The Works of the Flesh and the Fruit of the Spirit

Part I. The Works of the Flesh

Sexual Sins: **Hebrews 13:4:** "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled."

1. Adultery (moicheia) - Sexual unfaithfulness violating the marriage covenant.
   1 Corinthians 6:18: "Flee sexual immorality."
2. Fornication (porneia) –Illicit Sexual conduct contrary to God's institution of marriage.
3. Uncleanness (akatharsia) -All aberrations of impurity in desires, thoughts, and conduct.
   Ephesians 5:3: "Fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you."
4. Lewdness (aselgeia) - Shameless, unrestrained sensual behavior. (Gen 19:1-11, Eph. 4:19)
   Revelation 2:14: "… you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality." (Num 25:1-9)

2 Samuel 11 David and Bathsheba: David commits adultery with Bathsheba, attempts concealment, and arranges Uriah's death.

Godless sins: **Ephesians 5:5:** "…no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

5. Idolatry (eidōlolatria) Giving created things the worship, fear, love, or trust owed to God.
   Exodus 32: Israel worships a calf fashioned by Aaron while Moses is on Sinai.
6. Sorcery (pharmakeia) -Seeking occult power or forbidden knowledge (Deut 18:10-12)
   1 Samuel 28:3–25: Saul consults a medium at Endor to learn the outcome of a battle.

Personal Hatreds/Strife and Wrangling

7. Hatred (echthrai) - Sustained hostility that desires another's harm.
   1 John 3:15: "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer."
8. Contentions (eris) - Quarrelsome strife and antagonistic dispute.
   Proverbs 17:14: "Stop contention before a quarrel starts."
9. Jealousies (zēlos) - Resentful rivalry with desires of superiority
   James 3:14–16: "If you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts..."
10. Outbursts of Wrath (thymoi) - Explosive, uncontrolled eruptions of anger.
    James 1:19–20: "Be ... slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God." (Numbers 20:1–13 Moses Strikes the Rock)

Abram and Lot's Herdsmen (Genesis 13:5–12): Strife arises between the herdsmen;
Saul's Jealousy of David (1 Samuel 18:6–16): Saul resents the people's praise of David

Jealousies and Outbursts

11. Selfish Ambitions (eritheiai) Pursuing personal advantage at others' expense.
    Philippians 2:3–4: "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit."
12. Dissensions (dichostasiai) - Divisive factionalism and unnecessary separation.
    Romans 16:17: "Note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned."
13. Heresies (haireseis) -those formed around false teaching (Galatians 1:6–9; 5:1–12)
    2 Peter 2:1: "False teachers ... will secretly bring in destructive heresies."
14. Envy (phthonoi) - Resentment at another person's blessings or success. (Mt 27:18)
    Proverbs 14:30: "Envy is rottenness to the bones."
15. Murders (phonoi) - Unjust taking of human life. (Genesis 4:1–16 - Cain and Abel)
    2 Samuel 15:1–12: Absalom flatters petitioners at the gate to gain supporters for his revolt.
    Numbers 16: Korah and his allies gather a faction against Moses and Aaron.

Sprees

16. Drunkenness (methai) Intoxication through excessive drinking and loss of self-control.
    Ephesians 5:18: "Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation."
    Genesis 9:20–27: Noah becomes drunk from wine and lies exposed in his tent.
17. Revelries (kōmoi) Riotous, disorderly feasting and sensual excess(orgies).
    Romans 13:13: "Let us walk properly ... not in revelry and drunkenness."
    Daniel 5: At a great feast Belshazzar drinks from sacred temple vessels and praises idols before receiving a warning of judgment.
18. And the like (Genesis 6:5–13 - Human Wickedness Before the Flood)
    1 Thessalonians 5:22: "Abstain from every form of evil."

Part II. The Ninefold Fruit of the Spirit

Filled by the Spirit

1. Love (agapē) - Self-giving concern for the neighbor's good, modeled by Christ's sacrifice.
    1 John 3:16: "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us."
    Luke 10:25–37: A Samaritan stops for a wounded stranger, tends his wounds, and pays for his care despite the hostility between their peoples.
2. Joy (chara) - Gladness rooted in Christ and His saving work, not mere circumstances.
    John 16:22: "Your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you**."**
    Acts 16:22–34: Beaten and imprisoned at Philippi, Paul and Silas pray and sing hymns at midnight; their witness reaches the jailer and his household.
3. Peace (eirēnē) - Rest and confidence grounded in reconciliation with God through Christ.
    Philippians 4:6–7: "The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
    Mark 4:35–41: The disciples panic in a violent storm while Jesus sleeps; He commands the wind and sea to be still.

Dealing with Men

4. Longsuffering (makrothymia) - Patience toward people who provoke or wrong us; slowness to anger. Patience refuses revenge and entrusts judgment to God.
    Ephesians 4:1–2: "With longsuffering, bearing with one another in love."
5. Kindness (chrēstotēs) - Compassionate goodwill expressed in generous words and deeds.
    Eph. 4:32: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another."
    2 Samuel 9:1–13: David restores land to Jonathan's disabled son Mephibosheth and gives him a place at the royal table.
6. Goodness (agathōsynē) - Moral uprightness that does what pleases God and resists evil.
    Genesis 39:7–23: Joseph refuses Potiphar's wife because adultery would be a sin against God, though his refusal leads to imprisonment.

Before God

7. Faithfulness (pistis) - Steadfast loyalty and reliability in duties entrusted by God.

1 Corinthians 4:2: "It is required in stewards that one be found faithful."

Daniel 6:1–23: Daniel continues praying despite a royal decree and is thrown into the lions' den.

Before the World

8. Gentleness (prautēs) - Humbleness that corrects/restores without needless harshness.

Galatians 6:1: "Restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness."

Before Self

9. Self-Control (enkrateia) - restraint of appetites and impulses in obedience to God.

1 Corinthians 9:25–27: "Everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things."

Part III. The Opposites: Comparative Charts

Fruit of the Spirit	Opposing works of the flesh	Nature of the contrast
Love	Hatred, envy, murders	Love seeks the neighbor's good rather than harm.
Joy	Envy, jealousies	Joy rejoices in God's gifts rather than resenting another's blessings.
Peace	Contentions, dissensions, heresies	Peace seeks unity in truth rather than quarrels or factions.
Longsuffering	Outbursts of wrath, hatred	Patience bears offenses rather than erupting in anger.
Kindness	Hatred, murders	Mercy benefits the neighbor rather than injuring him.
Goodness	Idolatry, sorcery, uncleanness	Goodness seeks God's will rather than moral or spiritual corruption.
Faithfulness	Adultery, fornication, heresies	Faithfulness honors sacred obligations and God's truth.
Gentleness	Wrath, contentions, selfish ambitions	Gentleness restores humbly rather than dominating.
Self-Control	Lewdness, drunkenness, revelries	Self-control restrains sinful desires and excess.

Specific Opposites and Their Biblical Illustrations

Work of the flesh	Opposing fruit	Illustration of the opposite
Adultery	Faithfulness	Joseph resists temptation — Genesis 39:7–12
Fornication	Self-Control	Abstain from sexual immorality — 1 Thess. 4:3–5
Uncleanness	Goodness	Daniel resolves not to defile himself — Daniel 1:8
Lewdness	Self-Control	Joseph flees temptation — Genesis 39:12
Idolatry	Faithfulness	Three men refuse the image — Daniel 3:16–18
Sorcery	Faithfulness	Ephesian converts renounce magic — Acts 19:18–20
Hatred	Love	David spares Saul — 1 Samuel 24
Contentions	Peace	Abram makes peace with Lot — Genesis 13:8–9
Jealousies	Joy	Jonathan supports David — 1 Sam 18:1–4; 23:16–18
Outbursts of Wrath	Longsuffering	David restrains vengeance — 1 Samuel 25:23–35
Selfish Ambitions	Gentleness	John the Baptist exalts Christ — John 3:30
Dissensions	Peace	Jerusalem Council — Acts 15
Heresies	Faithfulness	Bereans examine the Scriptures — Acts 17:10–12
Envy	Kindness	Jonathan protects David — 1 Samuel 20
Murders	Love	Jesus prays for His persecutors — Luke 23:34
Drunkenness	Self-Control	Timothy told to use a little wine. — 1 Tim. 5:23
Revelries	Self-Control	Believers abandon former excesses — 1 Peter 4:3–4

Part IV. Things to Remember

Works versus fruit. Paul speaks of "works" of the flesh but the "fruit" (singular) of the Spirit. The virtues are the unified result of the Spirit's work, not nine independent achievements.

Outward deeds and inward desires. The works include overt acts such as murder and drunkenness as well as hidden attitudes such as envy and hatred. Compare Matthew 5:21–30.

Sins often grow together. David's adultery leads to deception and murder; Saul's jealousy to hatred; Joseph's brothers' envy to betrayal. Sin is not safely confined to isolated acts.

A serious warning. Galatians 5:21 warns that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. This does not mean Christians earn justification by their conduct; it warns against an unrepentant life.

The ongoing struggle. Galatians 5:16–17 describes the conflict between flesh and Spirit.

The believer has a new heart. Galatians 5:24 says those belonging to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Justification and sanctification. The believer is justified through faith in Christ, not by producing virtues. The Holy Spirit creates faith and then brings forth new obedience.

Daily repentance means the drowning of the old Adam and the rising of the new man.

John 15:1-5
"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3"You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

-Be conscious of the sinful desires ... as not to give in to them. Ps 32:5-6
-Resist before the desire becomes word/deed. Rom 8:13 live/mortify
-Great weakness -... Rom 7:21-25 shows what sinful nature wants
-Christians complain about the rebellion, conflict and captivity to sin Ps 143:2 Ps 130:1-4
-Do not despair, when another battle begins.
-Do not be surprised or frightened at that which is within you. (conflict felt)
-When you follow the spirit, the flesh will hinder.
1. Walk by spirit (word: faith and love)
2. Resist flesh, say No to works of flesh.
3. If fail, confess and receive forgiveness

-Sin which remains is not imputed to believers. (lusts of sinful nature)

Luther

p80 "It is one thing to be aroused by the flesh and not to tolerate its desires any further, but to walk and to withstand by the Spirit; it is quite another thing to give in to the flesh and to do its works with a smug air, to persist in them..."

p80 "Nevertheless, it sometimes happens that saints may lapse and gratify the desires of their flesh... But no matter how great these sins were, they were not committed intentionally, they were committed because of weakness. In addition, when they were admonished these men did not persist stubbornly in their sins but returned to their senses. Later on (6:1) Paul commands that such men be received, instructed, and restored, saying: "If a man is overtaken, etc."

p81 "... this passage provides us with the greatest possible comfort when it tells us that it is impossible to live without any desires and temptations of the flesh, in fact, without sin.

Remember:

1. If we are ignorant of or deny the weakness of believers, we will have a hypocritical righteousness.
2. When we are aware of our uncleanness of flesh, it keeps us from being puffed up.
3. We strive to avoid the works; we can't avoid the desires.
4. We don't trust in our own righteousness.
5. A Christian struggles with sin, continually.

Thoughts

Philippians 4:8-9 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—**meditate on these things**. 9The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Ephesians 5:19 …speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody **in your heart** to the Lord,

Words

1 Thessalonians 5:12-22 And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. 14Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. 15See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. 16Rejoice always, 17pray without ceasing, 18in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19Do not quench the Spirit. 20Do not despise prophecies. 21Test all things; hold fast what is good. 22Abstain from every form of evil.

James 5:13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.

1 Corinthians 14:15 What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.

Deeds

Matthew 21:28-32 "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' 29"**He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went.** 30"Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. 31"Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. 32"For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.

1 Peter 5:6-10 Therefore **humble yourselves** under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7**casting all your care upon Him**, for He cares for you. 8**Be sober**, **be vigilant**; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9**Resist him**, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. 10But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.