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# Galatians

**...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. Galatians 5:21**

In this verse, Paul completes his list of the "works of the flesh." After this, he will give a summary thought concerning people who pursue such works. This verse begins with envy. This is identified as strong feelings or desires which sour due to the influence of sin. It is the jealousy of a bitter mind which shows displeasure at the success or blessing of another. HELPS Word Studies goes on to say that figuratively, it is "the miserable trait of being *glad* when someone experiences misfortune or pain."

Following this are murders. This item is not in many manuscripts, but assuming it belongs, it is the unjust taking of life from another human being. It does not include capital sentences of death that are rightly handed down. Nor does it include the taking of animal life.

The next item is drunkenness. This is immoderate drinking. The Bible does not forbid the consumption of alcohol during any dispensation. Only two times is it forbidden in Scripture. The first is when the priests performed their functions at the tabernacle/temple, and the second is when a person was under the vow of a Nazirite. Other than those two, drinking is not considered sinful unless it leads to drunkenness.

Revelries are the next category. This comes from the "village-merrymaking that took place at the gathering of the grapes." Eventually the word became associated with riotous parties and drunken feasts. These often "hosted unbridled sexual immorality."

Next, to show that this list is not all-inclusive, he adds in the comment "and the like." All such works of the flesh, and any others like them, are contrary to living a holy life, dedicated to the Lord. Because of this, Paul warns them precisely of the consequences of such acts with the words, "...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."

He was warning them now, before the Day of Judgment, just as he had previously warned them in person, that those who fail to come to Christ and who participate in such works of the flesh will not be saved. They will not participate in the messianic blessings which God offers through the giving of His Son. This brings in the obvious question as to whether our continued salvation is dependent on our works.

If this is true, then that means that our initial salvation must be as well. Logically, if one has to do something in order to keep being saved, then the initial salvation is also dependent on what we do, or salvation is not a "guarantee." But it is called exactly that by Paul in Ephesians 1. The answer is that all sin is under the blood of Christ when one comes to Him by faith.

Hence, there are two distinct judgments noted in Scripture. The first is that for believers, and which results in rewards and loss of rewards. The second is for non-believers and it will result in condemnation. Paul speaks of these things in detail in his other letters. For the believer who has been cleansed by Christ, Paul will next explain what is expected of us while in this continued earthly walk.

Life application: If we are to live out our lives after coming to Christ pursuing any of the vile deeds of the flesh that Paul has described, then those around us will see and will never learn what it means to call out to Christ. We may not lose our own salvation when we stumble and fall, but we may become a stumblingblock to those who might otherwise come to Him. Let us pursue holiness and righteous living all of our days.

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, Galatians 5:22**

Beginning with "But..." Paul now contrasts the deeds of the flesh of the previous verses with the fruits of the Spirit. One can understand the contrast when considering that "works of the flesh" stem from the natural, earthly man. He is fallen, and his works produce that which is unfit for the kingdom of God. To contrast this, that which stems from "the Spirit" is given to show that these do not flow from our own nature, but rather from God.

It should be noted that each of these fruits appear to be things which any person can possess, even if they have never come to Christ. However, this is incorrect. Only through the Spirit are our actions acceptable to God. Without Christ's covering, our works are tainted with sin, and any fruit we have is already corrupted. Further, the use of some of these words is only in relation to that which is of divine origin. This fruit of the Spirit includes:

Love - This is love which is expressed to our Creator and to other humans which is pure and undefiled. It follows the description given by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13, and it is a volitional act of the will. It is, in particular, love directed to God more than anything else. The reason for this is that this, as a fruit, is set in contrast to the works of the flesh which are carnal and earthly. This is uniting; that is divisive.

Joy - This word is etymologically linked to words meaning "rejoice because of grace," "joy because of grace," and "grace." Therefore, it signifies the knowledge and understanding of God's grace and favor. In essence, it is the recognition of His grace in our lives... something to be truly joyous about.

Peace - This word indicates "peace of mind." It is comparable to the Jewish word "shalom" which indicates more than just calm, but wholeness and completion when all the essential parts are joined together. It is God's gift of wholeness.

Longsuffering - Patience is the short definition here. But it is a bit fuller than that. It is a divinely regulated endurance which even is used by God of Himself to show that He is truly able to endure our waywardness in order to reveal His character to us. It demonstrates the ability to wait a sufficient time before expressing anger. Thus, it withholds any premature use of force concerning offense.

Kindness - This word is described as that which is well-suited for use. It is the ability to meet real needs in the way that God would meet them, and in the timing He would meet them. As it is a divinely generated type of kindness, it is rightly known as a fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit produces in us a goodness which meets the needs of others while avoiding natural, carnal harshness.

Goodness - This speaks of goodness which is intrinsic in nature. It is a quality or condition which is related to believers because its source is found in God. It is revealed in both moral and spiritual excellence.

Faithfulness - The word here is noted by HELPS Word Studies as always being a gift from God; never that which can be produced by people. It is "God's *divine persuasion*" – and therefore distinct from human belief (confidence), yet involving it. The Lord continuously *births faith* in the yielded believer so they can know what He prefers, i.e. the *persuasion of His will* (1 Jn 5:4)."

Life application: In a cursory reading of these fruits of the Spirit, one might think that they possessed them apart from coming to Christ. This is not the case. The gifts that God offers, through His Spirit, are unique to believers. Further, they are not automatically obtained. Rather, they develop as we yield ourselves to Christ. This can be done through prayer, praise, fellowship, study of the word, etc. Be well rounded in your walk and yield your life daily to the Lord. As you do, He will continue to fill you with His Holy Spirit.

**...gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Galatians 5:23**

Paul completes his list of the fruits of the Spirit in this verse. This is not an all-inclusive list; other fruits and gifts of the Spirit are provided in his other letters as well. However, this list is given in contrast to the "works of the flesh" which he previously noted. The last two that he now mentions are:

Gentleness - This word is another one which has a root that emphasizes the divine origin of "meekness." In other words, it is a gentle strength which expresses power and yet it is a reserved power. Despite the ability to crush one's foes, there can be gentleness towards them. HELPS Word Studies says that it "*begins* with the Lord's inspiration and finishes by His direction and empowerment. It is a *divinely*-balanced virtue that can only operate through faith."

Self Control - This means, properly, "dominion within." In other words, it is a control of oneself that proceeds outward from within. Again, HELPS notes concerning this virtue, that it "can only be accomplished *by the power of the Lord*. Accordingly, [it] is explicitly called a *fruit of the Holy Spirit*."

Paul says of this list, which comprised the majority of verses 22 and 23, that "against such there is no law." This is speaking of the fruits (things), not those who display them (people). There is no law for such things because they transcend any law. They come from God and are fruits of His Spirit. Therefore, no

law can exist against them. Instead, they are what will naturally flow from Him as we yield to His will.

Life application: It needs to be noted once again that as believers, we can never get more of the Spirit of God than that which was first received upon belief. However, we can yield to God and the Spirit can get more of us. This is the purpose of Paul's list of the fruits of the Spirit. Our ability to exercise these gifts is dependent on our yielding to Him and allowing Him to work through us.