



GALATIANS 5 · KJV



The Works of the Flesh



GALATIANS 5:19-21 (KJV)



A Doctrinal Study on the Corruption of the Carnal Nature



Setting the Scene



THE APOSTLE & HIS AUDIENCE

The Letter of Paul

Written by the Apostle Paul circa **AD 49–55** to the churches of Galatia, addressing the threat of legalism and spiritual compromise.



THE SHARPEST CONTRAST

Galatians Chapter 5

Galatians 5 presents **one of the most concentrated and vivid contrasts** in all of Paul's writings — the Spirit-led life versus the flesh-dominated life. (cf. Romans 8)



THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

Verses 19–21

Vv. 19–21 identify the works of the flesh as **symptoms of the unregenerate carnal nature** — which believers are called to mortify through the Spirit (Romans 8:13).



THE CORE SCRIPTURE



Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

— GALATIANS 5:19–21 (KJV)



Four Categories of Fleshly Works

Paul organizes the 17 works into four distinct doctrinal groupings



I

Sexual Sin

4 works

Adultery

Fornication

Uncleanness

Lasciviousness



II

Occult & Spiritual Rebellion

2 works

Idolatry

Witchcraft



III

Relational & Social Disorder

9 works

Hatred

Variance

Emulations

Wrath

Strife

Seditions

Heresies

Envyings

Murders



IV

Excess & Self-Indulgence

2 works

Drunkenness

Revellings

Total works enumerated by the Apostle Paul:

17

— Galatians 5:19–21 (KJV)



Category I — Sexual Impurity

THE WORKS

- 1** **Adultery** *Gk: moicheia*
Marital unfaithfulness; covenant betrayal.
- 2** **Fornication** *Gk: porneia*
All sexual immorality outside of marriage.
- 3** **Uncleanness** *Gk: akatharsia*
Moral filth; impurity of heart, mind, and body.
- 4** **Lasciviousness** *Gk: aselgeia*
Shameless excess; licentiousness; open indecency.



(KJV)

Heb. 13:4

Hebrews 13:4

"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

1 Cor. 6:18

1 Corinthians 6:18

"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."

Eph. 5:3

Ephesians 5:3

"But fornication, and all uncleanness... let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints."

2 Pet. 2:7

2 Peter 2:7

"And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked."

Category II — Idolatry & Witchcraft

The Spirit-Denying Sins



Idolatry

Gk: eidōlōlatría — lit. "image worship"

The worship of false gods; placing any person, object, or desire above the Living God. The flesh naturally gravitates toward created things rather than the Creator.

CROSS REF: 1 Corinthians 10:14 — "Flee from idolatry." · Colossians 3:5 — "covetousness, which is idolatry."



Witchcraft

Gk: pharmakeia — root of the English word "pharmacy"

Sorcery; drug-induced occult practices; seeking supernatural power outside of God. An ancient and modern snare — the flesh pursues forbidden power rather than divine grace.

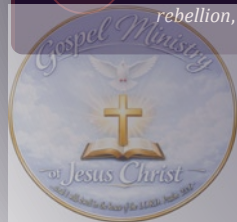
CROSS REF:

Deuteronomy 18:10-12 — "There shall not be found among you...an observer of times...a witch...for all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD."



Doctrinal Note

Both sins represent a **direct assault on God's sovereignty** — substituting demonic or created things for the Creator. They are not merely moral failures; they are *theological rebellion*, placing a false throne where God alone must reign.



Relational & Social Disorder — Nine Works

Hatred

Gk: *echthra*

Enmity; active hostility toward others

Cf. 1 John 3:15

1

Variance

Gk: *eris*

Strife & quarreling; contentiousness for self-advantage

Cf. Proverbs 6:19

2

Emulations

Gk: *zēlos*

Jealousy that seeks to surpass or harm another

Cf. James 3:14

3

Wrath

Gk: *thumos*

Explosive, uncontrolled rage; fiery outburst of passion

Cf. Ephesians 4:31

4

Strife

Gk: *eritheia*

Selfish ambition; factious partisanship

Cf. Philippians 2:3

5

Seditions

Gk: *dichostasia*

Divisions; deliberate splitting of communities

Cf. Romans 16:17

6

Envyings

Gk: *phthonos*

Resentment at another's prosperity; a gnawing desire to possess what belongs to others

Cf. Prov. 14:30

8

Murders

Gk: *phonos*

Taking human life; the ultimate expression of hatred and enmity against the image of God

Cf. Matt. 5:21-22

9

Heresies

Gk: *hairesis*

Sectarian factions; self-chosen doctrinal deviation

Cf. 2 Peter 2:1

7



Sins of Excess & Self-Indulgence

The Flesh Unrestrained

IV



Drunkenness

Gk: *methē*

Intoxication; loss of sobriety; surrendering self-control and the Spirit's governance to substances.

CROSS REF

Eph. 5:18 — "be not drunk with wine...be filled with the Spirit."



Revellings

Gk: *kōmos*

Wild parties; raucous carousing; immoral festivity that inflames the passions and scorns holiness.

CROSS REF

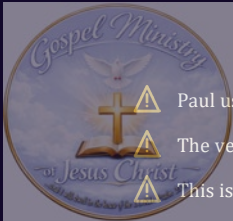
Rom. 13:13 — "not in rioting and drunkenness."



THE APOSTOLIC WARNING

GALATIANS 5:21B (KJV)

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Paul uses the present active participle “they which do” — indicating habitual, unrepentant practice, not isolated failure.

The verb “inherit” (Gk: klēronomeō) speaks of covenant possession — those who practice these works demonstrate they belong to another kingdom.

This is a salvific warning, not merely moral instruction — eternal inheritance is at stake.

Cross References — Old Testament Foundation

Paul's list echoes the Law's condemnation of the flesh



Deuteronomy 27:26

"Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them."

The Law exposes the flesh's total failure — no man under the flesh can satisfy its demands.



Proverbs 6:16–19

"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

The six-then-seven graded-number form (Hebrew X/X+1) gives climactic weight to the final entry — sowing discord. Pride, bloodshed, and deceit all appear in Paul's catalogue; the Law



named them centuries before Galatians 5.

Isaiah 59:2

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you..."

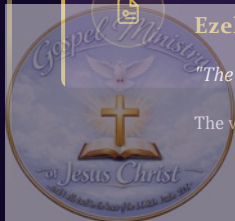
The flesh creates the very separation the gospel overcomes — sin severs covenant access to God.



Ezekiel 18:20

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

The wages of unrepentant, fleshly works is death — Ezekiel's verdict and Paul's warning stand as one.



Flesh vs. Spirit — The Decisive Contrast

⚠ THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

Galatians 5:19–21

- **Death** — its only wage (Romans 6:23)
- **Division** — fractures community & fellowship
- **Bondage** — enslaves the soul to corruption
- **Corruption** — decays the inward man
- **Eternal Loss** — forfeits the kingdom of God

📍 THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5:22–23

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| • Love | • Joy | • Peace |
| • Longsuffering | • Gentleness | • Goodness |
| • Faith | • Meekness | • Temperance |

VS

√ The upward fruit of the Spirit-led life

⚡ The downward path of the carnal nature

🛡 The Spirit does **not** suppress the flesh — He replaces its rule.

📖 **Romans 8:13** — "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." **Romans 6:14** — "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

GALATIANS 5:16 · THE CALL TO EVERY BELIEVER

Walk in the Spirit



"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."
— GALATIANS 5:16 (KJV)

- **Examine** your life against the 17 works — repentance is the doorway to freedom.
- **Yield** daily to the Holy Spirit — through Him, you mortify the deeds of the flesh (Romans 8:13).
- **Pursue** holiness — for without it, no man shall see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).



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Want to Learn More?

If you would like a face-to-face presentation or training on *Works of the Flesh*, email the **Gospel Ministry of Jesus Christ** from the contact page with your information and point of contact.

Someone from the Team will reach out to you.

