

Weekly Reflection – “Sowing and Reaping: There’s Only Two Fields”

Galatians 6:6-10

“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.”

Galatians 6:7 ESV

I think verse 7 is the verse that the surrounding verses are built on. Paul uses a very straightforward, easy to understand metaphor from the agricultural world; you reap what you sow. If you plant an apple seed, you get an apple tree. If you plant a corn seed, you get corn. Paul informs us that this unchanging agricultural law of sowing and reaping that God has built into the created world, is also a spiritual law. This is an immutable law not only in the created world but also in the spiritual world.

And notice that Paul, being aware how easily we ignore this changeless law, prefaces this immutable law with a warning. “Do not be deceived.” Like all warnings in scripture this warning is an expression of God’s mercy, meant to protect us from our vulnerability to deception. We can be so easily duped by our culture and so easily deceive ourselves into thinking that we can sow one thing and get something else. But this verse is warning us of how serious a matter this is. How serious it is to understand that what you sow is what you will reap. To disregard this, or to think you are not under this law is to mock God. And though it can appear that people are getting away with disregarding this unchangeable law of sowing and reaping; make no mistake no one gets away with mocking God. Each of us will reap what we sow, and if you think you will reap something different than what you sow, Paul says to you, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked.”

The law of reaping and sowing is immutable irregardless of whether we believe it or not. It's like the guy who thought he could deny the law of gravity, just didn't believe it applied to him, and so he decided to prove it. He climbed to the top of a twenty-story building and dove off. His last words were heard as he sailed past a guy on the third floor, "Hey, nothing's happened yet!" Yet many Christians believe they can sow to the flesh, live to suit themselves in this life, and still reap a joyous harvest for heaven. It just won't work.

Who I am today, who you are today, is the fruit of the seeds we have planted in the past. The seeds that you and I sow today will form and shape the person that we become in the future. This is the biblical explanation behind anyone you know who is godly and mature. Think for a minute about the people that you admire for their spiritual maturity. Here's good news for you and me, they do not have some secret formula that you and I do not have access to. What they have recognized is that whatever one sows one will also reap, and they have chosen to sow to the Spirit.

***“Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.” Galatians 6:6
ESV***

Paul applies this law of sowing and reaping to our giving. The law of sowing and reaping applies not only to how you give to support those who teach but to all the ways you use your resources. Are you sowing to the Spirit? Are you using your money for the Kingdom of God? The Bible very clearly teaches that we are to use our money to support the advancement of the Gospel. The tithe in the Old Testament is at least a pattern for us to give to support our local church. The early church in Acts and in Corinth give us very clear examples that we are to give generously to meet the needs of others in our local church and community. Where are you sowing your money? Are you sowing to the Spirit, to the things of God; or are you sowing to the flesh, things that won't last?

“For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.” Galatians 6:8 ESV

We are planting seeds all day long, every day; each day is filled with real choices, and each choice is either sowing toward the flesh or toward the Spirit. There is no neutral "field" for our seed choices. Every one of us, at this moment, is progressing toward corruption or eternal life, depending on what we are sowing.

Paul makes it very clear that there are only two fields to sow in, the flesh field or the Holy Spirit field. That's the decision before each of us every day, which field am I going to sow in. Not only is it true that a person can only reap what he sows, he must get it from the same field in which he sows. Don't be deceived that you can sow in the field of the flesh and reap a harvest in the field of the Holy Spirit. Don't be deceived and think you can sow to things of the earth and reap a heavenly harvest.

“Sow a thought, and you reap an act; Sow an act, and you reap a habit; Sow a habit, and you reap a character; Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.” (Samuel Smiles) I think Samuel Smiles is right that the law of sowing and reaping (whether the harvest is good or bad) is set in motion by our thought life. How is your thought life? What do you think about? Are you in the Word of God daily so that God's truth might be in you, renewing your mind, transforming your mind into conformity with the mind of Christ? If not, do not be surprised when thoughts come into your mind that reap an evil act and may even "bloom" into an evil habit.

John Scott explains sowing to the flesh, “To ‘sow to the flesh’ is to pander to it, to pamper, cuddle and stroke it, instead of crucifying it. The seeds we sow are largely thoughts and deeds. Every time we allow our mind to harbor a grudge, nurse a grievance, entertain an impure fantasy, or wallow in self-pity, we are sowing to the flesh. Every time we linger in bad company whose insidious influence we know we cannot resist, every time we lie in bed when we ought to be up and praying, every time we read pornographic literature, every time we take a risk which strains our self-control, we are sowing, sowing, sowing to the flesh. Some Christians sow to the flesh every day and wonder why they do not reap holiness.”

I want to appeal to anyone who right now knows they have been sowing to the flesh to confess your sin to God and turn from your sin. Don't mock God, thinking you can get away with it. If you see yourself reaping the consequences of your sins, stop the self-destructive cycle. Make the most of the rest of your life by running back to the open arms of Jesus. He longs to forgive you and lead you to a way of life that reaps His blessing and reward.

Paul immediately follows the danger of sowing to the flesh with the alternative practice and the amazing promise. ***“BUT the one who sows to the Spirit will reap from the Spirit eternal life.”*** So, if we want a harvest of eternal life, a harvest of the fruit of the Spirit, we must avoid sowing to the flesh and intentionally sow to the Spirit. This is how we grow in godliness, this is how we become more like Jesus, this is God's design for spiritual growth.

Here's the really good news, by the grace of God, you can this moment, regardless of how you have sown in the past, you can start right now to sow to the Spirit and reap eternal life. This eternal life is not just life that lasts forever but it is God's very own life, given to us now.

So how do we sow to the Spirit? Four foundations: The Word of God, prayer, fellowship, and disciple-making.

1. Sow to the Spirit by reading, studying, meditating on, memorizing, listening to, being taught, the Word of God. Discipline (crucify) your flesh and spend time consistently and daily in the Word of God.
2. Sow to the Spirit through prayer. Every time we ask God for help we are sowing to the Spirit. Every time we thank God and praise God we are sowing to the Spirit. When we listen to the

Holy Spirit direct us throughout the day, give us words to speak throughout the day, we are sowing to the Spirit.

3. Sow to the Spirit through fellowship. Being committed to a local church is sowing to the Spirit. ***“So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Galatians 6:10 ESV*** Sow to the Spirit by doing good; real, everyday, practical good. Anytime you do one of the many “one another” commands found in God’s Word you are sowing to the Spirit. Spending time throughout the week with other brothers and sisters in Christ to encourage and be encouraged is sowing to the Spirit.
4. Sow to the Spirit by making disciples of Jesus who make disciples of Jesus. Intentionally invest time into sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ and helping others grow in Jesus and allowing others to help you grow in Jesus Christ. If you are not doing this, I encourage you to pray and ask God who He would have you start spending time with (don’t pray about it too long, pray and open your eyes and see who God places in front of you). Then ask them if they are willing to commit to getting together on a consistent basis, then get to know each other, study the Word of God together, pray together, talk about life together, and help each other grow in Jesus. I would recommend this happens at least weekly and continues for at least 6 months (or longer). If you need or want a resource to help guide you, the church has bought a couple books that have worked well, “The Purple Book”, and “Conversations”. The books are in the office at church. Find someone, make a commitment with each other to meet on a regular basis, start getting together, then commit to each other that you will both find someone else to start the process over.

“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9 ESV

We live in a culture of instant gratification, instant results; but that is not part of the law of sowing and reaping. Paul is encouraging us not to give up, not to grow weary and quit sowing to the Spirit because we are not seeing immediate results. In due season we will reap. Parents, don’t give up sowing into your children. Keep loving them, keep teaching them, keep encouraging them, keep disciplining them, keep pointing them at Jesus, keep displaying Jesus to them. Church, don’t give up sharing the Gospel of Jesus, don’t grow weary of doing good.

“Do not love the world or the things in the world (sowing to the flesh). If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires (reap corruption), but whoever does the will of God (sowing to the Spirit) abides forever (reaps eternal life).” 1 John 2:15-17 ESV