

You reap what you sow

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[0 : 00] Music Galatians 6 verse 7! Be not deceived, God is not mocked.

! For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.! For he that soweth to his flesh shall off the flesh reap corruption. But he that soweth to the Spirit shall off the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Be not deceived, I am imparting truth to you. Undeniable truth, what God's book says is truth. It is the truth. And this is a truth here tonight.

A truth from God's Word. A truth from the book of truth. A truth that is an undeniable principle. A law, if you like. The law of seed time and harvest.

[1 : 12] The law of seed time and harvest. This truth, this law, is inescapable. And it's evident in the natural world. It's evident all around us.

And it's a commonplace thing that sometimes we don't even think of because it's so obvious. God is not mocked. It starts here. God is not mocked.

In other words, you can't fool God. You can't fool him. You can't outsmart him. You can't outwit him. God knows what you're doing. He knows you through and through.

He knows everything about you and me. Yet, despite that, some people think that they can fool God. They think they can fool God.

They think that they can sin with impunity. In other words, without any consequences. They think they can just sin and there's no consequence to sin.

[2 : 06] And it's a big lie. Really, it's a big lie today. And it's evident in popular culture. Here's a bit of a quote to illustrate what I'm talking about today.

It seems like rarely are there any consequences for sin. So, the drunks are always funny drunks. They are the life of the party, loved by all.

They don't seem to get in wrecks and kill people like they do in real life. They don't fail in their jobs and get fired. They don't turn their homes into hell holes.

Sexual immorality is always romantic. Talking about in the movies. Romantic, glamorous, exciting and airbrushed fun. Teenagers don't get pregnant like in the real world.

No one gets a venereal disease. Single mothers don't live in abject poverty. That's what some people think. This is the world that some people think. The quote goes on.

[3 : 07] Adultery doesn't lead to divorce and heartbroken children. It's just an affair. If there is a divorce, it is happy for all. That's what some people say. If there is an abortion, there are no regrets.

Life is painless. Sin has no downside. The whole culture screams at our youth. Do what you feel like doing. If you have an itch, scratch it.

If you have a desire, fulfil it. If it feels good, do it. But listen to what God says. Don't be deceived. God is not mocked.

You will reap what you sow. End quote. There's a lot of truth there, isn't there? The world just airbrushes sin. You know, just photoshops it if you like.

It just makes it all look okay. And it puts it in nice kind of words like, instead of adultery, they call it an affair. Sort of makes it sound a little bit harmless in some ways, doesn't it?

[4 : 09] And as we talked about drunks and this kind of happy-go-lucky life that people lead, thinking there's no consequences to their sin.

But they're dead wrong because it's obvious that there is. There obviously is a consequence to our sin. You reap what you sow. And so, some people seem, sadly though, to have this view that they pay no attention to their souls.

They live with abandon. And they have no thought for the consequences of their actions. But friends, tonight, there are consequences. There are consequences.

We will reap what we sow. We will reap what we sow. People think they can mock God. They can treat God with contempt.

As if they can fool God. They can hide their sin. But the Bible says that your sin will find you out. And there is no troubling sense of meaninglessness in some people.

[5 : 15] They give no thought to eternity. But friends, God is not mocked. God is not mocked. They will reap what they sow. And tonight, a question I'd like to pose and hopefully help you answer tonight is this.

How can I be a more fruitful Christian? How can I be a more fruitful Christian? I'd like to try and help you answer that question. The answer, really, in simple terms is, we reap what we sow.

We reap what we sow. We reap what we sow. If we're not a fruitful Christian, it's about the sowing. That is the question, the problem. People may wonder and ask the question, why don't I see more holiness in my life?

You know, I've been a Christian for some time. I don't see the fruit. I don't see the holiness that deep down I'd like to see. It's about the sowing. The sowing is the problem.

Because we reaping what we sow. What matters is what we put in. What we put in, so it will affect what we get out. And it's like that familiar computer phrase.

[6 : 24] You know, garbage in, garbage out. When you put garbage in your computer, you get garbage out. You know, the computer can only really store what is entered into it.

In that analogy, we see it's the same as what we sow is going to lead to what we reap. So, in other words, if you plant a carrot seed, you will not reap a lettuce.

It's obvious, isn't it? If you plant an apple tree, it's not going to bring you oranges. Again, it's plain obvious. And the harvest from our lives is just like that.

Because the harvest is dependent upon what we sow. And a harvest takes work. It takes an intent to get a crop.

But surely, friends today, all of us will have a crop that will show from our lives. What will it be? What will it be for you? The question is, will we hand it to the flesh or will we sow to the spirit?

[7 : 33] Will there be something to show from our lives, from what we've lived? Yes, there will be. It'll be one or the other. It'll be corruption or life everlasting.

Will it be a harvest from the works of the flesh, which is corruption? Or will it be a harvest from the work of the spirit, which is something eternal and precious?

We need to choose wisely in our lives. So, sowing and reaping, it's a law. It's a truth. It's a principle. A simple truth. Whatsoever a man soweth, that he shall also reap.

One thing leads to another. As it's been truly said, sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit.

Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny. A thought leads to an act, leads to a habit, leads to character, leads to destiny.

[8 : 40] There's a cause and effect. There's a consequence to all of our actions in life. In Hosea 10 verse 12, it says, Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy.

Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord till he come and rain righteousness upon you. Ye have ploughed wickedness, ye have reaped in equity.

So, the prophet in Hosea is saying here, sow to yourselves in righteousness. Make that determined effort that what you sow into your life will be righteousness. And the result will be you reap in mercy. God's gracious mercy is going to be the harvest there. Break up your fallow ground. That hard work of tilling the ground and cultivating your life, as it were, is a picture of how it is time to seek the Lord. You know, some have compared that to the breaking up of the heart in repentance, in contrition, in confession unto God. But you break up that fallow ground, that ground that is hard and sterile and stagnant and ineffective, needs to be broken up so that the rain can penetrate and the life can spring forth.

[9 : 53] And then God will rain righteousness upon you. And it goes on, you've ploughed wickedness, you've reaped iniquity. Now, if we're going to plant that harvest of sin, of iniquity, we're going to have a reaping that will be destruction.

So, friends, tonight, the simple truth here is really so elementary, really, is that our actions have consequences. You know, I've seen some people and they've almost blamed God for their lung cancer, despite their smoking.

You think, well, come on, isn't it obvious? You reap what you sow. You reap what you sow. Don't blame God if you get lung cancer and you smoke. You know, honestly, you reap what you sow. Our actions have consequences in all of our lives. And I'm just picking smoking as one example. That's not to say smoking is particularly of our thing, compared to so many things that we can get up to.

Friends, there's a consequence for everything that we do. That's the point. Every thought, every word, every deed that we sow into our lives will either be of the flesh or of the Spirit.

[11:06] One or the other, in effect. And so there's a consequence for sin. What does the word say? The wages of sin is death. And payday is coming.

Payday is coming. We reap what we sow. So think of it for a moment of these two elements, of sowing to the flesh firstly. To sow to the flesh.

God says if you sow to the flesh, you will reap corruption. The flesh speaks of the sinful nature. If we sow to the flesh, there will be a dread consequence.

The word tells of reaping the whirlwind. There will be a self-destructive aspect here. As we sow to the flesh, as we commit the works of the flesh, there will be a destruction that will flow from that. And to sow to the flesh, it means to do the works of the flesh. So what can we think of this could mean? The flesh.

[12:09] Now, I'll put it to you that our world has an addiction to the flesh. It knows that people want to chase after fleshly things.

That's why worldly advertising is, you know, they sell cars but they've got a half-naked woman draped over the car. Now, what are they doing? What are they trying to sell you? You know, it's to get your attention.

It's satisfying that addiction to the flesh that is endemic in the society that we live in. This sick, materialistic society. It's addicted to the flesh.

There's an addiction to the flesh. What are some of the works of the flesh? You know, there's numbers listed. And some have put them in different categories as to what the works of the flesh are.

They come from the spirit of the world. Things like, in the physical sense, immorality, impurity, sensuality. They're the physical things. Immorality. In the spiritual aspect, there's idolatry and witchcraft.

[13:15] Now, in some countries, it's more blatantly idol worship and witchcraft. But we see that in Adelaide too, in our place here. There's idolatry and witchcraft.

You know, as Westerners, we may not bow down to statues of clay or metal. But we have our idols too, as Australians, don't we?

Things that take God's place in our lives. And relational things too. Things like hatred, discord, jealousy, sinful anger, selfish ambitions, strife and dissensions, heresies and factions and envying. These are all relational kind of works of the flesh. So you've got the physical, immorality. You've got the spiritual, idolatry and witchcraft. And then you've got relational. Things to do with your relationships.

The hatred, the discord, the sinful ambitions and attitudes and heresies and envying. All of these things, promises, are the works of the flesh.

[14:19] They are the sowing to the flesh. You could name many, many more than these. These are just some examples. In some regards to lack of discipline can be a work of the flesh.

We see people inclined to drunkenness and raveling and carousing. You know, they just go from one party to the next, from one pub crawl to the next.

And they've got an addiction as a work of the flesh has got control of their lives. What we sow, we will reap.

What are the seeds that we are sowing in our lives? It does well for us to reflect on this and to take stock and take personal stock before the Lord about all of these things.

Are we sowing seeds of rebellion? It could be in the home life, in our attitudes of life. We could sow idleness.

[15:21] Idleness can be a work of the flesh. It's easy to take the attitude of just coasting along. We know it's not of our works, but it doesn't mean that we're not meant to be active.

Our faith should be alive and active. So idleness can be a seed, a sowing to the flesh. And then on the other side of the coin, busyness can be too.

We can get so busy that we can be unwise, unwisely busy. And you know, sometimes people ask me, how are you?

I'm keeping busy. But that's not always a good thing to do, is it? Now we can be busy, but I'm not productive. Amen. And that can happen spiritually too, can't it? You get busy, but not productive for God.

These are seeds that we've got to watch in our lives, in my life. Seeds of intemperance. Where we don't have temperance. Now self-control, in other words.

[16:22] If we lack self-control, this can be a seed of the flesh. A sowing to the flesh, if you like. False doctrine. False doctrine can be a sowing to the flesh.

What we sow will reap the harvest. What is it that fills our lives? Is it these harmful addictions that we are sowing into our lives?

What about our associations? If we linger in the company of people who would influence us to do evil, this will be deadly for our spiritual lives.

Another area where we can be sowing to the flesh. And it's who you hang around with can influence you to start sowing to the flesh. So guard your company.

Guard your associations. Choose wisely. So what are we busy sowing? Is the question. In Proverbs 6, it says to sow discord, can produce calamity.

[17:19] Now some people sow words of contention and strife. It's like they're always finding some folds. Or finding something to complain about. In Job 4 verse 8, it says, They that plough iniquity and sow wickedness, reap the sowing.

So what does our text say? It says, God is not mocked for whatsoever a man soweth that, shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.

But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. It tells us here, They that sow to the flesh shall reap corruption.

Now, corruption is decaying. That leads to degradation, destruction and death. Corruption, it speaks of a putrid, decomposing corpse.

Corruption, it is rotteness. Now think about it. Let me just illustrate this. Maybe you can smell it. It's that green stuff on your food.

[18:26] It's that dead mouse under the fridge. Corruption, it's the cockroaches around your oven.

Corruption, it speaks of degeneration and decay. Like gone off milk. Gone off milk. If you sow to the flesh, you're going to reap corruption.

It's not very pleasant, is it? They're the kind of word pictures I'd like to get in your mind. When you're thinking about sowing to the flesh, you don't want that corruption. You don't want it.

You get those things in your fridge, you want to get them out and in the bin and clean your fridge.

You know, friends, corruption is ugly. It's vile and it's distasteful and it stings.

And spiritually, it speaks of death. And for some, it will be the perishing in eternal health. Some reap to, some sow to the flesh. They're not saved and they'll perish in eternal health.

[19:24] If you sow to the flesh, you can expect to reap corruption. But rather than chasing after pleasing yourself and being focused on the things of the flesh and being led by the appetites of the flesh, rather, let us seek to please God and feed your spirit.

So we've looked at sowing to the flesh. Let's look now at sowing to the spirit. That's what we want, isn't it? Amen. Isn't that what you want? If you want to be a fruitful Christian, you want to be sowing to the spirit.

Sowing to the spirit. In the parable of the sower, it says that the seed is the word of God. Luke 8 verse 11. Luke 8 verse 11. The seed is the word of God.

In the parable of the sower, the sower went out to sow. Christ explained how the seed that was sown, that produced a harvest, was the word of God.

God's word. And a seed will reproduce after its kind. So if it's God's word that we're speaking into our lives, if it's God's word that we're meditating on and bringing to mind that we're speaking, it will produce truth.

[20:35] Now in this world where there's so much falsehood and error and confusion, we need truth today. So we need to sow God's word.

God's word. Like the sower who went out to sow. And God's word will produce things in our lives, good things in our lives. A harvest of God's good things in our lives.

So it's really important to speak God's word. To stand upon God's word. And so I encourage you. I know I've mentioned it before how memorising the Bible is so important.

It's so helpful to you to grow as a Christian. And for those who've maybe not thought of this, try God helping you to hide God's word in your heart.

It'll help you. It'll keep you from sin. It'll keep you on the right track. Try to remember God's word. Take time. I know what helped me as a younger Christian was to write out Bible verses on little cards and keep them to refer to and keep looking at them until it's in the mind.

[21 : 44] It's in the heart. It's hidden away forever in our lives. And God's word is a seed that we can sow and it's a sowing to the spirit. It's a good thing. Sow God's word.

Speak God's word in your life. To sow to the spirit speaks to sowing righteous works. We're promised a sure reward in Proverbs 11 verse 18. Proverbs 11 verse 18 it says, The wicked worketh a deceitful work, but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

So sow righteousness. In other words, choose that which is godly. Choose godly decisions. Choose right decisions for your life. And God says there shall be a sure reward.

A sure reward. It's God's promise for us. So how can we sow to the spirit? We said sow the seed of the word of God into your life. Hunger and thirst after righteousness as we referred to before.

Sow to the spirit. Hunger and thirst for it. Have that appetite. Have that longing, that desire, that wanting to be filled. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

[22 : 54] Let that be your first goal. Let that be your aim in life. And other things are secondary to that. Seek after purity. Seek to please God.

Seek to strengthen yourself in moral discipline. Learn to say no to sin. Say no. Affirm no. When sin tempts you, say no and walk away.

Flee youthful lusts. Seek after purity. Strengthen yourself. Discipline yourself. We're meant to be disciples. It's got the intention of discipline.

There's a discipline to being a disciple. And self-discipline is something that we do well to learn. How do I sow to the spirit? Be in fellowship with others who seek after God.

It will help strengthen your faith. And you can strengthen others too. Because not only will you sow to the spirit in your life, but you can sow to the spirit in other people's lives too.

[23 : 58] As you exhort one another. As we see the day approaching. Be regular in public worship. Be devoted to Bible studies. These are ways that we can sow to the spirit in our lives.

Be generous. Be generous as well. Here's what a preacher Ironside said. He who seeks only to be benefited by others and is not concerned about sharing with them will have a dead sea kind of life. In the dead sea it's a salty sea. And I'm told people can float on it because it's so full of salt that it's affected the consistency of the water.

And the big thing about the dead sea is it's one of the lowest places on the earth and the water cannot float out. It only goes in. And the quote goes on.

It is said that nothing can live in that body of water because it has no outlet. And though millions of tons of fresh water pour into it every week, evaporation and mineral deposits make it so bitter and acrid that it cannot sustain life.

[25 : 02] He who is more concerned about giving to others than about receiving for himself will be constantly fresh and happy in his own experience and will enjoy all the more the good things ministered to him.

So friends today, if you can think of it, be a generous Christian. Now it says it's more blessed to give than to receive. There's a benefit, there's a blessing, there's a joy that we can receive as we give to others.

And so have that generous spirit. It's a way of sowing to the spirit. How is your spiritual commitment? In verse 9, Paul urges us in the context here as it goes on.

And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. Paul urges us, don't grow weary in this work.

As I say, a harvest takes work. The farmer doesn't just sit back and the crop suddenly springs out of the ground. He's got to till it, he's got to water it, he's got to cultivate it, he's got to care for it and manage the crop.

[26 : 11] And it's like that with our Christian lives too. We should cultivate our Christianity. We should not slacken. Don't grow weary, Paul says. Don't tire but re-fire.

Don't weary in well-doing. There's no time for us to slacken off now. It's almost time for the Master to come. And when he finds us watching, working, waiting, faithful.

Don't be weary in well-doing. Redouble your efforts. Christian soldiers here tonight. Redouble your efforts. This is a time to strengthen our hands and to be doubly working as God helps us to, to endure.

And sometimes it's hard work and we can feel weary. It's natural for all of us to have times of weariness, maybe even spiritual weariness. But the Word says, if need be, sow in tears.

Sow in tears. Sow when you don't feel like sowing. Sow when you feel like crying, sow. Sow in tears and you will reap in joy. We don't have to feel like it.

[27 : 22] We just have to be faithful. Be faithful, brother. Be faithful, sister. Sow in tears and you will reap in joy. Keep on sowing. You are planting seeds every day in your lives.

Every day you are sowing seeds. Continually sowing. Whether you realise it or not. Into your life and into others who are watching you.

And following you. Because we're all leaders. Everyone is especially parents. We're all leaders. People watching us and walking in our footsteps.

Following us. Or at least whether they're following us or not. They're taking heed. They're taking note. And they're watching.

And friends, you are sowing one kind of seed or another. And your reaping will be in accord with your sowing. So the more you plant, the more you will see for it.

[28 : 21] The question is, what will you sow? Well, it's an important question. And only you can answer that for yourself. What will you sow in your life?

You know, the Bible says every one of us shall give account of ourselves to God. I can't give account for you. You can't give account for me. But we'll all stand personally to give personal account.

Personal account. What will you sow? Choose to sow to the Spirit. Choose to sow to the Spirit, to the Holy Spirit. How will you sow? In 2 Corinthians 9 verse 6, it says, But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly.

And he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. You will reap in accord with that which you sow. Now, of course, some faith prosperity preachers say, Send me all your money.

I'm not saying that tonight. I don't need your money. But, and it's not about money. That's maybe one aspect that we could consider to a degree.

[29 : 32] But much, much more is your life. Your breath. Your energy. Your zeal. Your ardour. Your love. Your appetite. Your appetite.

Your affections. Your talents. Your health. Your health. Your time. Your resources. Who you are. Your substance. He which.

Sows. Sows. Sparingly. Shall reap also sparingly. If you're going to be a half a Christian.

Christian. You're going to get half a Christian result. And if you're going to be a slack Christian.

You're going to get a slack result. Amen. But if you are a zealous Christian.

You're going to get something to show for it. There's something that will be evident. That will stand. And if you're going to sow wood, hay and stubble.

[30 : 27] You're going to get ashes. If you sow gold, silver, precious stones. You're going to have something to show. For a life lived.

Friends, you will reap in accordance with what you sow. Choose what you will sow.

Sow to the spirit. And choose how you sow it. Bouncifully. Don't hold back. Don't hold back from what God is urging you to do. Don't hold back from what God has put on your heart to be.

Don't hold back if God's given you an ability. A calling. A mission. Don't hold back. Give your all. Give your all for that. Do not hold back, sister.

Give your all. Give your all. Give your all to him. Sow bountifully. In how you consider your talents, your abilities, your time, your resources.

[31 : 27] Sow it bountifully to the spirit. Choose that which is going to benefit you in eternity.

Please help me. Let me impress on you tonight.

I'm not saying you work for your salvation. People might kind of get that impression from what I'm saying. It's not about working for your salvation. It's about your salvation being worked out.

As God worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. It's the fruit of your salvation. And so in Proverbs 22 verse 8 it says, Here that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity.

Now you can hear all of this tonight and just go out that door and say, I'm going to go and sow some more sin. I'm going to go and sow iniquity. The Bible says you shall reap vanity.

Vanity. Now this word vanity can also intend trouble, wickedness and sorrow. There will be a harvest. If you sow iniquity or sin, you're going to reap vanity, trouble, wickedness and sorrow.

[32 : 33] But the verse goes on in Proverbs 22 verses 8 and 9. It says, He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed, for he giveth of his bread to the poor. It's talking about that generosity, that wholeheartedness, that you can choose to sow iniquity or you can choose to have that abundance, that generosity, that spirit of harvest, that spirit of sowing.

And you shall be blessed, it says. You shall be blessed. There's a blessing from that. Let me recap by repeating the scripture again. Be not deceived, God is not mocked.

You can't fool God. Stop trying. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. You will reap what you sow.

Choose wisely. Verse 8. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. Do you want that? You don't want it in your fridge.

You don't want it in your life. You don't want it in your life. You don't want it in your life. He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.

[33 : 49] It's vile. It stinks. But the good news. But the good news. He that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.

There's a sense where there's an abundance, an eternal blessing, an eternity. As you live a life that is in God's way, there will be a wonderful harvest.

And it goes on. It says, verse 9. So, friends, we reap what we sow.

And the context here is saying, don't just think of that selfishly. You will reap what you sow. Do good to all men.

So, there's a sense where we sow to the spirit. We sow, I suppose, righteous works in our own life. But we think of others round about us too. What is it that our world needs?

[35 : 02] It needs the seed, the word of God. You are the vessels. You are the messengers of this word. You are the messengers, the witnesses of this gospel that our world is crying out for.

Or should be crying out for. It's the answer that they need. And it should be on our lips. And our legs should take it to them. Friends, sow to the spirit.

Think of the harvest of souls that can be something to show for a life lived too. And it tells of how that he that wins souls shall be shining like the stars.

As it were, there's a wonderful eternal dimension that we might be missing out on when we fail to witness. When we fail to be sowing the word of God into lives around us.

So, I urge you tonight, take heart. This is not to cause condemnation. If it cause conviction, let it be of God that will be drawn closer to him.

[36 : 02] That will be urged to consider our sowing. And make it count. Make it count. Let us pray. Let us pray.