

Thayer's Greek Lexicon
STRONGS NT 874: ἀφορμή

ἀφορμή, ἀφορμῆς, ἡ (ἀπό and ὄρμη which see);

1. properly, a place from which a movement or attack is made, a base of operations
2. metaphorically, "that by which endeavor is excited and from which it goes forth; that which gives occasion and supplies matter for an undertaking, the incentive; the resources we avail ourselves of in attempting or performing anything

BUT SIN TAKING (seizing the) **OPPORTUNITY THROUGH THE COMMANDMENT:**
aphormen de labousa (AAPFSN) e hamartia dia tes entoles: (Ro 7:11,13,17; 4:15; 5:20)

Sin (266) (**hamartia**) is literally **the sin** (the definite article precedes "sin" in Greek) which in Romans 6 represents a moral principle or force which is personified as an evil king who constantly seeks to enslave and to rule those who are subject to its power (all unregenerate mankind).

Hodge explains sin this way - By **sin**, in this case, cannot be understood acts of sin. It must mean indwelling **sin**, or corruption of nature, sin as the principle or source of action, and not as an act. There is a principle of sin, a corruption of nature which lies behind all conscious voluntary exercises, to which they owe their origin. (Hodge, C. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 1835)

But sin taking opportunity - S Lewis Johnson has an interesting description of what transpired writing that...

In other words, when sin sees the Law, it "sees red" and "runs wild," hurrying into rebellion and wickedness (cf. Ro 7:5). The Law, thus, does not let "sleeping dogs lie," as Luthi puts it. Spurgeon writes,

That must be a very terrible power which gathers strength from that which should restrain it, and rushes on the more violently in proportion as it is reined in. Sin kills men by that which was ordained to life. It makes heaven's gifts the stepping stones to hell, uses the lamps of the temple to show the way to perdition, and makes the ark of the Lord as in Uzzah's case, the messenger of death. Sin is that strange fire which burns the more fiercely for being damped, finding fuel in the water that was intended to quench it. The Lord brings good out of evil, but sin brings evil out of good."

(Editorial Suggestion: We should all re-read Spurgeon's statement regarding the power of sin. Then we might think twice the next time we are tempted to give in to temptation! Sin kills!)

Wuest offers an interesting explanation of how **sin** works with the **Law** - **Sin** is here the evil nature (**Ed**: That lives inside every human, even redeemed men and women). Without the incitement produced by the law, the evil nature was relatively dormant. A fulcrum is an instrument in the form of a pole or long stick, which when applied beneath an object, will pry that object loose from its position. Just so, the sinful nature uses the law as a fulcrum by which to pry itself loose from its relative inactivity into activity. (Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans)

Opportunity (874) (**aphorme** from **apó** = from + **horme** = has various senses denoting the start of a rapid movement, a rushing on, a setting into rapid motion) means to make a start from a place. It describes a starting point, an occasion, an opportunity or a circumstance from which another action becomes possible. **Aphorme** is a place from which a movement or an attack can be made.

In context **aphorme** describes a starting point or base of operations for an expedition. It was frequently used to denote a "base of operations" in war. Paul is saying that the commandment provided sin with a base of operations, an attack upon the soul. 2.3.2.1. It's hard fighting an enemy on their soil...but even harder to fight against hidden terrorist in our own country! And such is sin!

Vincent has an example of the use of **aphorme** in secular Greek writing "The Lacedaemonians agreed that Peloponnesus would be *aphormen hikanen* or a good base of operations (Thucydides, i., 90). Thus (aphorme means), the origin, cause, occasion, or pretext of a thing; the means with which one begins. Generally, resources, as means of war, capital in business. Here the law is represented as furnishing sin with the material or ground of assault, "the fulcrum for the energy of the evil principle." Sin took the law as a base of operations.

A T Robertson writes that **aphorme** here in Romans 7:8 describes "a starting place from which to rush into acts of sin, excuses for doing what they want to do. Just so drinking men use the prohibition laws as *occasions* for violating them. "

Sin uses the specific requirements of the law as a base of operation from which to launch its evil work. Confronted by God's law, the sinner's rebellious nature finds the forbidden thing more attractive, not because it is inherently attractive, but because it furnishes an opportunity to assert one's self-will.

In other words, **law** was not intended to be the means by which **sin** would launch its attack, but sin took advantage of this opportunity to attack man.

Aphorme is used 7 times in the NT...

Romans 7:8 (note) **But sin**, taking **opportunity** through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.

Romans 7:11 (note) **for sin**, taking **opportunity** through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.

2 Corinthians 5:12 We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an **occasion** to be proud of us, that you may have an answer for those who take pride in appearance, and not in heart.

Comment: Here *aphorme* is used in a positive sense for Paul is saying that his irreproachable conduct provided his friends with a base of operations against his detractors.

2 Corinthians 11:12 But what I am doing, I will continue to do, that I may cut off **opportunity** from those who desire an **opportunity** to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting.

Comment: In the first use of *aphorme* Paul is saying that by his refusal of support at Corinth the detractors had been deprived of the ability to set up a base of operations [second use] their against him.

Galatians 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an **opportunity** (starting point or base of operations) for **the flesh (that evil disposition that dwells in the physical body of believers and unbelievers)**, but through love serve one another.

The flesh (that aspect of the human self which refuses to acknowledge God and which leads to the doing of evil instead of acts of righteousness) seeks a base of operations in the believer's new freedom in Christ. How does it manifest itself? By turning liberty to license, indulging self, using freedom as an excuse to do anything the sinful nature wants to do! Paul is saying "*Don't allow your freedom to become an excuse to allow your fleshly evil desires to control you.*" The flesh here represents lovelessness and selfishness. Christian freedom is not to be abused for selfish ends. What is the antidote or defense against this misuse of the freedom? By doing all things to others out of love. The flesh seeks to get. Agape love led and enabled by the Spirit seeks to give.)

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4. **σάρξ**, when either expressly or tacitly opposed to τό πνεῦμα (τοῦ Θεοῦ), has an ethical sense and denotes "mere human nature, the earthly nature of man apart from divine influence, and therefore prone to sin and opposed to God"; accordingly it includes whatever in the soul is weak, low, debased, tending to ungodliness and vice ("Thou must not understand 'flesh', therefore, as though that only were 'flesh' which is connected with unchastity, but St. Paul uses 'flesh' of the whole man, body and soul, reason and all his faculties included, because all that is in him longs and strives after the flesh (Luther, Preface to the Epistle to the Romans); note that 'flesh' signifies the entire nature of man, sense and reason, without the Holy Spirit"

A & G Greek Lexicon page 744 (σάρξ)

7. “in Paul’s thought esp., the flesh is the willing instrument of sin, and is subject to sin to such a degree that wherever flesh is, all forms of sin are likewise present, and no good thing can live in the σάρξ Rom. 7:18”

Σάρξ then is the whole fallen nature of mankind, turned away from God, in rebellion against God, in the supreme interest of SELF and devoted to the old creation in Adam. The dominate outlook of the flesh is always orientated towards the self, that which peruses its own ends and interests in self-sufficient, self centered independence of God.