



Daily Verse and Comment

Galatians 5:19-21

(19) Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, (20) idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, (21) envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

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If a person is walking in the Spirit, he has no conflict with the [law of God](#). Paul uses "flesh" as a synonym for "carnality" or "human nature." The carnal mind, hating God's laws, does not subject itself to them ([Romans 8:7](#)). What we see in verses 19-21 is what carnality—what human nature—works at producing: the *works* of the flesh.

It produces [adultery](#). Have you ever seen a young man—as carnal as the day is long—on the prowl after a sweet young thing? Maybe he stands on the corner, watching all the girls go by, trying to get a date, to pick her up. He has one thing in mind: conquering her and getting her in bed. He has to work at it. He turns on all his charm to seduce her.

It produces theft. Do robbers work at their thievery? Certainly, they do. Some of them actually consider it to be legitimate work, a skill. I recently heard of a church pastor who allowed himself to be convinced that gambling is legal according to God's law. The man who convinced him, a gambler by profession, labored long hours to perfect his skills in taking advantage of other people. He argued that gambling is lawful because he is working, not playing.

The flesh *works* at producing these things. But the Spirit is opposed to the flesh. They are at war with one another. If a person has the [Spirit of God](#), he

cannot allow his human nature to dominate his way of life. He must make a choice as to which way he will be led—by the flesh or by the Spirit of [God](#).

The apostle says that if a person is doing these works, he is following the urgings of the flesh, not the law of God. Paul is by no means doing away with the law of God; that is the farthest thing from his mind, the last thing he would want these Christians to do. Note that he writes that people who practice the [works of the flesh](#) will not be in the [Kingdom of God](#). Did Paul want Christians to be in the Kingdom of God? Of course, he did! But they must be guided and led by God's Spirit. If they are led by their carnal mind, they will not enter it.

Thus, the solution to [sin](#) and the struggle for salvation lies in the spiritual relationship between God and us. It lies in prayer, [faith](#), study, meditation, and coming to know and [love](#) God with all of our being. It does not take long to realize that He is so desirable, and we want to do everything we can to please Him.

What pleases Him? When we imitate Him and live as He does. This great spiritual Being gives us elements of His mind so we can live the way He lives. *God is love*. And the bottom line of love, the place from which it starts, is the keeping of the commandments ([1 John 5:3](#)).

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The Covenants, Grace, and Law \(Part Twenty-Eight\)](#)



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