

The Works of the Flesh

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[0:00] Colossians 5 verse 19! Let us pray.

Lord, we thank you for your precious word, that it is life, it is truth, it is hope, it is our source of guidance today. Lord, let it be something that we can take to heart personally and apply and put into action, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us be seated. Colossians 5 verse 19. In Colossians 5 we often turn there and look at scriptures such as the fruit of the Spirit, but prior to the fruit of the Spirit are the works of the flesh.

That's what I want to look at this morning. The flesh, the flesh, the fallen sinful nature has been with us, it's been with every man, including and since Adam.

It's seeking our own way, not God's way. The flesh, the flesh. And the text here tells you the works of the flesh are manifest.

[1:43] They're manifest, it's obvious, it's obvious. Open your eyes, you can easily recognise the flesh. You can see clearly when someone is energised by the flesh instead of by the Spirit.

The works has got the sense of energy. You can be energised, you can be motivated by the flesh. And either the flesh is producing its deeds, its works, or the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, is truly producing His fruit in our lives.

It's one or the other, the flesh or the Spirit. And our focus today is to look at really the negative side, but I'm hoping that you'll take a positive learning from it and a positive application of it.

Nevertheless, so Galatians 5 verse 19, Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these.

We're going to look at them in three groups. Three groups of the deeds, the works of the flesh.

Sensual, spiritual and social. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, firstly, sensual sins. They are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness.

[2:58] Well look at those four things. These are sensual sins. Sins to do with ungodly sexual things. Adultery, number one.

Adultery is unfaithfulness to your spouse or taking another spouse. It's obvious the sins of the flesh, the works of the flesh are manifest. Adultery, it's obvious that that is something that is ungodly that we should steer away from.

Secondly, fornication. This is immorality. It's sex outside of marriage. Fornication is clearly a work of the flesh. It's something that a Christian should not partake of.

Sex outside of marriage. Each time we sin, it's like a strand in the rope that holds a sinner in bondage. In Proverbs 5 verse 22 we're told, His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.

Wickedness is going to hold you like a cord. It's going to wrap its strands around you. It's going to become a rope that holds you, that binds you, that holds you fast. And that is what fornication or immorality is in all of its forms.

[4:07] Immorality. The third one of the sensual sins is uncleanness. Uncleanness. It's a life wallowing in the mire of the world's ways.

It's moral impurity. In thought, word and deed. It's filthiness of heart and mind. And this word uncleanness, the Greeks used it to describe the pus of an unclean wound.

That's what God looks at it and it looks like pus. It's uncleanness. It's vile. It's dirty. It's filthy. It's the very opposite of the word for clean and pure.

It refers to sexual sin. It's impurity, filthy, repulsive especially to God. It's immoral thoughts, passions, ideas and fantasies.

The works of the flesh are manifest including uncleanness. And fourthly, the last one of the sexual sins, the sensual sins is lasciviousness. It means lewd, uninhibited, sexual immorality, sensuality.

[5:07] It means when you get to that point where it's just reckless, it's shameless, it's without any holding back. It's with abandon. It's a lack

of moral restraint, the loss of honour, decency and shame.

Friends, today, the works of the flesh are manifest. We've seen those four ones that we just started with, the sensual sins.

Friends, the flesh, the sins of the flesh, the works and deeds of the flesh are manifest. You just have to look about you. As we know in this sinful, godless world that we live in, it's plastered everywhere about us.

And you can scarcely avoid it in terms of viewing it to a degree. And friends, we need to be alert. We need to be enlightened.

We need to be very clear and aware of this fleshly, godless world that we live in.

[6:05] And take heart that as a Christian, as a believer in Christ, in contrast to those things that we started with, those sensual sins, God has given marriage.

God has given marriage and the marriage bond, the marriage bed, as something that is beautiful and pure and precious. God, in contrast to those things, the deeds, the works of the flesh, God has given you something that's pure and beautiful and precious and is His perfect and ideal life for us to have.

And so we see as believers, you have a beautiful, wonderful gift of purity and something that is precious and to be guarded.

It goes on. Now, the works of the flesh, a second group of the works of the flesh, are, you could say, spiritual sins. And we look at two of those, idolatry and witchcraft.

The spiritual sins, you could say. Idolatry, idolatry, idol worship. Now, you might say, well, in Australia there's no such thing as idol worship. But really, idol worship, idolatry, is admiring something in God's place.

[7:23] It's where something takes God's place, that which He deserves. It's adoring something instead of Him. God alone, God alone deserves your worship. He alone has the right to occupy the throne of your heart.

Some today in the West, in our nation, they worship idols. The idols of pleasure, of fame, of possessions, of wealth, of power.

Sports stars, pop stars, film stars. The idols, the Australian idols of our nation. Brothers and sisters, we are in an idolatrous land.

A land full of idols. Of course, we know back in Israel and Judah and so on, they had the altars to idols that the godly men and women would cast down and destroy and build up the altar unto the Lord.

Friends, we need to tear down the idols. Tear down the altars and renew that worship that is godly and true. In 1 Corinthians 10, 14, it says, Wherefore, my beloved, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

[8:26] Run from it. Get right away from idolatry. Flee from it. Steer away from it. And it's interesting. It's the present imperative. Now, I'm not much of a grammar buff, but this means do this continually.

So, what it's telling you and I today, friends, brothers and sisters this morning, is my dearly beloved, continually flee from idolatry.

It's all about you. It's all about us. We're all subject to these things, these temptations of the flesh.

Do this continually. Idolatry is a constant threat in Australia in 2008.

And it will be in 2009 if we live that long. Brothers and sisters, flee from it. Keep away from it. Idols.

An old-time preacher, a creation scientist, Morris, said this.

Idols are either physical images or mental constructs with which men try to explain and control the forces and systems of nature without acknowledging the one true God as creator and sustainer of all things.

[9:36] It's when something takes his place. We know for many in our godless land, evolution takes God's place. I know someone was talking to me lately how they were witnessing and someone gave the offhanded remark, Oh, science has already proven there's no God.

Evolution proves there's no God. And they just walked off and didn't take any regard. You know, it's the idol of our world, isn't it? It's where something takes God's place. That even in their mind, that something can take away from that worship of the creator, of him who deserves our worship and

love.

And the only one who we can adore as our saviour, as our master. And in Numbers 21, verses 5 onwards, while Israel was in the wilderness, there was a great time of murmuring.

God's people started to murmur. Now, God's people don't ever murmur these days, do they? But there they were, Israel, in the wilderness land. They were grumbling and griping and murmuring against the Lord.

And as a disciplinary measure, God sent these fiery serpents amongst them. And then the people really started to whinge and moan at Moses and they feared the snake bites. They cried out to Moses.

[10:52] And Moses, at God's command, he fashioned a bronze serpent on a pole. A bronze serpent on a pole. And while the people looked at the serpent, they were healed.

But this degenerated into idol worship. What was originally a symbol of sin judged and salvation given was perverted into an idol for the practice of idolatry.

Isn't it amazing? And friends today, people today, churches today, can take something that you would hope would provoke in them a love for the Saviour and an adoring of Him becomes an idol. You know, we see some of them have crucifixes and they bow down to them and worship the image. Brothers and sisters, it's not something we're to do. As much as we know maybe there was some well-meaning intent behind the design of such a thing, yet we know as believers we're not to bow down to crosses, to idols, to crucifixes, to statues, to pictures, to try to picture our Lord even. We know that the Word says we're not to make images and we're not to bow down to them. It's a clear commandment. You can't get around it. And yet, friends, it's sad, isn't it, that some do so, thinking that's worship.

[12:14] Yet, Lord, the Lord knows that the worship that He deserves that you are to give to Him is a worship that's within your heart, that's to Him through Christ, your mediator, to the Father.

And so, we need to be alert to idolatry. Now, the Word defines idolatry in Colossians 3, verse 5. It says that covetousness is idolatry.

Greed. Covetousness. Now, think about it. Greed. Place a selfish desire above obedience to God. Covetousness. To covet. To be greedy.

To have the love of money. It's the root cause of all sin. And sin is basically doing what you desire rather than what God desires. It's the worship of self rather than the worship of God.

The very essence of idolatry. So, friends, today, you might think in our fair land there's no idolatry but it's all about you. Covetousness. Greed. Worshipping at anything other than the Saviour.

[13:14] And an adoring of something. Placing in God's place is idolatry. Something to be alert to. Even those mental constructs. Those things in your mind. Those imaginations.

Those loves outside of God's will. They can be idolatry. And the second sin, the spiritual sin in this group here is witchcraft.

Witchcraft. Now, ancient sorcerers would use mind-altering drugs to induce their visions and healings. Hallucinatory drugs are commonplace today.

We're living in a world that's soaking in drugs and drunkenness. We're seeing a world that's drugged to death.

And it's one of the features of the deception of the latter days. In Revelation 18, verse 23, it talks about sorcery, which is this word, pharmakia, drugs. Now, of course, we know there's needful medicines.

[14:17] We're not talking about that. But we're talking about this kind of atmosphere that this world is kind of living in a drug state, I think, to a degree.

As the word tells us, that the devil blinds the minds of those who believe not. I think there's a blindness. There's a sense of walking around in a daze for some people.

They've got no sense of God and of truth. And they're living in this cloud of the devil's control. And witchcraft refers to a drug used to control one's mind in an evil sense.

Now, friends, I think, in a way, you know, as the television's been called a plug-in drug, you know, I mean, there's a sense where there's an atmosphere about us, the world, and its toys and its

tentacles are capturing people.

Sorcery, witchcraft, you can think of really magic. Look about you today, magic. People have got bumper stickers and not Christians and talk about angels and things and whatnot.

[15:35] Of course, it's like I heard lately, someone was witnessing to a lady called Angela and they said to her, well, Angela comes from the word angel.

But of course, there's two kinds of angels. There's two kinds of angels. Brothers and sisters, there's the devil's angels. And we need to be careful about these magical and supernatural powers.

There's lots of beliefs out there, lots of beliefs in these things.

Someone showed me Friday night this newspaper about the New Age movement. And it was packed with so many adverts to do with crystals and tarot and healings and psychic things and supernatural forces and knowledge.

And people professing the ability to forecast the future and various charms and magical spells. And we need to recognize that the works of the flesh are manifest. Friends, this is something that's about us today in planet Earth.

And you need to be aware of it. Even as believers, you can be subject to it. You think of maybe some of those things you've been brought up with. Superstitions. You don't have to worry as a Christian.

[16:45] You don't have to worry about black cats. I can tell you right now. You don't have to worry about black cats crossing in front of you. Run them over. It doesn't matter. Black cats, it doesn't matter. Broken windows.

Broken mirrors. Walking to the ladder. Floor. Four leaf clovers. Walking under ladders. Spilled salt. Old wives' tales. It's a load of garbage. You don't have to worry about it.

Christian, you're under the blood. You're covered by Christ. You're in Him and He is in you. Forget about superstitions. It's a load of rubbish. And avoid occultic things like Ouija boards, seances, psychics, those movies and books that have got those kind of themes, demonic themes in music, in music, in films, horoscopes.

Steer away from it. As a Christian, those things are not for you. They are the works of the flesh.

Don't look at your horoscope. It's a load of twaddle or it's demonic.

So whatever the case, it's no good. Steer away from it. Now the works of the flesh are manifest.

They manifest. They're evident. They're everywhere about us. We've seen the sensual sins.

[17:54] We've seen the spiritual sins. Now thirdly, that you could term them the social sins. It's the social sins which are hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings.

We'll work through them one by one. Hatred. It's obvious it's the work of the flesh, isn't it? It's the opposite of love. It means malice. It means holding grudges against someone.

It means hostility. It means being the enemy of another. And of course, the unbeliever is the enemy of God. The carnal or fleshly mind means enmity.

It's the same word as hatred here against God. Romans 8, 7. The sinner is a rebel against God and he is in active hostility to him. The works of the flesh are manifest.

Hatred. Variance is the next one. It means contention, quarrels. It means utter selfishness. The contrast of variance to that kind of attitude, that mindset is one who humbles himself.

[18:56] Then he can be exalted. The third one, emulations. Emulations, it means jealousy. It means trying to get ahead at the expense of another. It means envy, competition, rivalry.

The next one is wrath. Wrath. Passionate. Anger. Passionate anger. I do that every so often to wake people up. Passionate anger. Wrath. It means violent, intense, uncontrolled rage.

Explosions of rage. Ungovernable temper. Friends, today, listen now. If you've got a problem with your temper, give it to God. Confess it as a work of the flesh. Confess it to him as a sin that you need to be delivered from.

Next one is strife. Refers to those who seek only their own. They desire to be number one no matter what. It's extreme selfishness, self-elevation, self-seeking.

Strife. It's a building up of yourself by tearing others down as in gambling when one gains from the losses of others. It's a striving to advance yourself by flattery, by deceit, by selfish ways.

[20:02] Friends, today, the lost man's basic problem is the flesh itself. He's totally wrapped up in self and he has no place in his life for God.

Everything that he does is for the purpose of serving and pleasing himself. I know, oftentimes, I've talked about world, the world, and worldliness. We often talk about the devil, but there's three of them, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

I know, we were at some preaching lately and many of the preachers were talking about their own struggles with the flesh. And friends, it besets every man. It's like that besetting sin.

It's like something that we're all subject to. We all are still flesh. Last time I looked, I still got skin and bones on me. I'm still flesh. I'm still human. And friends, there's that need to bring our flesh to Christ, to give it to him.

Next one is seditions. It means dissension. It means disagreement, which leads to discord, disunity, division into opposing groups. Seditions. Heresies.

[21:08] It's an opinion that's contrary to the true exposition of the word of God. Heresies. It means all deviation from the truth. And we all need to be alert. You need to look in your Bibles and judge and see if these things are so that I'm speaking to you.

Judge the preacher by the word of God. Judge the truth that you hear by the truth of God to make sure it matches up, that it measures up and not deviates from it.

Next one is envyings. Envyings. It's an envy. It's jealousy for someone else's possessions and achievements or advantages. It's that spirit that gets in a man that he can't be content with what he has.

He looks with a jealous eye on every blessing given to someone else and denied to himself. Next one is murders. To kill. Obvious murders is a work of the flesh.

And really encapsulates hatred too in 1 John 3 verse 15. If you hate your brother you're a murderer. Get right with God this morning. If you've got a problem with your brother in Christ you need to repent.

[22:14] Murders. It means to spoil or mar the happiness of another. To have hatred. Next one is drunkenness. Drunkenness. Living intoxicated means being a slave to drink.

To drinking bouts. Now friends today as believers don't we want to aspire to honour the Lord in every aspect of our life.

To aspire to that which is going to be pleasing to Him when the eyes of others may be watching us or not. And we are to avoid anything that might be harmful to our bodies.

We know in 1 Corinthians 6 verse 19 our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We don't want to put anything into this temple that's going to harm it that's going to hurt it.

And drink is not very good for you I can tell you that. Stay away from anything that is addicting. Now 2 Peter 2 verse 19 I'll just flick there. If something's addicting if something's addictive then there's a big question mark over it for you as a Christian.

[23:22] It says in 2 Peter 2 verse 19 it talks of in the context there of the flesh while they promised them liberty they themselves are the servants of corruption for of whom a man is overcome of the same he has brought in bondage.

Now some might argue they can have a drink without overcoming them but one drink leads to another. Brothers and sisters beware of the danger the works of the flesh are manifest and the drunk starts with one drink the alcoholic starts with one drink what a man is overcome with brings him into bondage it says.

you don't want to be brought into bondage you're not a slave you've been given liberty great liberty and deliverance and of course we know there's different views on these subjects but as a believer set your mark high set your standard high don't fall for the world standard brothers and sisters let's lift the standard and it says that one thing that is certainly very clear Ephesians 5 verse 18 we are prohibited from getting drunk if you're getting drunk then that's a clear sin it's something that's clearly sinful and we're told not to don't drink to get drunk certainly that is something that is clearly forbidden in scripture for us and better not to touch the stuff we're told to keep alert to keep

alert these are end days we should have an alert mind we should have a mind that is switched on that's ready that's awaiting our Saviour that is prepared for his coming do you want him to find you in some days in some stupor or will you have a heart that is alert that's prepared that's watching that's waiting that's working that's alive and ready we're told to keep alert friends these are the last days there's no time to muck about with the things with the toys and treasures of this world with those things that are going to harm and hurt and stumble and damage your testimony friends drunkenness last one is revelings revelings it means revelry it means boisterous feastings and pleasures drinking parties was the sense of it for instance we've got no place in that atmosphere we've got no place in that environment as a believer we know that the word urges us that we are to be lovers of God more than lovers of pleasure 2 Timothy 3 verse 4 friends the works of the flesh are manifest the works the deeds the doings of the flesh we've covered the list of them we've seen them there the sensual adultery fornication uncleanness lasciviousness the spiritual idolatry witchcraft and the social like our everyday lives hatred variance emulations wrath strife seditions heresies envies murders drunkenness revelings and such like it's not a complete list it's not comprehensive there's much more you can say about the flesh we're subject to it brother you're subject to it sister you're subject to it be alert be aware of it it says of the witch

I tell you before as I told you in time past that they which do such things shall not inherit salvation means something will happen to you salvation means a conversion it means a changed life it means the nature of God comes and resides and dwells within you the spirit of God lives within you and that Christ may live out his life through you in contrast to those three areas we talked about sensual instead of sensual sins choose purity choose a life that is pure that you haven't got the taint of sin to it choose to live a pure life that is pleasing to God those spiritual sins witchcraft idolatry instead have faithfulness to the Lord and God the Saviour of your soul have faithfulness to him don't mess with those things that are doubtful in the spiritual realm the new age is all about as you're constantly barrazed with it be discerning even in the church scene in the church scene perhaps more so there's alarming things going on

I'd love to say so much more about such things to alert you to alert you because it's so needful in these last days in these latter days the apostasy the apostasy that's blinding that's deceiving multitudes today you know why does why does hillsong go and sing for the pope why why oh why oh why why does the australian idol maybe that explains it maybe and darlene sheck sing the praises of the pope why oh why is this happening hillsong it's infiltrated it's infesting it's it's everywhere it's contaminating the whole church scene the churchdom christendom it's infected with this virus that's destroying the truth of god friends the world council of churches you know

[29:09] I know there's godly people in churches like the salvation army like the churches of christ yet these churches are in the national council of the in the national council of the churches the world council of churches the whatever the national body is the state body this should not be so brother sister william brooke booth wouldn't have had a bar of it not a bar of it wesley wouldn't have had a bar of it the men and women of god who've seen the church founded on the foundation of the word of god on sound doctrine they would not have a bar of it they wouldn't touch it with a barge pole it's tainted it's vile it's filthy it's rotten to the core and friends today there's many that are being swept along to this you know I've got loved ones in the church of christ the church of christ i saw on the web lately they are part of the national council of churches and what do the national council of churches do they have dialogue dialogue they talk they hold hands with their roman catholic brothers and sisters people who bow down and worship idols who don't have a have a speck of salvation truth to them friends these things ought not to be we need to be very alert to the works of the flesh and they're spiritual they're idolatry they're witchcraft and it's in the church in the church of god friends it's happening and lastly those things that are social sins think about how do you relate to one another is your life filled with hatred with strife with angulations with jealousies with this self flesh is really the self it's like one of these preachers was talking hyphenated sins self image self esteem self worship you know it's putting self on the altar it's worshipping and bowing down to the self

the self man the carnal man friends take note of where you are at today the works of the flesh are manifest they're all about us of course we'd much rather move on later in the passage to the fruit of the spirit wouldn't we wouldn't we much rather see the fruit of the spirit and we that are of the lord we should crucify the flesh kill it nail it put those nails in you know whip it bash it bruise it smash it of course we know our lord was treated like that that is what we should do to our flesh to your flesh to mine kill the flesh crucify the flesh with the affections and lust kill it put it to death of course it rears its ugly head now and again we're going to keep killing it friends walking in the spirit is the alternative are you going to walk in the flesh walk in the flesh with all that vile stuff going on or are you going to choose instead that path of the spirit to walk in the spirit to walk in his truth walking in the spirit it's going to affect you it's going to change you the way that you feel the way that you think the way you manage your bodies the way that you act let's not follow the flesh but follow the spirit be led by the spirit and friends just to close with this and this was something as I say was talked about in some of these meetings in Matthew 26 41 this verse was quoted watch and pray that you enter not into temptation the spirit indeed is willing but the devil is too strong is that what it said the spirit

indeed is willing but the world is against you and it's too hard to combat the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak the flesh is weak friends it's something you and I as there's many godly men there's many senior saints here many men who I revere as my elder brothers in Christ this morning and they still battle with it amen it's still there it's like it's going to be with you till your grave there's that flesh nature that sinful nature that sinful man friends as believers we need to crucify the flesh and keep on doing so and let God be glorified walk in the spirit let us pray heavenly father we thank you for your great grace to us that you've chosen flesh to be a dwelling place on this earth you've chosen our flesh these skin and bones this vessel that we are Lord help us to rid ourselves of those works of the flesh that will drag us down that will take us away from your perfect will help us Lord to recognize them to admit to them to confess them to repent of them Lord to walk in your truth help me Lord I repent of my works of the flesh Lord I pray help me to be more godly more like Christ and for each of us Lord here today help us Holy Spirit fill us fill us with your fruit help us with your truth guide us in your way we want to walk in your way we want to walk in your life help us Lord if there's anyone here this morning they haven't become a Christian yet they haven't even started on this walk of life of truth of faith Lord that they'll put their hearts trust they'll bow their heart hearts will they'll bow their knee their will their mind and they'll give their heart to you today they'll surrender all they'll surrender all and leave their self at the foot of the cross bowed down and bruised and crucified today in Jesus name we pray Amen Okay.