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"You Reap What You Sow"

Galatians 6

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There is a life principle the Bible teaches called the law of "sowing and reaping." This is particularly true for Christians who have a choice about whether they will feed their spirit or their flesh. The spirit is that part within us that is redeemed and eternal; the flesh is unredeemed and temporary. The spirit wants to please the Lord, and the flesh wants to gratify the sinful nature. If we nurture our spiritual nature we will reap eternal life. But if we nurture our fleshly nature, we will reap destruction. In this study, we explore the Biblical principle of sowing and reaping and its application to various aspects of life.

1. **Galatians 6:1-18** – *"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load. Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."*
 - a. **Galatians 6:11** – *"See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!"*
 - i. Paul is believed to have suffered from an eye condition that impaired his vision and led him to write in large letters.

2. The law of sowing and reaping

a. The world's version

i. The world's version of the law of sowing and reaping is "karma."

1. Karma is based on Hinduism.
2. Karma thinks actions return to you like a boomerang.

b. God's law

i. The law of sowing and reaping must be understood through the lens of the two natures described in **Galatians 5**.

1. We have a spirit that wants to please God.
2. We have a flesh nature that wants to live for self.

ii. We must make a choice of which nature we want to feed and nurture.

iii. We will reap from whichever nature we sow to.

1. If you sow to the flesh, you reap "corruption," or **phthora**.

- a. The Greek **phthora** is sometimes translated in some Bibles as "destruction" or "ruin."

2. If you sow to the spirit, you reap "everlasting life," **aiōnios zōē**.

- a. Every breathing person has **bios** life, which is a Greek word used to describe the physical side of being alive.
- b. People only have **zōē** life when they encounter Jesus, who gives us fullness of life.

3. We face God-given rewards or consequences depending on which nature we nurture.

4. **DISCUSS**: Which nature are you nurturing, and how?

3. Three principles of sowing and reaping

a. What you reap is always greater—in quantity or quality—than what you sow.

i. **Hosea 8:7a** – "They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind."

1. The harvest is always greater than the planting.

ii. If you minimize sin, you will gain more consequences than you expected.

1. **Job 4:8** – "Even as I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same."

2. **Proverbs 22:8a** – "He who sows wickedness reaps trouble." (NIV 1984)

iii. Even the little good that we do gains for us eternal rewards.

1. **DISCUSS**: When have you been surprised by the harvest of your thoughts, words, and actions?

b. The time it takes to harvest (what you reap) is considerably longer than the time it takes to plant (what you sow).

i. We must learn to have the patience of a farmer; consequences do not come immediately.

1. Do not think because you are not facing immediate judgment that you are getting away with your sin.
2. Do not be frustrated when you do not see the benefits of living for the Lord.
3. **DISCUSS:** When have your thoughts, words, and actions led to rewards years down the road?
- ii. The principle of waiting on the harvest applies to the Lord's second coming.
 1. **James 5:7** – *"Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains."* (NIV)
 2. **DISCUSS:** How are you waiting expectantly for the Lord's return?
- c. The law of sowing and reaping applies equally to both benefits and consequences.
 - i. Paul seemed more focused on sowing to the Spirit and reaping a good harvest because of how he ended **Galatians 6:**
 1. **Galatians 6:9–10** – *"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."*
 2. Do not give up. Press on.
 - a. **DISCUSS:** In what basic day-to-day things can you sow righteousness?
 - b. We do not do good to gain benefits from the Lord, but we trust that as we honor the Lord with our lives, He blesses us in greater measure.
 - ii. Sow righteousness; reap rewards.
 1. **Galatians 6:7–9** – *"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."*
 2. **Proverbs 11:18** – *"The wicked man does deceptive work, but he who sows righteousness will have a sure reward."*
 - iii. Sow tears; reap joy.
 1. **Psalms 126:5–6** – *"Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing,*

shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”

2. There are seasons when we pour out our hearts to God in grief, and God sees our tears.
 - a. **DISCUSS:** With hindsight, how have you seen God answer the prayers you brought to Him in tears?
3. **Psalms 42:3** – *“My tears have been my food day and night.”*
 - a. God keeps a record of our tears.
 - b. **DISCUSS:** Looking back, how did pouring out your heart to God bring you closer to Him?
- iv. Sow generously; reap abundantly.
 1. **2 Corinthians 9:6–10** – *“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: ‘He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.’ Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness.”*
 2. God is generous to the generous.
 3. This passage does not promote giving to get, like some TV preachers do.
 4. A good harvest does not always mean God rewards us in material possessions, though He can.
 5. **DISCUSS:** In what ways has God blessed you, materially and immaterially?
 6. Those living a stingy life will reap a stingy harvest.
- v. Sow peace; reap righteousness.
 1. **James 3:18** – *“Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.”* (1984 NIV)
 2. **DISCUSS:** Are you a peacemaker? How can you go into conflicts with the goal of working toward peace instead of working toward proving you are right?
- vi. Sow death; reap life.
 1. **1 Corinthians 15:36–44** – *“Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to*

each seed its own body. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

2. When Believers die, they will gain a glorified body like Jesus has.
3. **DISCUSS:** When has this spiritual principle brought you hope?

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James (NKJV)