

The Flesh, Not The Devil

AUDIO: “The Flesh, Not The Devil” (Kenneth Hagin)¹ *The transcript is at the end of this document.*

It's the flesh, your base nature, that's the problem in your life's falterings, not Satan.

Take a look at this scripture:

Galatians 5:19-21 (NKJV) – *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery², fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders³, 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.*

What is the 'flesh'?

Note this: According to Vine⁴ Greek word *sark* used in this verse is a multi-use term. It is a synecdoche figure of speech in which a part is used for the whole or the whole for a part, or the special for the general or the general for the special.⁵ Sometimes it's a metonymy figure of speech. Interestingly, it is used for:

- The substance of an animal's or human's body
- The human body itself
- The whole or complete person – body, soul & spirit (Including that of Jesus)
- The outward part of a person as opposed to their inward spiritual and real self
- The weaker elements of human nature
- The unregenerated state of people
- The seat of sin in a person (which is not their body)
- The lower and temporary elements of a believer
- The natural attainments of people
- Circumstances, the externals of life
- Natural relationship, consanguine or marital

This means we have to be careful how we throw around the term 'flesh' and also how we assign sinfulness to it when it refers to that which is normal and natural as well. The Holiness Movement caused great disservice to believers with this mistake leading many to believe life was evil. We must be careful how we read the NT writings where the English translation refers to the 'flesh' – such as:

- “the Word became flesh” (John 1:14)
- “God was manifested in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16)
- “who do not confess Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh” (2 John 7)
- “in the days of His flesh” (Hebrews 5:7)

NOTE: We will take the 'flesh' to refer to the base human nature in this study as I will be looking at references to this type of 'flesh' – i.e. as used in the Galatians' quote at the top.

Before analysing the “works of the flesh”, here are a few quotes which cross-reference the ones listed in Galatians 5:

1 – www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHYnT_VCzxE&t=3s [16:10-23:28]

2 – NU-Text omits *adultery*.

3 – NU-Text omits *murders*.

4 – Vine's Dictionary of NT words

5 – www.dictionary.com

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (NKJV) – *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals⁶, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the Kingdom of God.*

Ephesians 5:3-5 (NKJV) – *But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know,⁷ that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God.*

Revelation 21:8 (NKJV) – *But the cowardly, unbelieving,⁸ abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*

What do each of the Greek words translated in these refer to exactly? We must not get confused by the biases of the translators, so what does Vine⁹ say the words mean?

Galatians 5

ADULTERY (*moicheia*): The unlawful sexual intercourse with the spouse of another.

FORNICATION (*porneia*): Illicit sexual intercourse, such as whore-mongering. In the plural¹⁰ it stands for, or includes, adultery.

UNCLEANNES (*akatharsia*): Impure, no purity or filthiness. Suggestions of sensuality and evil doctrine are frequently associated with the word.

LEWDNESS (*aselgeia*): Excess, absence of restraint. Lasciviousness, licentiousness, wantonness, indecency. The prominent idea is shameless conduct. One of the evils that proceed from the heart. Among the sins of the unregenerate who are past feeling. The life of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

IDOLATRY (*eidōlolatreaia*): Wholly given over to or to serve idols. Associated with immorality and divers lusts.

SORCERY (*pharmakeia*): Primarily signifying the use of medicine, drugs, spells, poisoning, and witchcraft. “In 'sorcery', the use of drugs, whether simple or potent, was generally accompanied by incantations and appeals to occult powers, with the provision of various charms, amulets, etc., professedly designed to keep the applicant or patient from the attention and power of demons, but actually to impress the applicant with the mysterious resources and powers of the sorcerer.”

HATRED (*echthra*): Enmity. From the adjective *echthros* meaning 'enemy'. It is the opposite of *agape* love.

CONTENTIONS (*eris*): Quarrelling, strife. Especially rivalry and wrangling. Also, 'debate' & 'variance' in KJV.

JEALOUSIES (*zēlos*): Envy. Zeal for something others have. “The distinction lies in this, that 'envy' desires to deprive another of what he has, 'jealousy' desires to have the same or the same sort of thing for itself.”

OUTBURSTS OF WRATH (*thumos*): Wrath. Hot anger, fierce anger. Wrath is the best translation and is distinguished from anger (*orge*) in that wrath indicates a more agitated condition of the feelings, an outburst of wrath from inward indignation. Anger suggests a more settled or abiding condition of mind, frequently with a view to taking revenge. Anger is less sudden in its rise than *thumos*, but more lasting in its nature. “*Thumos* expresses more the inward feeling, *orge* the more active emotion. *Thumos* may issue in revenge, though it does not necessarily include it. It is characteristic that it quickly blazes up and quickly subsides, though that is not necessarily implied in each case.” Can be

6 – That is, 'catamites'

7 – NU-Text reads *For know this*.

8 – M-Text adds *and sinners*.

9 – www.menfak.no/bibelprog/vines?tofrom=A

10 – e.g. 1 Corinthians 7:2; Matthew 5:32; 19:9

translated as passion but this hardly conveys the full meaning of the word.

SELFISH AMBITIONS (*eritheia/erithia*): Fictious, contentious, strife. Ambition, self-seeking, rivalry. Self-will is the underlying idea in the word; hence it denotes 'party-making'. "It is derived, not from *eris*, 'strife', but from *erithos*, 'a hireling' hence the meaning of 'seeking to win followers', or 'factions'...'Faction' is the fruit of jealousy."

DISSENSIONS (*dichostasia*): Sedition, division. Literally means, 'a standing apart'. (From *dicha*, 'asunder', 'apart', & *stasis*, 'a standing')

HERESIES (*haireisis*): Heresy, party, sect. Literally, 'a choosing' or 'a choice'. (From *haireomai*, 'to choose') Meaning is: 'that which is chosen', and used to mean 'an opinion', especially a self-willed opinion. It "is an opinion which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division and the formation of sects", or parties. These erroneous opinions frequently come from personal preference or for the prospect of gaining an advantage. It denotes a preference for either a particular truth or a perversion of one."

ENVY (*phthonos*): Envy. "The feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others."

MURDERS (*phonos*): Murder. Can be rendered: 'slaughter' or 'kill'. Committing unjustified, intentional homicide.¹¹

DRUNKENNESS (*methē*): Drunkenness, habitual intoxication. Meaning comes the noun *methu* for wine or strong drink.

REVELRIES (*kōmos*): Revelling, carousing. The activities that come from drunkenness. Hence, riotous behaviour or running amok.

1 Corinthians 6

UNRIGHTEOUS (*adikos*): Not righteous. Literally: Not conforming to what is right (*dike*).

FORNICATORS (*pornos*): Whore-monger. Indulging in fornication (illicit sexual intercourse), including adultery. A man who prostitutes himself.¹² (From *pernaō*, 'to sell off') Properly, a male prostitute, but in the NT, any fornicator.¹³

IDOLATERS (*eidōlōlatrēs*): A slave to idols and the depraved ideas the idols represent. Can be conducted openly or secretly, consciously or unconsciously.

ADULTERERS (*moichos*): Adulterer. One who has unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another.

HOMOSEXUALS (*malakos*): Effeminate. Literally: 'soft', 'soft to the touch'. "Not simply of a male who practices forms of lewdness, but persons in general, who are guilty of addiction to sins of the flesh, voluptuous." A catamite: a boy kept for homosexual practices.¹⁴

SODOMITES (*arsenokoitēs*): Abuser. The dominant partner in a homosexual act. Comes from *arsen*, one of the Greek words for 'man', and *koite*, the Greek word for 'bed' – therefore, 'to bed a man'.¹⁵

THIEVES (*kleptēs*): Thief, robber. "A thief who steals by *stealth* (in secret), rather than in the open with *violence*".¹⁶

COVETOUS (*pleonektēs*): Covetous, greedy for gain. Literally: 'eager to have more'. To have what belongs to others.

DRUNKARDS (*methusos*): Drunkard. (See Drunkenness above)

REVILERS (*loidoros*): Abusive, reviling. Railing against others.

EXTORTIONERS (*harpax*): Rapacious, to extort. "Like ravenous wolves".¹⁷

Ephesians 5

11 – Strong's definition (biblehub.net/searchstrongs.php?q=5406)

12 – Strong's definition (biblehub.net/searchstrongs.php?q=4205)

13 – HELPS word-studies (biblehub.net/searchstrongs.php?q=4205) [HelpsBible.com]

14 – Referenced in www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+cor+6%3A9&version=NKJV. Meaning from Google search.

15 – rationalwiki.org/wiki/Arsenokoites

16 – Strong (biblehub.com/greek/2812.htm)

17 – Matthew 7:15

FORNICATION (*porneia*): [See Fornication above]

UNCLEANNES (*akatharsia*): [See Uncleanness above]

COVETOUSNESS (*pleonexia*): Covetousness. Literally: 'a desire to have more' (From *pleon*, 'more' and *echo* 'to have'). Always has a bad sense.

FILTHINESS (*aischrotēs*): Baseness, obscenity. All that is contrary to purity. (From *aischos*, 'shame', 'disgrace')

FOOLISH TALKING (*mōrologia*): Foolish talk. (From *moros*, 'foolish', 'dull', 'stupid', & *lego*, 'speech') It denotes more than mere 'idle talk' – viz. 'talk of fools', which is both foolishness and sin at the same time.

COARSE JESTING (*eutrapelia*): Facetiousness, ready wit. Literally: 'easily turning'. (From *eu*, 'well' & *trepo*, 'to turn') Over time, the meaning deteriorated with use from its original meaning to refer to 'coarse jesting' or 'ribaldry'.

FORNICATOR (*pornos*): [See Fornicators above]

UNCLEAN (*akathartos*): [See Uncleanness above]

COVETOUS (*pleonektēs*): [See Covetousness above] **NB:** Equivalent to being an idolater.

Revelation 21

COWARDLY (*deilos*): 'Timid', 'fearful', 'succumbing to dread'.¹⁸ 'Cowardice', 'afraid'; a spirit not from God.¹⁹ By implication, 'faithless'.²⁰

UNBELIEVING (*apistos*): Not believing or not trusting, faithless. Also, depending on its use in grammar, unfaithful, unreliable, untrustworthy. (From *a-pistos*, 'no-belief')

ABOMINABLE (*bdelussō*): To render foul. To cause to become abhorrent, detestable. (From *bdeo*, 'to stink')

MURDERERS (*phoneus*): [See Murderers above] Literally: 'a man' (*aner*), 'a murderer'.

SEXUALLY IMMORAL (*pornos*): [See Fornicators above]

SORCERERS (*pharmakeus/pharmakos*): Someone devoted to magical arts, especially one who uses drugs, potions, spells, enchantments. [See Sorcery above] "A person using drug-based incantations or drugging religious enchantments; a *pharmakeus*-practitioner who "mixes up distorted religious potions" like a sorcerer-magician. They try to "work their magic" by performing pseudo "supernatural" stunts, weaving illusions about the Christian life to use "powerful" religious formulas ("incantations") that manipulate the Lord into granting more temporal gifts (especially "invincible health and wealth"). This has a "drugging" effect on the aspiring religious zealot, inducing them to think they have "special spiritual powers" (that do not operate in keeping with Scripture)."²¹

IDOLATERS (*eidōlolatrēs*): [See Idolaters above]

LIARS (*pseudēs*): Lying, false. Speak what is untrue, falsehoods, which are designed to deceive.

Here are the references used as they appear in the Amplified so you can get a better sense of the passages.

Galatians 5:19-21 (AMPC) – *Now the doings (practices) of the flesh are clear (obvious): they are immorality, impurity, indecency, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger (ill temper), selfishness, divisions (dissensions), party spirit (factions, sects with peculiar opinions, heresies), envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you beforehand, just as I did previously, that those who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.*

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (AMPC) – *Do you not know that the unrighteous and the wrongdoers will not*

18 – Thayer's definition

19 – Vine's definition

20 – Strong's definition

21 – HELPS word-studies (biblehub.com/greek/5332.htm) [HelpsBible.com]

inherit or have any share in the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived (misled): neither the impure and immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor those who participate in homosexuality, nor cheats (swindlers and thieves), nor greedy graspers, nor drunkards, nor foulmouthed revilers and slanderers, nor extortioners and robbers will inherit or have any share in the Kingdom of God.

Ephesians 5:3-5 (AMPC) – *But immorality (sexual vice) and all impurity [of lustful, rich, wasteful living] or greediness must not even be named among you, as is fitting and proper among saints (God's consecrated people). Let there be no filthiness (obscenity, indecency) nor foolish and sinful (silly and corrupt) talk, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting or becoming; but instead voice your thankfulness [to God]. For be sure of this: that no person practicing sexual vice or impurity in thought or in life, or one who is covetous [who has lustful desire for the property of others and is greedy for gain]—for he [in effect] is an idolater—has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.*

Revelation 21:8 (AMPC) – *But as for the cowards and the ignoble and the contemptible and the cravenly lacking in courage and the cowardly submissive, and as for the unbelieving and faithless, and as for the depraved and defiled with abominations, and as for murderers and the lewd and adulterous and the practicers of magic arts and the idolaters (those who give supreme devotion to anyone or anything other than God) and all liars (those who knowingly convey untruth by word or deed)—[all of these shall have] their part in the lake that blazes with fire and brimstone. This is the second death.*

A person said to me recently something like this, “My life is a mess. I have so much 'baggage'. Why wasn't it dealt with when I became a believer? Why did they focus on my spiritual growth and development and not deal with my issues first?”

This person was struggling with their 'flesh' because the 'flesh' problems they've had all their lives didn't just disappear when they became a believer. Now they are struggling with them while they are wanting to advance spiritually. Their 'flesh' is holding them back in a major way. They are very frustrated.

Now, here's the thing.

Believers carry a great deal of 'baggage' because we've concentrated on the MAJORS, but neglected the MINORS. This probably comes from the cultural principle: “Major on the majors. Don't major on the minors”. We've shown new believers the big sins they need to give up and then focussed them on coming to Sunday meetings, reading the Bible and praying. This was in the hope that God would deal with their issues because they are very time consuming to work through.

Maybe we've decided that it was all too much. That it would be all too hard for them so they'd eventually give up the faith, so we didn't put them through that pain. After all, the most important thing was that they are “saved”. So, we focussed on being holy, because we thought that that's what God wants from us more than anything. Our quest for holiness masked the 'flesh' sins we had and turned us into legalistic, negative people who were not nice to be around.

In this way, and through this type of reasoning, we've taken the easy way out of our responsibility to grow 'baby' believers. Where has been the discipling, mentoring, coaching, fathering²², or mothering²³?

It's also our fault because we've chased after people and listened to teaching that made us 'feel good'. We never really wanted to deal with our flesh, just to be happy as a Christian.

We've regarded the minors as personal because they are often hidden from others and we get offended if other believers suggest that these need to be dealt with. Hence, the anonymous prayer lines each Sunday morning. But this technique doesn't work quickly enough because we won't surrender and deal with our secret 'flesh' issues. Secrets such as these few:

Dishonour	Negativity	Criticism	Hurt
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22 – e.g. Titus 2:6-8

23 – e.g. Titus 2:4-5

Worldliness	Spending	Pride	Coldness
'Parasitism'	Regret	Back-sliding	Gluttony
Gossip	Babbling	Lust	Soulishness
Hate	Laziness	Unloving	Striving
Unforgiveness	Anger	Resentment	Pornography
Heartlessness	Domination	Manipulation	Performing
Disappointment	Neglectfulness	Pay-backs	One-upmanship
Slander	Disobedience	Tantrums	Bullying
Worry	Stress	Anxiety	White lies

Then there's the selfies:

Selfishness	Self-advancement	Self-interest	Self-promotion
Self-pity	Thanks-seeking	Praise-seeking	Approval-seeking

I like the maxim that Roy Hession has in his book “The Calvary Road”²⁴: “**Whatever is SELF is SIN**”.

While ever we are focussed on ourself, we are not focussed on what God wants us to focus on. That means we don't think, do, say and go in alignment with him. This is what sin is: “missing the mark”. Sin in its essence is not being in alignment with God. It's not a legal issue, it's a relational issue.

It's important to remember that there are levels of 'flesh' activity. All levels are inappropriate for Kingdom sons, so we can't justify that any of them are insignificant or not needing to be dealt with.

What Now?

Now that we know about “the works of the flesh”, the things that come from our natural fallen being, it's our obligation to deal with them.

That's a daunting task – especially if we are older than 10 y.o.a. – because we've allowed our fleshy desires and habits to go unchecked for years and years. They are deep-rooted in us and won't be eliminated without our body, soul and mind surrendering them up for removal.

We can quote scripture 'til the cows come home', but that won't work. Dealing with the 'flesh' requires effort on our part, as well as surrendering to the Lord for him to break them. Here are my suggestions from personal experience to speed up the elimination process:

1. Forget quoting scripture in the hope they will 'magically' remove them.
2. Identify fleshy thoughts, emotions, speech and actions whenever they occur.
3. Label these as coming from the 'flesh' whenever they occur.
4. Give them the status of: 'To be eliminated'.
5. Ask the Lord to expose more of them for you.
6. Know that they will return at any time that circumstances 'open the door'.
7. Work consistently at dealing with them.
8. Live a repentant lifestyle. (Confess these to the Lord every time they appear, turn your self away

24 – Free PDF download here: www.christianissues.biz/pdf-bin/sanctification/thecalvaryroad.pdf

- from them, tell him you are going to do things his way instead, and ask for his forgiveness.)
9. Don't strive to eliminate them.
 10. Allow the Lord to eliminate them.
 11. Relax, and let the Lord deal with them one at a time. (He's interested in your progress and he's not in a terrible hurry.)
 12. Have an accountability partner who will monitor your habits.
 13. Have someone you can comfortably confess your sins to.²⁵
 14. Belong to a Kingdom Community family where the members are accountable to each other.
 15. Allow others to speak into your life in the area of your 'flesh'.
 16. Be open and transparent with Community members.
 17. Don't hide ANY of them – that's Satan's method.
 18. Don't resist having them exposed.
 19. Don't stop dealing with them – most are deep-rooted and take time to remove.
 20. Never give up cleaning yourself up.

WARNING: This is potentially destroying, but the rewards are worth it. If you want to grow spiritually – genuinely spiritual, not spiritually-gifted – eliminating the 'flesh' is a prerequisite attitude.

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TRANSCRIPT

“Have you ever had any trouble with your head? That is probably where your greatest trouble is. To tell you the real truth about it, some people get off on the devil – don’t misunderstand me, he is a reality – but on the other hand your greatest enemy is not the devil, it is the fellow you look at in the mirror when you comb your hair or shave your face. That is what you are going to have the most trouble with, not the devil.

I want you to turn with me to Galatians. I want you to notice something. I want you to notice Paul in writing to the churches – not just one church – the churches of Galatia. Now he had established these churches and he wrote this letter and it was to be passed from church to church and read in all of the churches. He addresses it to the “churches” – plural – of Galatia. I want you to notice just one observation at the moment. “Now the works of the devil are manifest which are these – the works of the flesh”. You see, people want to lay it off on the devil because

he will not help you, but really they are the works of the flesh, he said. He didn't say they were the works of the devil, did he? Did you notice that? Galatians 5:19. "Now the works of the flesh were manifest which are these – adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness". Now all of them have to do with sexual impurity and immorality. Now notice he didn't say the works of the devil, he said the works of the flesh. Now don't misunderstand me, the devil will help you, but read this "works of the flesh". Idolatry even, witchcraft, hatred, violence, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelling and such like are which I tell you before...that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

The point I want to make with you is that that is where you are going to have your most trouble, is with the flesh and with your mind. That's the reason he wanted to get your body presented to God a living sacrifice, and your mind renewed. But like I said, the devil will help you, but too many times folk just want to lay it off on the devil. Well, he wouldn't have anything to work with if it wasn't your flesh. "Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee". If you keep your mind stayed on him, the devil wouldn't have anything to work on. People always say, "Brother, the devil made me do it". Well, not if you're a Christian, he didn't make you, because he's not greater than Jesus, and Jesus is in you. Christ in you, the hope of glory.

So, you will find that is where your greatest battle is, with the flesh, your greatest problem, with your flesh and with the mind. That's why you need to get them renewed, ascended to God. He wants transfigured bodies and transformed minds, that's what God wants out of you. You see, he is the one who will tell you to do it, but then he sends the Holy Ghost to help you do it – he is your helper.

Now, you see, we are all human, we all have to deal with the flesh. And after all, because Jesus was living in the flesh, the Bible said he was tempted in all points. A few of them? No, all points, like as we are, yet without sin. That's the reason he knows how to have compassion on us. Now, he's the only one living in the flesh, that ever lived in the flesh, was tempted along all points as we are, and didn't sin. All the rest of us have sinned.

But now then, thank God we've got the Holy Ghost on the inside of us to help. I know from experience, you know, things will happen in the natural, in this world in which we live, and you know from the natural standpoint sometimes you want to quit so bad, even in the ministry things will happen. I'm speaking naturally, and the flesh just wants to give up, and your mind will fight you. But some way or another, something on the inside of me just rose up, when it's the Holy Ghost in my spirit, wouldn't let me quit.

Things happen in life, and your mind and your flesh – you say, "Well, I may as well just throw in the towel", in other words surrender, give up. And that's what your flesh wants to do. If you go with your flesh, you wouldn't come to church half the time because your flesh would rather stay in bed and rest, wouldn't it. But if you listen on the inside, something on the inside just won't let you quit.

You know, I will be honest with you, sometimes my flesh has just said, "Well, throw the sponge in the ring, forget it, just give it up", but something on the inside wouldn't let me, something on the inside just held me steady. Something on the inside. We ought to say "someone". Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

I have had the time when I was born again, filled with the Holy Ghost and healed by the power of God, and yet I've faced death, and right in the face of it. Your flesh recoils from it because death is an enemy, and God really didn't make us for death. Physical death is the last enemy to be put under foot. But something rose up on the inside of me, I mean, right down in here, out of my spirit, and comes up out of my mouth and right in the face of death, it just started laughing, just started laughing. And the devil said, "What are you laughing at?" and I said, "I'm laughing at you." He said, "What are you laughing at me about?" You said, "I'm going to die." "That's right, you are," he said. I said "Ha ha ha ha". I had a big time laughing and he took off and left me. In a time of crisis, rose up, because you see it's all back to this, because you've cast every care on him, because you've turned it all over to him, then you are carefree. If a person's carefree, they're happy. If a person is carefree, it will show up on their face, it will show up on their outside. But these things are real and here they come, you know. But right in the midst of the test, right in the midst of the trial, right in the midst of the darkest hour, he rose up on the inside, the Holy Ghost, gave illumination to my mind, where I could understand and see what's happening and why, gave direction to my spirit, that I could direct everything the right way."