

Galatians

Chapter 5

Verses 19-21

1. Paul has explained that there are two ways to live life for the Christian:
 - Walking in the Spirit
 - Following the lusts of the flesh
2. When a person attempts to live the Christian life by the law instead of by faith, Paul shows us the result in verses 19-21. Paul calls this list the "*works of the flesh.*"
3. Verse 19 deals primarily with sexual sins.
 - Lasciviousness is not a word we use a lot today. It carries the idea of sexual perversion. It is translated "filthy conversation" in **2 Peter 2:7**.
 - Christians can find themselves in bondage to every kind of sexual sin. **2 Corinthians 12:21 (Illustration: Lot in 2 Peter 2:6-8)**
 - Sex is a holy and wonderful gift from God when two Spirit-filled believers are living in the beauty of the marriage covenant, but the flesh twists and distorts it and makes it an unclean thing.
4. Verse 20 deals more with sins of the heart.
 - Witchcraft is from the Greek word from which we get our English word "pharmacy." It means "medication, magic." It is translated "sorceries" in **Revelation 9:21, 18:23**.
 - "Hatred" – hostility (**Proverbs 10:12**)
 - "Variance" - a quarrel (also translated in other places as "contention, debate, strife")
 - "Emulation" - malice towards another person, translated as "envying" in **James 3:14, 16**
 - "Seditions" - disunion, dissension, division
 - "Heresies" - this word carries the idea of choosing a side, dividing along party lines
 - "Envyings" - ill will, spite
 - These sins not only destroy the person who harbors them, but they also destroy harmony in the home, the workplace, and the church. They are wicked and destructive and are the works of the flesh. As we will see, they are the opposites of the fruit of the Spirit.
 - Again, Christians can find themselves in bondage to all of these sins. **1 Corinthians 3:3**
5. In verse 21, Paul also mentions the sins of murder, drunkenness, and revellings (living a wild party life).
6. Here's the point: nothing good can come from the works of our flesh.
 - Paul said that in our flesh dwells no good thing. If this is the case, then nothing good can come from it.
 - Walking after the flesh, at its core, is self-reliance. We do not depend or rely on Christ, but decide that we will do things our way in our own power and strength.

- Here we see the dreadful result of such an arrogant spirit. This list is a testimony to what **we** can produce apart from Christ.
 - The sad part is that these works of the flesh many times characterize Christian lives, Christian homes, Christian marriages, and Christian churches.
 - The works listed in these verses regularly surface and dominate lives and families.
 - For the Christian, it doesn't have to be this way. As we will see, if we will just yield to the Spirit of Christ within, our lives and homes can be filled with the sweet and precious fruit of the Spirit.
7. Paul had taught the Galatians that people who constantly live their lives by the works of the flesh shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
 - God's kingdom speaks of His rule, authority, and power. **1 Corinthians 15:24**
 - Where does God rule and reign today? Where is the kingdom of God today?
 - Paul taught that God's kingdom is manifested in believers' hearts today. **Romans 14:17**
 - God's kingdom is not a physical rule over the earth, but a spiritual rule in the believer's heart. God's kingdom (rule) is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Where is the Holy Ghost? In the believer.
 - God's kingdom is a spiritual manifestation of His Holy Spirit power working in the believer. **1 Corinthians 4:20**
 8. So, Paul is not saying if you do any of these sins you can't go to heaven. This is not what the verse says. To inherit the kingdom of God is to possess God's Spirit and be filled with the fruit of the Spirit.
 9. We cannot obtain the kingdom (rule) of God in our lives when we are walking after the flesh. This is the point Paul is making.
 10. This is why verse 22 begins with, "**But the fruit of the Spirit is...**"

Verse 22-23

1. We demonstrate God's kingdom (God's rule) over our heart when we bear the fruit of the Spirit.
 - The flesh produces works (the works of the flesh).
 - The Holy Spirit within the believer bears fruit (the fruit of the Spirit).
2. These nine graces are not something that the believer can work up and manufacture on his own. They are a natural expression of God's Spirit filling a yielded believer.
 - **Illustration:** the branch of an orange tree does not work and toil to produce fruit. It simply abides in the tree and draws life and nourishment from the tree. As it soaks in the sunshine and rain, the fruit is a natural expression of its connection, attachment, and abiding in the tree.
 - As we abide in Christ, soaking in the sunshine of His presence in prayer and allowing the water of His Word to soak into our hearts, this fruit comes forth naturally, without straining and toil.
3. When you are walking in the Spirit (verse 16) and are yielded to the Spirit (verse 18), this is the fruit that the believer enjoys. These nine graces are evidence that God's kingdom is ruling your heart.

4. Notice that this list is called the "*fruit of the Spirit*," not "fruits."
 - It's not the idea that the Holy Spirit may bear the fruit of love in one person, but the fruit of peace in another.
 - Rather than viewing these as nine separate fruits, we need to view them as a whole. They are all tied together and they can all be manifested at the same time, as we yield to the Holy Spirit and allow Christ to live through us.
5. These are not to be confused with the gifts of the Spirit. **Romans 12:5-8**
 - A Christian must not have the attitude, "I just don't have the gift of gentleness - my gift is faith. That's why I'm so mean and hard to get along with."
 - This entire list of fruit **can** and **should** be manifested in a Christian's life as he/she walks in the Spirit and is led of the Spirit.
 - These are not **gifts**, but rather **fruit** that comes forth from a Spirit-filled, Spirit-controlled believer.
6. These are not Christian habits or disciplines.
 - There is a lot of talk today in Christian circles about spiritual disciplines. This is man-made philosophy and is man's attempt to produce in his flesh what only the Holy Spirit can bear through the yielded believer.
 - You cannot discipline yourself to love or be patient or at peace. The Colossians (like the Galatians) were into spiritual disciplines, and Paul rebuked them. **Colossians 2:20-23**
 - A habit is something you can establish apart from God's Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is something that cannot come from self-effort and discipline, but only from God's Spirit.
 - Establishing godly habits and disciplines in our own fleshly willpower is simply self-improvement, but is not true spiritual growth.
7. There are nine graces that constitute the fruit of the Spirit:
 - Love
 - This is listed first because all the other fruit flows forth from the fruit of love. **Colossians 3:14; Galatians 5:14; 1 Corinthians 13:13**
 - We are able to love because God has lavishly bestowed His love upon us. **Romans 5:5** ("shed abroad" means "to pour forth, gush"); **Ephesians 2:4, 3:17-19, 4:2, 5:2; John 13:34; 1 John 4:10-11**
 - God has given us a spirit of love. **2 Timothy 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:9**
 - It's the idea of, "Now that I **know** love, I can **give** love."
 - When a person says, "I can't love," he/she is in essence saying, "I don't know God, I've never experienced God's love, and I do not possess God's Spirit."
 - Just as fruit grows, we can grow and mature in the fruit of love. **1 Thessalonians 3:12, 4:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:3**
 - As we grow in love, it lead to unselfishness (**2 Corinthians 8:8**) and a desire to serve others (**Galatians 5:13**).