Described here is a personal arrangement wherein the flesh is in command of the mind. This aberrant arrangement results in a state called "death."

#2. Nothing works; everything is in dissolution, decay. Frustration, futility and foolishness are the norm.

#3. "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord" v.25. He is the solution; the only solution. Anyone, everyone who does not bow to Christ is lost and will remain so. Such a one's heart, mind and soul is in bondage to sin.

#4. "So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin." The mind can be unplugged from the savage authority of the flesh. Once this happens the mind, through Christ, begins its quest to dominate the flesh. This powerful reversal of arrangement is the key to the survival of any collective. It is the only hope. Nothing else is so powerfully redemptive.

#5. Imagine. Each one of us becomes a personal manifestation of the Solution. Marriage, family, nation, civilization and all other collectives are blessed by its energetic effect on the destructive principle.

Yes! "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord"!