

THE LAW OF THE HARVEST Galatians 6:7-9

The most important verse in the Bible is the first verse. Genesis 1:1 says: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” The opening statement of the Bible declares God is the sole and sovereign creator of the universe. The God who created the world sustains the world. God maintains order through natural laws. One such law is THE LAW OF THE HARVEST. Life is seasonal. In the spring, seed is planted in the ground. In the fall, the planted seed produces a harvest. Ecclesiastes 3:2b says there is “a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted.”

In Genesis 3:17-18, The Lord said to Adam, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.” Because we live in a sin-cursed world, sometimes the ground produces weeds instead of wheat. Yet THE LAW OF THE HARVEST remains inviolable. In Genesis 8:22, The Lord promised Noah, “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”

This is THE LAW OF THE HARVEST. Seedtime is followed by harvest. It is true in the natural world. It is also true in the spiritual world. Galatians 6:7-9 says: “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 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. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not lose heart.”

Paul teaches this principle of sowing and reaping after instructing his readers to care for their pastor-teachers. Verse 6 says: “Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.” The principle of sowing and reaping addresses how members of the local church treat their spiritual leaders. But it makes a much bigger point: **You must answer to God for how you live your life.** THE LAW OF THE HARVEST is not about financial prosperity. It is about divine reciprocity. You must answer to God for how you live your life. Galatians 6:7-9 teaches three principles to live by in light of the Law of the Harvest.

I. YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW.

Verse 7 says: “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.” This verse makes a threefold statement about the Law of the Harvest.

A. A WARNING ABOUT THE POWER OF SIN

Verse 7 begins: “Do not be deceived.” The word “deceived” means to stray away from truth, virtue, or safety. False teachers deceived the Galatians by preaching another gospel that claimed works must be added to faith in Christ for

salvation to be complete. In Galatians 3:1, Paul writes, "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?" False teachers are in the business of deceit. 2 Timothy 3:13 says "evil people and imposters will go on from bad to worse, deceived and being deceived." In Matthew 24:24 Jesus, "For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect."

We must remain vigilant against false teachers who would deceive us. But the concern of this text is not about false teachers. The warning here is about self-deception. This is the power of sin. Jeremiah 7:19 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" The worst advice any one can give you is to follow your heart! Your heart is deceitful, sick, and beyond understanding. Don't trust yourself! Hebrews 3:12-13 says, "Take care, brothers, lets there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

B. AN AFFIRMATION OF THE NATURE OF GOD

Verse 7 says: "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked..." The word "mocked" means "to turn one's nose up at someone." It is the picture of one who shows respect with his words but contempt with his actions. The undiscerning person missed the covert message in the body language and is mocked. But God is not mocked. CLARENCE JORDAN'S Cotton Patch Version reads: "Don't let anybody pull the wool over your eyes - you can't turn up your nose at God!" Jude 18 says: "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passion." Until the Lord Jesus Christ returns, people will try to mock God. No one will succeed. God may let you get by. But he will not let you get away. Numbers 32:23 says, "But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out." God is not mocked. PHILLIP GRAHAM RYKEN said it well: "People who think that they can fool with God are only fooling themselves."

C. A REMINDER OF THE FACTS OF LIFE

Verse 7 says: "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap." This is THE LAW OF THE HARVEST. It is not just that reaping follows sowing. It is that you will reap what you sow. Fruit grows after its kind. You cannot plant one thing and receive something different when harvest comes. You reap what you sow. Job 4:8 says, "As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble will reap the same." The sins you think you are burying are seeds you are planting. It's coming up again! You reap what you sow. You reap more than you sow. Hosea 8:7 says, "For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind."

God is sovereign. Yet the sovereignty of God does not eliminate human freewill. God's sovereign authority operates through the choices we make. God has

established the world in such a way that you reap what you sow. In a real sense, you determine how you want God to treat you by how you live your life. Sow a thought; reap an action. Sow an action; reap a habit. Sow a habit; reap a character. Sow a character; reap a destiny.

Proverbs 22:6 says: "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it." The seeds planted in childhood often shape what a person becomes in adulthood. A child that is trained to follow the ways of God will become an adult that follows the ways of God. But a child that is permitted to have his own way will become a man that is determined to have his own way. Proverbs 12:14 says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." This is why parents must bring up our children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. And this is why young people must not waste your life in sin. Sin produces guilt, judgment, and scars. The blood of Jesus removes the guilt and satisfies the judgment. But it may not remove the scars. You reap what you sow.

II. PRESENT CHOICES HAVE ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES.

Verse 8 explains the principle stated in verse 7: "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." The emphasis of this verse is on our personal accountability to God. We live in a society of victims. People refuse to take personal responsibility. Something or someone else is always the reason for the choices we make. But no matter how much you blame people, events, and factors for what is not right in your life, you must reap what you sow. You cannot control what you reap after you have sowed. But you can control what you reap by where you sow. There are two places you are can sow – to the flesh or to the Spirit. Where are you sowing your life? Choose wisely. Your present choices have eternal consequences.

A. SOWING TO THE FLESH REAPS CORRUPTION.

Verse 8 says: "For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption..." The word "flesh" is used ethically, not literally. It is not the human body. It is the fallen human nature that is governed by sin. In salvation, we receive a new nature. But the old nature wars against the new nature. Galatians 5:17 says: "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do." There are times when we sow to the flesh. We live according to our passions. We caress our sinful inclinations, rather than crucifying them. JOHN R.W. STOTT wrote: "Every time we allow our mind to harbor a grudge, nurse a grievance, entertain an impure fantasy, wallow in self-pity, we are slowing 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 that strains our self-control, we are sowing, sowing, sowing, to the flesh."

This is why Christians struggle with personal holiness. You cannot sow to the flesh everyday and expect to reap godliness. Christlikeness is the direct result of where you sow. Verse 8 says: “For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption.” The term “corruption” refers to death, decay, or destruction. The unsaved person will suffer eternal punishment for his sin. But the saved person will also give account to God. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.” The Christian cannot lose his salvation. But you can lose your eternal rewards if you waste your life.

Verse 8 is about the wrath of God. God does not have to strike you with a lightning bolt to punish you. God has established THE LAW OF THE HARVEST so that life will catch up with you. Verse 8 says: “For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption.” The flesh is the object of pleasure and the source of pain. If you live to please your flesh, your flesh will turn on you and ruin your life. We are not so much punished for our sins as we are punished by our sins.

Eskimos hunt wild foxes by coating the blade of their knives with blood. They freeze it. Then they put another coat of blood on the knife and then stick it in the ground, shaft first. The smell of the blood attracts the fox that licks the blood off the knife until he dies. The fox never recognizes that at some point he is no longer licking blood off the blade. He is licking his own blood as he cuts himself on the blade. The Eskimos do not kill the foxes as much as they set up the foxes to kill themselves. This is what happens when you live to please the flesh.

B. SOWING TO THE SPIRIT REAPS ETERNAL LIFE.

Verse 8 says: “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.” THE LAW OF THE HARVEST is presented here as a warning to those who live to please the flesh. But there also good news here: “the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life” The flesh is an enemy of the soul we cannot defeat on our own. But in salvation, God the Holy Spirit takes up complete and permanent resident in the heart of the Christian.

The Holy Spirit enables us to live in the freedom of Christ, without using it as an opportunity for the flesh. Galatians 5:16 says: “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.” Galatians 5:18 says, “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” Galatians 5:22-23 says: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” Galatians 5:25 says, “If we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” God the Holy Spirit can and will enable you to conquer the flesh. But you must sow to the spirit.

Verse 8 says: “but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.” This does not mean you can earn eternal life by living spiritually. Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, plus or minus nothing. But the evidence of true conversion is a willingness to submit your life to

the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The one who sows to the flesh lives with assurance that he will reap eternal life. "Eternal life" is quality of life, not just duration of life. In John 10:10, Jesus says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they might have life and have it abundantly." New life in Christ is so abundant it requires eternity to experience it. John 4:36 says, "Already the one who reaps is receive wages and gather fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper may rejoice together." Let me ask you again: Where are you sowing your life?

**YOU MAY BUILD GREAT CATHEDRALS LARGE OR SMALL,
YOU CAN BUILD SKYSCRAPERS GRAND AND TALL,
YOU MAY CONQUER ALL THE FAILURES OF THE PAST,
BUT ONLY WHAT YOU DO FOR CHRIST WILL LAST.**

III. HARVEST DOES NOT HAPPEN IN A HURRY.

Verse 9 says, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." This is a word of encouragement for the one who sows to the Spirit. Encouragement is needed because harvest does not happen in a hurry. You plant your seed. But you do not bring in the harvest the next day. It takes many long days of sunshine and many wet nights of rainfall before anything even breaks grounds. What do you do in the meantime?

A. THE CONSTANT TEMPTATION WE RESIST (V. 9A).

Verse 9 says, "And let us not grow weary of doing good." This verse summarizes the Christian duty as "doing good." Verse 10 commands, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." Verse 9, however, is not a command. It assumes the life of true Christians is characterized by doing good for others. Real Christians are do-gooders. But when the reward does not follow the investment as quickly as we think it should, we are prone to become tired of sowing, frustrated with waiting, and anxious for the harvest. JOHN BROWN wrote: "Many Christians are like children; they would sow and reap the same day." Verse 9 exhorts us to resist this childish temptation: "And let us not be weary in well doing." You may grow weary while doing good. But you must not grow weary of doing good. 1 Corinthians 15:58 says: "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

B. THE CORE TRUTH WE BELIEVE.

Verse 9 says, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap." The key phrase of this verse is "we shall reap." Everything else in the verse revolves around the core truth that we shall reap. This is God's word to the

wear: "Hold on, harvest is coming!" The wait may seem unbearable, but harvest is coming. The grass may be greener on the other side of the fence, but harvest is coming. The hand may seem barren, the seed may seem powerless, and the weeds may seem unmovable, but harvest is coming." It comes in "due season." It comes at the set and proper time. It comes according to God's perfect time. In due season we shall reap. Psalm 126:5-6 says, "Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him."

**SOWING IN THE MORNING, SOWING SEEDS OF KINDNESS
SOWING IN THE NOON-TIDE AND IN THE DEWY EVE
WAITING FOR THE HARVEST AND THE TIME OF REAPING
WHEN WE SHALL COME REJOICING, BRINGING IN THE SHEAVES**

C. THE CRUCIAL TEST WE FACE.

Galatians 6:9 begins with an exhortation: "And let us not grow weary of doing good." It explains why we should not grow weary of doing good: "for in due season we will reap." Then it closes with a qualification: "if we do not give up." This final clause emphasizes the point of the opening clause. We may all be tempted to grow weary of doing good. But there is only thing that can stop you from reaping the harvest in due season is if you faint, lose heart, or give up.

- **Satanic attacks cannot stop you from reaping the harvest.**
- **Heavy burdens cannot stop you from reaping the harvest.**
- **Difficult circumstances cannot stop you from reaping the harvest.**
- **Inadequate resources cannot stop you from reaping the harvest.**
- **Hostile people cannot stop you from reaping the harvest.**
- **Vicious lies cannot stop you from reaping the harvest.**
- **Personal failure cannot stop you from reaping the harvest.**

My father told a story about a sharecropper and his son who worked the fields in low lands valley. The rains would often send floods that ruined the crops. The father told the son that the next time it happened he was leaving for good. The father encouraged the son to be patient. That next season the owner of the land took a tour. When he saw where the father and son were located, he ordered his man to move them from the low lands to the hilltop. God sits high and looks low. If you are patient, he knows when to move and where to move and how to move in your life.

**I'M PRESSING ON THE UPWARD WAY,
NEW HEIGHTS I'M GAINING EVERY DAY;
STILL PRAYING AS I'M ONWARD BOUND,
"LORD, PLANT MY FEET ON HIGHER GROUND."**

**MY HEART HAS NO DESIRE TO STAY,
WHERE DOUBTS ARISE AND FEARS DISMAY;
THOUGH SOME MAY DWELL WHERE THOSE ABOUND,**

MY PRAYER, MY AIM, IS HIGHER GROUND.

**LORD, LIFT ME UP AND LET ME STAND,
BY FAITH, ON HEAVEN'S TABLELAND,
A HIGHER PLANE THAN I HAVE FOUND;
LORD, PLANT MY FEET ON HIGHER GROUND.**