

Relational Sin Part 1: The Works of the Flesh

Calvary Chapel Nuevo, Pastor Dave, Sunday 8/2/26

Galatians 5:16-26; 2 Corinthians 12:20

M.I.P. Relational sin begins in the flesh, the enemy exploits it, and the body is damaged by it; but the answer is powerful: the flesh must be crucified and the believer must walk in the Spirit.

Relational Sin Defined

Relational sins are **attitudes, words, and actions** that violate Christlike love, distort the truth, wound others, recruit allies, and damage the unity of Christ's body.

Relational pain is not relational sin. Being hurt is not sin; disagreement handled in love is not division; asking for real help is not gossip; reporting misconduct to people who can help resolve it is not slander; necessary boundaries are not unforgiveness; and unity does not mean uniformity, silence, or pretending nothing is wrong.

1. Relational Sin Starts in the Flesh - Galatians 5:16-21

1. Galatians 5 gives both the diagnosis and the answer: the battle is the sinful nature against the Holy Spirit in us.
2. Scripture calls these relational sins the works of the flesh (our sinful nature); hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, and envy.
4. We must apply these definitions to ourselves first, because every one of us has missed the mark relationally.

Before I diagnose relational sin around me, where is the flesh ruling in my attitude, words, or actions?

2. Gossip and Slander Spread the Damage - 2 Corinthians 12:20

1. Gossip and slander are often the delivery system for the works of the flesh.
2. Gossip is sharing damaging, private, or inflammatory information with someone who is not part of the problem or part of the biblical solution.
3. Slander is speaking damaging accusations, distorted truth, exaggerations, or unverified claims in a way that damages another person's character or reputation.
4. Like adding fuel to a fire, gossip and slander spread relational damage until unity, fellowship, and communion are dismantled.

Gossip spreads the story without a biblical purpose or concern for the whole truth. Slander shapes the story to damage the person.

3. The Warning Is Serious - Galatians 5:21

1. Paul is not saying that if you have ever committed one of these sins, you are not saved. If that were true, none of us would have hope.

2. The key is “living that sort of life” - a life characterized by the works of the flesh without conviction, repentance, surrender, or the Spirit’s transforming work.
3. There is a big difference between a believer who is convicted by relational sin and a person who is comfortable living in relational sin.
4. The question is not, “Have I ever sinned this way?” The question is, “Am I continuing to live this way without conviction, repentance, and surrender?”

Big Truth: The works of the flesh cannot be overcome by the flesh (trying harder). God’s answer is the life-transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

4. The Answer Is Powerful - Galatians 5:22-26

1. God does not expose relational sin to shame us. He exposes it to deliver us.
2. The answer to the works of the flesh is not trying harder or learning to hide our sin better.
3. The Holy Spirit produces fruit that changes how we see people, speak to people, respond to people, handle offense, handle conflict, handle correction, and handle pain.
4. The flesh does not need a better excuse. Because we belong to Christ, our flesh belongs at the cross.

5. Walk by the Spirit in Real Relationships - Galatians 5:25-26

1. Following the Spirit’s leading means letting Him lead our relationships, conversations, reactions, texts, phone calls, and assumptions when we are hurt.
2. We stop long enough to let the Spirit check our flesh before the flesh takes over our attitude, mouth, or actions.
3. In every circumstance where relational sin is possible, be quick to surrender your feelings, slow to speak your mind, and determined to control your actions.
4. Before addressing relational sin around me, I must crucify my own flesh and bring my own relational sin to the cross.

Key Cross References

- Galatians 5:16-26 - the works of the flesh, the fruit of the Spirit.
- 2 Corinthians 12:20 - slander and gossip named with church-damaging relational sins.
- Proverbs 26:20 - gossip fuels quarrels like wood feeds a fire.
- Ephesians 4:29-32 - put away slander and speak words that build up and give grace.
- Colossians 3:8-14 - put off the works of the flesh; put on the fruit of the Spirit.
- John 15:4-5 - lasting fruit comes from abiding in Christ.

The first place relational sin must be addressed is in my own life.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Get the series, “The Bait of Satan” at wordbymail.com