

Body Groans

For we know that if our temporary, earthly dwelling is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal dwelling in the heavens, not made with hands. Indeed, we groan in this body, desiring to put on our dwelling from heaven. ~ 2 Corinthians 5:1-2

Discover the Context
2 Corinthians 5:1-5

? Are you longing for heaven? Are you groaning for the day when you will be free of the pain of this life? How might your age affect your answers? What role does heaven play in your daily life?

o It's true, much of the focus of Christianity is on how to live in this life and on God's blessings in this life. But if we are not careful we can focus too much on living this life at the expense of remembering that Jesus came to save our souls from this life and to prepare us for the next. How can we proclaim this message?

““Our penchant for life on earth has driven us to embrace it on every level imaginable and to denounce anything that might interfere with that life.”

~ Ted Dekker
Slumber of Christianity

One day I took my campers hiking up a mountain. We cooked our own dinner over an open campfire, built a crude lean-to, and slept on the ground after an awesome campfire.

Sounds idyllic, right? But there's more to the story. I twisted my ankle on the way up the mountain. I burnt my finger on the fire. No matter where I moved my sleeping bag, there was always a root or a rock right under the small of my back. And when it rained, our lean-to had one leak—right above me.

I woke up the next morning with body groans. Why do we have to put up with less-than-perfect circumstances, with all kinds of aches and pains? Why are we plagued with a never-ending quest for happiness and comfort? Why do our bodies wear out?

The answer is that this is a fallen world. Every headache, every sore arm, every virus, every failed athletic maneuver is an undeniable admonition that this temporary, earthly body is marred by sin. We're living in a wonderful world, but it's not right. God created life, but the wages of sin is death. So the law of entropy takes over, and all the days of our lives we slowly die.

This is not just depressing news, as if all we can do is join the rest of the world in complaining about our pain. No. It's different for Christians. Paul says our body pains actually point forward to eternity. All the imperfection points ahead to what's coming—that which is perfectly perfect. Heaven!

Next time I wake up with stiff legs, instead of complaining, I want to remind myself that heaven—where I'll see Jesus face to face—will be a place of lasting joy.

All week long we're going to work our way through 2 Corinthians 5 to learn what it means to be in Christ and have the hope of eternal life. That's something worth longing for! [JCR]