

Works of the Flesh

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[0 : 00] Last week we started working our way through Galatians chapter 5 verses 16 through 26.

! We'll take several weeks to get through that section, but the verses form one block. So let's go ahead and read all those verses now. Here are Galatians 5, 16 through 26.

Paul said, If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Here's the main idea for the entire section.

The Holy Spirit within believers battles our worldly desires and enables us to become more and more like Christ. You probably will have that main idea memorized by the time we get through verse 26.

[2 : 12] It is important for us to remember. And so once again, the Holy Spirit within believers battles our worldly desires and enables us to live more and more like Christ.

Remember one thing that we mentioned last week. These verses apply only to true believers. In other words, the verses apply to people who have the Holy Spirit living inside of them.

Let's start tonight's lesson by reviewing some of what we covered last time. Verses 16 through 18 included Paul's command. And that command is to walk by the Spirit.

In this context, walk refers to someone's daily conduct or lifestyle. Paul's speaking of a continuous regular action or, in other words, a habitual way of life.

In Paul's vocabulary, to walk in the Spirit or to be led by the Spirit means to go where the Spirit is going, to listen to His voice, to discern His will, and to follow His guidance.

[3 : 15] Verse 16 also contains a promise. When we walk by the Spirit, we will not gratify the desires of the flesh. And that original word translated as gratify in the ESV means to complete, accomplish, or finish.

If we walk by the Spirit, we may start the works of the flesh, but the Holy Spirit will do His work to prevent us from finishing the works of the flesh or making them a habitual pattern.

We know that the flesh is our fallen human nature. It's twisted with self-centeredness and therefore prone to sin. The flesh is what remains of the old man after a person is saved.

It refers to unredeemed humanness, the part of a believer that awaits future redemption at the time of His glorification. Until then, the believer has a redeemed self living in unredeemed humanness, and that creates a great conflict.

In verse 17, Paul explained the reason for that conflict. The Holy Spirit and our original sinful nature continually battle against each other. What takes place within the heart, mind, soul, and body of the believer is nothing less than a civil war, a violent confrontation between opposing forces, and irreconcilable antagonism.

[4 : 40] That review brings us to the second section of this passage, and in verses 19 through 23, we see Paul's contrast. So Paul's contrast is your next blank.

In these verses, Paul gives us two lists. One is a list of some sins. The other list summarizes the fruit of the Spirit. So let's read verses 19 through 23 again.

Now the works of the flesh are evident. Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Against such things there is no law. An obvious and an important difference exists between the way the two lists are structured.

[6 : 01] Paul's list of sins is deliberately plural in number. He refers to works of the flesh. But notice how the fruit of the Spirit is singular.

There is one fruit of the Spirit that manifests itself in nine Christian graces that are nicely grouped into three well-balanced triplets. The obvious question is, why did Paul include the two lists if these verses only apply to true believers?

Martin Luther suggested two possible answers to that question. His first explanation sounds a little better in the Old English translation of his original words.

So here is his first possibility. He said, There were many hypocrites amongst the Galatians, as there are also at this day among us, which outwardly pretended to be godly men, and boasted much of the Spirit, and they understood very well the doctrine of godliness.

But they walked not according to the Spirit, but according to the flesh, and performed the works thereof. Said in plainer English, Paul may have been calling out the hypocrites in the Galatian congregation.

[7 : 38] Despite being professing Christians, the hypocrites' pattern of life showed that they were unsaved. Paul's goal was to persuade them to repent so that they would avoid missing out on eternal life.

That teaching mirrors the teaching of Jesus. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 7, verses 16-19. So here are Matthew 7, 16-19, part of the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus said, You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? So every tree, every healthy tree, bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.

A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

If Paul included both lists to call out the hypocrites, he was telling the professed believers to examine themselves to be certain that their faith was genuine.

[8 : 50] In addition to mirroring what Jesus taught, that interpretation also mirrors what Paul told the Corinthians. This verse is 2 Corinthians 13, 5.

And in 2 Corinthians 13, 5, Paul said, Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith, test yourselves, or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you, unless indeed you fail to meet this test?

Luther gave a second possible reason why Paul may have included the two lists, and the second reason seems more likely given the context of what we studied last time.

The second reason is that true believers battle with some of these sins daily. Even though we may not like to admit it, we know that true believers battle with some of these sins daily.

Luther said, There was never yet any of the saints whom the flesh hath not often in his lifetime provoked. Paul therefore is speaking here of the saints, saith that the flesh lusteth in them against the spirit, therefore they shall never be without the desires and battle of the flesh.

[10 : 04] True believers will be caught in a battle between works of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit for as long as we have our earthly bodies. We need to be aware of that battle, and we need to recognize when we're doing the works of the flesh.

Tonight we'll cover only the works of the flesh, we'll only do an overview of those respective sins, and in most cases, Paul's meaning is obvious. We'll come back next week to spend time digging deeper into the fruit of the spirit.

As Paul catalogs the deeds of the flesh, he groups them into four categories, sins of a sexual nature, sins of religious conduct, sins of a social nature, and sins of appetite.

Paul lists three sins of a sexual nature, immorality, impurity, and sensuality. In the term immorality, Paul includes all abuses of lawful sexual relations, fornication, adultery, and those things that tempt someone to commit those acts.

He also condemns all perversions of sexual relations, and that would include homosexuality, bestiality, and pornography. The term translated impurity encompasses immoral conversations, as well as books, movies, and music that promote sexual impurity.

[11 : 34] The term also condemns lustful thoughts and fantasies. Paul's use of a term that covers thoughts and fantasies is consistent with what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount.

Listen to Jesus' words in Matthew 5, verses 27 and 28. Jesus said in Matthew 5, 27 and 28, You have heard that it was said, you shall not commit adultery, but I say to you that everyone who looks

at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. The term translated sensuality in the ESV includes the shameful conduct of immodest dress, suggested behavior, and also shamelessness. Your handout includes the scripture references that further support Paul's teaching regarding this first group of sins, and if you want to go into greater detail about this first group, those cross-references to other scripture will let you do that. You'll hear people in society and even in this town try to explain away Paul's teaching about the sexual sins. However, the Bible's meaning is clear.

[12 : 52] Liberal interpretations require mental gymnastics and rationalizations that are unsupported by scripture. People who contradict the Bible's message regarding these first three sins think that they are being loving when they tolerate such behavior, but those people are wrong. Their mistaken teaching jeopardizes other people's eternity. The most loving thing we can do for people is to confront their sins humbly and graciously. We need to explain what God's word says, we need to explain what God's word means, and we need to explain the consequences of having a lifestyle that habitually contradicts God's word. Listen to what Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 6, verses 9-11. 1 Corinthians 6, 9-11 say, Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived, neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

[14 : 12] And such were some of you, that you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 6-11 tells us why we should be humble, gracious, and loving toward unbelievers, even unbelievers that commit these sexual sins that we just read about. Listen to 1 Corinthians 6-11 again. And such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. We did nothing to earn our justification and sanctification. We know that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit did it all. We were undeserving of such grace, so how could we possibly think that anyone else could be undeserving of such grace? Any believer should know that any unbeliever could be someone whom God may have chosen to save in the future. So let us never sin by thinking that someone is too sinful to deserve salvation.

[15 : 25] After all, we know that nobody deserves salvation, including us, but God chooses to save people anyway. So with that little detour, let's go back to our regular programming now and look at the second grouping of sins in tonight's passage.

The next group of sins includes two sins of religious conduct. The ESV translates those sins as idolatry and sorcery. Idolatry includes the worship of false gods and the false worship of the true God. Typically, idolatry features one of seven characteristics. The first characteristic is failing to worship the true God, and that includes atheism, polytheism, and the worship of all false gods. That also includes all non-Trinitarian cults like Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jews, and Muslims. A second characteristic of idolatry is worshiping the true God through images.

[16 : 30] God is a spirit, and we're not to make images of him or worship him through such images. A third characteristic of idolatry is refusing to come to the true God through the Lord Jesus Christ, God's appointed mediator.

A fourth characteristic of idolatry is failing to worship the true God according to Scripture. A fifth characteristic is failing to worship the true God from the heart by the Spirit. A sixth characteristic is failure to put God first in trust, affection, and priorities, trusting in things for our security or happiness, loving other people more than God, or putting things before God. A seventh characteristic is failing to believe what God has revealed in his word and failing to base our lives on his word. We went through those seven quickly, but you have those Scripture references in your handout as well. All seven characteristics have something in common. Idolatry is either failing to worship God in God's prescribed way or putting something else above our worship of God.

[17 : 46] Remember, Pastor Mike's two questions that help to test whether we have possible idols. The first question is, what do you daydream about?

And the second question is, what is your greatest fear? If either of those answers is something other than God, your answer may be an idol.

For a Christian, our fear of God should be reverential all for God and concern over doing anything that would dishonor him. sorcery is next on Paul's list of sins.

And for sorcery, Paul uses the term from which we derive the term pharmacy. The root word for sorcery refers to the use of formulas and potions to work magic and to cast spells and curses. This particular term also can be translated as witchcraft or sorcery like it is here. And we should avoid all occult activity and that includes use of mediums, fortune telling, astrology, and psychic games like Ouija boards.

[18 : 54] We also should avoid all superstitions and superstitious acts like knocking on wood or crossing fingers and attributing the outcome of events to luck or fortune. When we think about this work of the flesh, we often think of the obvious sorcery that we mention like the Ouija boards and the fortune tellers who set up shop near major airports or perhaps the advertisements we see for psychic hotlines.

But if those fortune tellers and psychics could do what they claim, they would have no need to make a living by reading the palms or working in a shady call center. As you heard from the definition, though, the meaning behind sorcery is broader than those obvious things.

Before this lesson, I never considered that seemingly harmless things like crossing fingers or knocking on wood might even be considered sorcery. However, even some of those little things unintentionally could send a message to others that we believe that luck or something other than God controls our circumstances.

At the very least, the broader definition of sorcery is a good reminder that others could be watching our actions and we never want to give them anything that might cause them to think we doubt our God.

Paul lists eight sins of a social nature next. These sins are ones that are easier for us to keep hidden from each other, but if we habitually practice them as a lifestyle, they're just as deadly as the more obvious sins.

[20 : 27] Enmity is a state of bitterness and vindictiveness towards another person. It was Esau's attitude towards Jacob. Esau was filled with enmity.

After Jacob deprived him of his inheritance, Esau began to nurture resentment. He had a settled opposition of bitterness toward his brother and planned his death.

Sometimes the spirit of bitterness or enmity can be short-lived. Most of us wrestle with it at times in our relationships. That happens if somebody does something to offend us.

We can nurse a bitter spirit against that person. But enmity lies at the root of many relationship problems in marriage, at work, and in the church.

But when a person nurtures enmity, it becomes a mark of his character. The bitter-spirited person constantly feels animosity toward those who have wronged him and wishes ill against them.

[21 : 30] Few things do more damage to relationships than enmity does. Enmity often leads to strife, which is the next sin on Paul's list.

Strife is a mark of the person who, by his speech, causes tension and difficulty within relationships. That person creates strife by harsh words, slander, and gossip.

Proverbs 18, 6-8 say, A fool's lips walk into a fight and his mouth invites a beating. A fool's mouth is his ruin and his lips are a snare to his soul.

The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels. They go down into the inner parts of the body. So those verses describe a person who causes strife.

Jealousy comes next in Paul's examples of sin. A jealous person is discontented with his own circumstances and resents what others possess or receive.

[22 : 36] A jealous person is upset because his gifts or importance are not recognized by others. Jealousy produces resentment, a feeling that comes from a me-first attitude.

We should pause here for a second thought and note that the Bible promotes such a thing as righteous jealousy. and there is such a thing as righteous jealousy. We can experience proper jealousy when our rights are violated or wickedness is perpetrated.

Men and women may be jealous in their covenantal relationship of marriage if one of them violates the marriage contract. Parents may be jealous of the allegiance of their children. Pastors and elders may be jealous for the truth of God and God's righteousness. And we know that God is jealous when his people disobey his law. You can see that in Exodus chapter 20 verses 5 and 6.

Clearly though the jealousy condemned here is improper jealousy. And improper jealousy is a form of anger and hateful resentment caused by coveting for ourselves what belongs to someone else. [23 : 49] Fits of anger show up next on Paul's list of works of the flesh. fits of anger are sudden unrestrained expressions of hostility toward others often with little or no provocation or justification.

So this is another way to talk about an unbridled temper. The next four social sins are more particular and ongoing expressions of the general sins that came before them.

They represent animosities between individuals and groups that sometimes continue to fester and grow long after the original cause of the conflict is passed.

These sins can become an established and destructive way of life. The word translated as rivalries in the ESV also can be translated as selfish ambitions or disputes.

believers. This sin often manifests itself in the false teacher who seeks to discredit true religion by throwing up intellectual doubts and stumbling blocks.

[24 : 53] A person with selfish ambitions wants to turn people away from the faith or lead them into some narrow sectarian view of the faith. So to accomplish his purpose, this type of person throws up obstacles.

Paul describes such people in 1 Timothy 6 verses 3-5. Listen to what Paul said in 1 Timothy 6 3-5. If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and a teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing.

He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicion, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

We need to be careful here, though, because even someone who is biblically correct in his teaching can cause rivalries and disputes. In several places, Paul noted that a church elder must avoid this sin.

[26 : 13] Among other listed things, 1 Timothy 3-3 says an elder is not to be quarrelsome. Titus 1-6 says an elder must avoid insubordination.

And listen to what Paul wrote in 2 Timothy chapter 2 verses 24 through 26. You'll hear the word quarrelsome pop up again. So here are 2 Timothy 2 verses 24 through 26.

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome, but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.

God may perhaps grant them repentance, leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

Dissension is the next thing on Paul's list of the flesh in Galatians. And dissension describes the result of strife breaking out in a group. It also includes a lack of respect for leadership.

[27 : 23] Dissension begins with disputing, but suddenly and subtly, one is undermining authority and creating questions that lead to doubt. Satan used this strategy with Eve all the way back in Genesis chapter 3, verses 1 through 4.

Romans chapter 16, verses 17 and 18, apply to the dissension sin and the divisions that the sin has. And the divisions are what we'll see in our next thing in the list.

So listen to Romans chapter 16, verses 17 and 18. Paul wrote, I appeal to you brothers to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught.

Avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites. And by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.

So now let's look at the divisions, sin. divisions also could be translated as factions. Factions are a type of division that causes cliques and creates turmoil within a church.

[28 : 40] 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verses 10 through 13. Talk about divisions or factions. Here are 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verses 10 through 13.

I appeal to you brothers by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that all of you agree and that there be no divisions among you but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, I follow Paul or I follow Apollos or I follow Cephas or I follow Christ.

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? Listen to the advice that Paul gave Titus in Titus chapter 3, verses 9 through 11.

You will hear a few of the sins that we already have discussed. So here are Titus chapter 3, verses 9 through 11. But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.

[30 : 01] As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him. Knowing that such a person is warped and sinful, he is self-condemned.

Last but not least on Paul's dishonor role of sins is the social sin of envy. Envy is similar to jealousy, but envy goes beyond ordinary jealousy.

When I'm jealous of someone, I want what that person has. But if I'm envious, I despise a person's possessions or success regardless of whether I would want those things myself.

Envy is wicked malice. It's the motivated, ill-tempered, and ill-natured desire to destroy others because you cannot abide them or their success. James 4, verses 1 and 2 summarize the results of envy.

Listen to James 4, 1 and 2. Envy also describes how the religious leaders felt about Jesus.

[31 : 31] Matthew 27, verses 15 through 18 take place on the day of Jesus' crucifixion after Jesus appeared before Pilate.

So here are Matthew 27, 15 through 18. Now at the feast, the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted.

And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?

For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him, talking about Christ, up. Pilate had no backbone, but he was perceptive.

He knew that it was out of envy that the religious leaders had delivered up Jesus. So did you notice the progression in the social sins? Enmity leads to strife.

[32 : 33] Jealousy leads to outbursts of anger and rivalries. Rivalries lead to dissensions. Dissensions lead to divisions. And left unchecked, these sins often lead to pure envy.

Two sins of a physical appetite finish out Paul's list of works of the flesh. And the first of these sins is drunkenness. The Bible always condemns getting drunk.

The term used here refers to drinking bouts or what people today would call getting wasted. The term translated orgies in the ESV is much broader than what we typically think of it.

The same term also can be translated as carousing. And the term refers to following the ways of the world in the pursuit of sinful pleasures and appetites, deliberately pursuing things that are immoral by going to places and associating with people who are debauched.

Listen to what Paul wrote to the Ephesians in Ephesians chapter 4 verses 17 through 19.

Ephesians 4, 17 through 19 are where Paul said, Now this I say and testify in the Lord that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do in the futility of their minds.

[33 : 55] They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

Being greedy to practice every kind of impurity is a good way to describe the last sin that is specified on Paul's list of fleshly works. So we made it through the individual items on the list but Paul makes it clear that this list is only a representative sample of fleshly works.

Paul follows the list with the phrase and things like these. Then verse 21 has a warning. Look at the last sentence of verse 21.

Paul said, I warned you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. We can tell from this sentence that the Galatians previously had heard those things and Paul tells them to remember his earlier warning.

That warning is sobering. He said, those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Every human, even a true believer, does at least some of these things occasionally.

[35 : 24] And we know from the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus says that we sin even if we think about doing such things. Here's some good news for you though. The word translated do at the end of verse 21 should be translated as practice.

The verb there speaks of a habitual action or lifestyle. Think of it as the opposite of walking in the spirit. John MacArthur said, the key word in Paul's warning is do or practice, which translates a present active participle, indicating durative ongoing action.

It is the continual habitual practice of such things that marks a person as unregimented and therefore barred from entrance into the kingdom of God. Scripture always assesses a person's character by his common habitual actions, not his occasional ones.

That's an important sentence to remember. Scripture always assesses a person's character by his common habitual actions, not his occasional ones. Joseph Pippa said, a genuine Christian can fall into the practice of serious sin for a period of time.

David lived for well over a year impenitent for his act of adultery. Peter fell into the sin of denying Christ, and there are many other examples in Scripture.

[36 : 50] It is possible that a genuine Christian can fall into the practice of one of these sins for a period of time. Such a Christian, while in such a state, has no right to assurance of salvation, but when he is warned, like David, he repents.

If a professing Christian continues to harden himself in the practice of sin, it is evidence that he is unregenerate. Martin Luther had this to say about the warning.

Luther said, This is a very hard and terrible saying, but yet very necessary against false Christians and careless hypocrites, which brag of the gospel, of faith, and of the spirit, and yet in all security they perform the works of the flesh.

But chiefly the heretics being puffed up with opinions of spiritual matters as they dream are possessed of the devil and altogether carnal. Therefore, they perform and fulfill the desires of the flesh even with all powers of the soul.

Therefore, most necessary it was so horrible and terrible a sentence should be pronounced by the apostle against such careless people who spread contempt and obstinate hypocrites. Namely, all they which do such works of the flesh as Paul hath recited shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

[38 : 13] And yet some of them being terrified by this severe sentence may begin to fight against the works of the flesh by the spirit. So once again we come back to Paul including this list to call people to repentance.

Charles Spurgeon wrote these words about Paul's warning. Spurgeon said, let each man judge himself by this test. Read over the list.

Put the question to conscience. Am I guilty of such things? If so, do not suppose that the holding of orthodox doctrine will save you or that any kind of religious ceremony will save you.

You must be delivered from these lusts of the flesh, these deeds of the flesh, or you cannot inherit the kingdom of God. So here's the bottom line for Paul's warning at the end of verse 21.

The warning calls people to examine themselves. Professed believers should determine whether our lives demonstrate a pattern of works of the flesh or whether our lives demonstrate the fruit of the spirit.

[39 : 21] Professing Christians who consistently do works of the flesh may really be unsaved. God says that by nature we are sinners and that nature manifests itself in thoughts, words, and deeds.

Each of us may discover the nature of his or her heart by examining its deeds by scripture. Psalm 119 tells us that the law of God is a light unto our path.

It is a light to search our hearts. James tells us that the law of God is a mirror that gives a clear testimony relative to the nature of our hearts.

You can read about that in James 1 23-25. So how then do we examine our hearts? Well, we take this list and others like it and prayerfully examine our thoughts, words, and deeds.

We need to regularly and carefully examine ourselves by the light of God's word. An unexamined life is a life in danger. true biblical examination leads us to discover the sin in our heart so that we may go to Christ for pardon and grace to obey.

[40 : 34] But what about the Christians who feel perhaps with some justification that they are dominated by some addictive sin such as pornography or any other repetitive sin?

They should heed Paul's warning that people who live this way will not inherit the kingdom of God, but they should not despair. The very fact that they are concerned about their spiritual condition

shows that the Spirit is at work and that the Spirit will enable them to live a life that is more and more pleasing to God.

Think again about the Joseph Pippa quote we heard last week. Pippa said, If you are not at war with your lust and the remnant of sin in you, then most likely you remain unconverted.

Mind you, I'm not talking about always winning the war, but if there is no warfare within you, that is an indication that you are not born again. Do not let the reality of the battle discourage you.

The fact that you have these interior wars is a sign to you that you are alive. That quote leads us back to the main idea for this passage.

[41 : 43] That main idea for Galatians 5, 16-26 is that the Holy Spirit within believers battles our worldly desires and enables us to become more and more like Christ.

Earlier in the lesson, we looked at Paul's teaching in this passage and how it reflected what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. Paul's teaching also reflects what Jesus taught in Mark 7, verses 20-23.

Listen to Mark 7, 20-23. And he, that's Jesus, said, What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.

All these things come from within, and they defile a person. King David wrote Psalm 51 after Nathan confronted David about David's sins with Bathsheba.

[42 : 56] Psalm 51 demonstrates the attitude of a true believer when that believer is confronted about sin. So let's read Psalm 51. Psalm 51 says, To the choir master, a psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. According to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you and you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness. Let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

[44 : 18] Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it. You will not be pleased with the burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Do good to Zion in your good pleasure. Build up the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings, in whole burnt offerings, then bulls will be offered on your altar.

[45 : 33] Let's pray. Father, we know that the verses that we covered tonight are unpleasant verses to look at, that you included those verses in scripture for a reason.

You included those verses to remind us that those who continually practice those sins may not be saved. Help us take that to heart and examine ourselves to make sure that none of us continually practices those sins.

Also, let this be a reminder to us to be gracious toward those who do, because those very people may be people who you want to use us to help them be saved.

Dear Lord, be with us as we go again. Help us become more and more like you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.