

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

Last week's Sabbath Thought article explained that Fruits of the Spirit are actually *Good Works* that benefit others, not acquired personal traits. Why is that important? The answer has to do with the human mind. In his preface to the Fruits of the Spirit, Paul discusses the antipathy of the human mind with the Spirit of God:

GALATIANS 5:16-17 I [Paul] say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For **the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another**, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

Aside from referring to a physical animal or human being, *flesh*, also translated *carnal [mind]*, describes an individual that is focused upon personal needs and desires. This is *selfish* behavior that goes beyond simply providing for one's needs, something that is basic *selfcare*. God created all physical life to respond to physical needs<sup>1</sup>; it is natural and required to ensure the continuation of life; however, *flesh* or a *carnal mind* is behavior that has no regard for others:

ROMANS 8:5-7 For **those who live according to the flesh [H4561] set their minds on the things of the flesh [H4561]**, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally [H4561] minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. 7 Because **the carnal [H4561] mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God**, nor indeed can be.

Such disregard for others, including God, is why a carnal mind wars against the Spirit of God because it is one of agape love that produces a SOUND mind in contrast to a carnal mind:

2 TIMOTHY 1:7 For God has not **given us a spirit** of fear, but of power and **of love and of a sound mind** [*“thinking that is correctly trained and moderated”*].

Agape love is selfless, directed toward others. Agape love does not discriminate nor does it expect something in return. Agape love will even deny the self—it can cost the giver. Therefore, the carnal mind is focused upon self whereas the Spirit of God is agape love toward others.

The two Great Commandments are agape love toward God and mankind<sup>2</sup>. The fact that “all the Law and Prophets” hang, or expand, upon them means that the entirety of the Law of God is an instruction in the ways of agape love. This is why Paul said above that a carnal mind is not willing to obey or submit to the Law of God—a carnal mind is selfish whereas the Law of God is agape love. Following his remarks about the war between a carnal mind and the Spirit of God in Galatians 5: 16-17, Paul listed Works of the Flesh:

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 6:31-32.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 22:36-40.

GALATIANS 5:19-21 Now the **works of the flesh** are evident, which are: **adultery, fornication, uncleanness, [licentiousness], 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions [strife], jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries,** and the like; of which I [Paul] 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.**

There is really no need to go into detail about each of the Works of the Flesh. They are the antipathy of agape love. There are also many, many more not listed here. A quick search of NT Scripture produced a staggering SEVENTY (70) Works of the Flesh that were included in the Sabbath Thought article on 2025-03-08<sup>3</sup> (they are reproduced at the end of this article). The crucial point about Works of the Flesh is that “those who practice such things **will not inherit the kingdom of God.**”

DEFINITION:

WORKS of the Flesh are acts that cause harm to others in the pursuit of selfish motives in contrast with the FRUITS of the Spirit that are acts that benefit others in the pursuit of becoming agape love<sup>4</sup>.

But works begin with thoughts in the mind. Works of the Flesh are the result of carnal thinking and Good Works of the Fruits of the Spirit arise out of agape love. What are the main factors that determine whether the works are good or evil? Consider that every human being possesses the Spirit in Man:

JOB 32:8 But *there is a **spirit in man,*** and the breath of the Almighty **gives him understanding.**

The Spirit in Man differentiates humans from animals<sup>5</sup> because it allows the human mind to have “**understanding;**” that is, the ability to *think*. The Spirit in Man existed in Adam and Eve *before* they sinned so the human mind is susceptible to influence. The three main ones are 1) emotions, 2) physical stimuli, and, 3) influence of others. When Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, they rejected God as the primary influence of what is good and evil. Whether they knew it or not, that decision unleashed and established Satan as the main influencer throughout the world:

[TS2009] EPHESIANS 2:2-3 in which **you once walked** according to **the course of this world, according to the ruler of the authority [NOT power] of the air, of the spirit that is now working** in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also **we all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind,** and were by nature children of wrath, as also the rest.

Have you wondered why God does not broadcast His influence upon the world the same way Satan does? Many translations say *power* in verse 2 but it is AUTHORITY. This verse basically says that the Prince<sup>6</sup> of the world—Satan—was given “**the**

<sup>3</sup> *Sabbath Thought 2025-03-08 - Keep the Feast With Sincere Sincerity.*

<sup>4</sup> *Sabbath Thought 2025-11-08 - The Gift of Fruits of the Spirit.*

<sup>5</sup> Job 32:8; Eccl. 3:21.

<sup>6</sup> John 16:11.

**authority** of the air." Satan has AUTHORITY to broadcast HIS influence—the Spirit of Satan—throughout the earth. The Spirit of Satan is the main influence upon the Spirit in Man in this world, producing THOUGHTS that are Works of the Flesh.

The Spirit in Man is not something that can be broadcast. It simply allows a physical mind to understand and think but it is susceptible to emotions, physical stimuli, and spiritual influence. The choice Adam and Eve made was whether the primary spiritual influence would be the Spirit of Satan that influences a mind to focus on the self and the Spirit of God that influences a mind toward others. But it gets worse. Even those with the Spirit of God dwelling in them are still influenced by the Spirit of Satan because he has the AUTHORITY to do so. This is why a WAR exists in the human mind between the Spirit of Satan and Spirit of God—no one can simply *replace* the influence of the Spirit in Satan with the Spirit of God:

[TS2009] ROMANS 7:21-23 I [Paul] find therefore this law, that **when I wish to do the good, that the evil is present with me.** 22 For I delight in the [Law] of [God] according to the inward man, 23 but **I see another [law] in my members, battling against the [law] of my mind,** and bringing me into captivity to the [law] of sin which is in my members.

Adam and Eve made a choice for all mankind. The choice now is not between the influence of the Spirit of Satan and the Spirit of God, it is a war AGAINST the Spirit of Satan FOR the Spirit of God. This is the point when Jesus said:

MATTHEW 5:28 “But I [Jesus Christ] say to you that **whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.**

Adultery is one of the Works of the Flesh. The influence of the Spirit of Satan on the Spirit in Man produces the THOUGHT that leads to the act. But it is important to understand that Satan does not have to target someone with his influence, he has the authority to saturate the “air” with his evil influence. Paul talked about this:

[TS2009] ROMANS 7:5 For when we were **in the flesh [of a carnal mind], the passions [emotions] of sins,** through the [Law], **were working in our members to bear fruit to death.**

Emotions and physical stimuli are powerful influences upon the human mind but the **“passions of sins”** are great temptations by the Spirit of Satan. On the other hand, Jesus also said:

MATTHEW 5:44 “But I [Jesus Christ] say to you, **love** your enemies, **ble**ss those who curse you, **do good** to those who hate you, and **pray** for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

The Fruits of the Spirit are works but the THOUGHTS behind these Good Works come from the influence of the Spirit of GOD upon the Spirit in Man. Paul calls it having “the mind of Christ.”<sup>7</sup> God said “the **thoughts** that I think **toward** you [are]

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<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. 2:16.

thoughts of peace and not of evil.”<sup>8</sup> He IS agape love<sup>9</sup> so His thoughts are Good Works toward us. Works are a measure of a person’s thoughts<sup>10</sup> because works are the result of influence either by the Spirit of Satan or the Spirit of God:

**MATTHEW 7:16-18 “You will know [whether people are good or evil] them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 “Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 “A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit.”**

Have you ever wondered what Jesus meant when He said in John 15:16, I appoint you that you “should go and bear fruit, and *that your fruit should remain [abide, endure]?*” The Fruits of the Spirit are Good Works for others. Works are the result of thoughts; therefore, fruit that abides and endures over time is evidence that mind that is becoming agape love by the consistent influence of the Spirit of God!

People are known by their fruits (Good Works) but they are also a means to assess our own minds. When Works of the Flesh are exhibited, the Spirit of Satan is likely the influence. When Good Works of the Fruits of the Spirit are manifest, the Spirit of God is likely the influence. Someone might ask how does one actually become agape love? How does someone produce Good Works that are Fruits of the Spirit?

**HEBREWS 5:13-14 For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”**

Skill comes through practice and repetition. Intentionally DOING *Good Works* reject the Spirit of Satan and allow the Spirit of God to influence and dominate our thoughts. Jesus judged the *ekklesia* in the townships in Revelation 2-3 by their WORKS<sup>11</sup>. That is also the message of the Parable of the Talents<sup>12</sup>. Judgment to eternal life or death is based upon works because they are a measure of the thoughts of the mind. That is why Good Works are required for SALVATION! Rejecting the Spirit of Satan and embracing the Spirit of God in our thoughts can be as simple as DOING Good Works of the Fruits of the Spirit unto others. Purposeful giving the gifts of joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control is of the Spirit of God—the WAY of agape love and life.

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

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<sup>8</sup> Jer. 29:11.

<sup>9</sup> 1 John 4:8, 16.

<sup>10</sup> Also Matt. 7:20; 12:33; Luke 6:44.

<sup>11</sup> Rev. 2:2, 9, 13, 19, 23; 3:1, 8, 15.

<sup>12</sup> Matt. 25:14-30.

## LISTING OF 70 WORKS OF THE FLESH

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|---|---|--|
| 1) Abomination (detestable, disgusting)             | 24) Extortion (exploitation, predatory, swindlers, violent greed) | 47) Prostitution                                       |
| 2) Adultery   | 25) Filthiness (obscene)  | 48) Quarrels   |
| 3) Anger (violent passion)                          | 26) Filthy language   | 49) Revelry (carousing)                                |
| 4) Backbiting                                       | 27) Foolish (undignified) talking                                 | 50) Reviling (abusers, criticism)                      |
| 5) Bitterness                                       | 28) Fornication   | 51) Rivalry (emulation)                                |
| 6) Blasphemy (evil-speaking)                        | 29) Gossip  | 52) Selfish ambition                                   |
| 7) Boasting   | 30) Greed   | 53) Sexual immorality                                  |
| 8) Clamor (pandemonium, uproar)                     | 31) Hatred (hostility)  | 54) Slander  |
| 9) Coarse jesting (sarcasm)                         | 32) Heresy (factions, denominations, disunions)                   | 55) Sodomites (homosexuals)                            |
| 10) Condemnation                                    | 33) Idolatry  | 56) Spiteful (insulting)                               |
| 11) Contention (quarrels, strife)                   | 34) Impious (God-haters)  | 57) Strife (wrangling debate)                          |
| 12) Covenant breaking (untrustworthy)               | 35) Incest  | 58) Talebearing (tattlers)                             |
| 13) Covetousness (avarice, extortion, fraud, greed) | 36) Jealousy  | 59) Theft  |
| 14) Cowards   | 37) Kidnapping  | 60) Unbelievers (untrustworthy)                        |
| 15) Deceit  | 38) Lewdness (lasciviousness, licentiousness)                     | 61) Uncleaness (satanic)                               |
| 16) Devising evil                                   | 39) Lying (deceit)  | 62) Undiscerning                                       |
| 17) Disobedient                                     | 40) Lust  | 63) Unforgiving  |
| 18) Dissension (sedition)                           | 41) Malice  | 64) Unloving   |
| 19) Drug sorcery (witchcraft)                       | 42) Meddling (busibodies)   | 65) Unmerciful   |
| 20) Drunkenness                                     | 43) Mischievousness (bad character)                               | 66) Unrighteousness (treachery, injustice, wickedness) |
| 21) Effeminate                                      | 44) Murder  | 67) Wantonness   |
| 22) Envy (ill will)                                 | 45) Perjury   | 68) Wickedness (depravity)                             |
| 23) Evil desire                                     | 46) Pride   | 69) Whispering   |
|   |   | 70) Wrath  |

NOTE: Compiled from Rom. 1:29-31; 13:13; Gal. 5:19-21, Eph. 4:29-31; 5:3-5; Col. 3:5, 8; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:9-10; 3:1-5, 11; 5:13 and Rev. 21:8.