

Galatians 5:19-21

The Works of the Flesh

-Paul has previously told them how to keep from fulfilling the lusts of the flesh- vs. 16

- the "lust" of it is one's natural desire to go that course

(When God saves, He changes hearts and sends one down another path)

vs. 19- "works" these are what an unregenerate person desires to follow

*the "works" are what they actually are while the "lusts" are man's natural (unregenerate) desire to fulfill them

- we must keep in mind that their legalist teacher had an imposing and intimidating personality that found it necessary to belittle those who opposed him

Truth- the Galatians turn from grace was an act of rebellion against God

(All these works of the flesh are an issue of a heart in rebellion against God and insisting on doing as it wills- Matt. 5:19)

*if a person walks in the Spirit, then there will be no rebellion against God

- Paul lists these works into four categories- sex, religion, relationships, and indulgences

1) Sex- "adultery"- (moicheuo) this word includes acts or advances outside marriage

(This includes infidelity of a spouse and also one who engages with another's spouse)

- "fornication"- (porneia) this term is much broader than adultery

- this word is where we get the word pornography from

*fornication includes all forms of illicit acts- homosexuality, incest, prostitution, sex with animals, and even premarital

- "uncleanness"- (akatharsia) impure motives and lustful living, promiscuous

- "lasciviousness"- (aselgeia) unbridled lusts, excess (implying one who can't control urges)

*these sins are listed first as they have potential to affect many people- not just one or two

(Sexual sins display graphic self-centeredness, dishonors those made in God's image, and violate God's pure plan of marriage)

2) Religion- "idolatry"- the #1 sin spoke against in Scripture

*idolatry is placing anything in place of God

Truth- everybody worships something or someone- even atheists (worship themselves)

-if one is not worshipping the Creator, then they are worshipping something created- Rom. 1:21-25

- "witchcraft"- (pharmakeia) these are deceptions and manipulations, something that alters the mind (this word is where we derive "pharmacy")

*its used here as many pagan religions of that day used hallucinogen drugs to aid their communication with their deities

3) Relationships- "hatred"- these are personal animosities

Truth- Christ commands us to love our enemies- Matt. 5:43-44, Prov. 16:7

- "variance"- having rivalries or being excessively quarrelsome

(These are those who always have to be right and have their way) jealousy stems from variance

- "emulations"- (zelos) this is zeal but channeled in the fierceness of indignation

(This is a person who has an uncontrolled temper)

Truth- this characteristic often excused as a personal trait but here, its called a work of the flesh

- "wrath"- (thumos) anger and vengeful (the idea of this word is that it leads to something that eventually consumes)

- "strife" - (eritheia) this is a person who magnifies themselves, self-seeking, or one who desires to put themselves forward
- "seditions" - (dichostasia) division, or one who divides a group, one who rebels against laws
- "heresies" - (hairesis) this word means falsehoods but also means an act or taking or capturing
(The idea of it would be some force storming a city to seize or take over)
- vs.21- "envyings" - an envious person is one who is not satisfied with what God has given them
(These are the people who hate to see others advance and will even try to stop them)
- 4) Indulgences- "murders" - the unlawful taking of another's life
- "drunkenness" - (methe) intoxication
 - *this word goes along with witchcraft as it alters the mind and potentially leads to other works of the flesh
- "revellings" - (komos) these are nocturnal and riotous processions
(These events were common in pagan religions, particularly the worship of the Greek god, Dionysus- he was considered the god of wine, festivities, and ecstasy)
- "in times past" - Paul's meaning here is that he told them this in person when he was there
- "do such things" - the verb in this passage suggests a continual, habitual action
(Meaning that it's a way of life)
- Truth- believers can commit these sins, but one that is led by the Spirit cannot continue in them
 - *Paul gives a hard reminder to people whose lives are characterized by these works