

The Law of Sowing and Reaping

Just as there are natural laws in our universe, such as the law of gravity, there are also spiritual laws that God has set up that work in our lives, whether we realize it or not. We should therefore take a good look at one of these laws, the law of sowing and reaping, to see whether we are benefiting from it in our lives, or suffering because we are disobeying it or are ignorant of it.

- **Genesis 1:11-12** "Then God said, 'Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees **bearing fruit after their kind**, with seed in them, on the earth'; and it was so. And the earth brought forth vegetation, plants **yielding seed after their kind**, and trees bearing fruit, **with seed in them, after their kind**; and God saw that it was good."

We see from Genesis that God put the law of seed planting (sowing) and reaping (harvesting a crop), into effect from the very beginning of His creation. All plants, vegetation and trees bring forth fruit and more plants, vegetation and trees **after their own kind**. After their own kind means that if you plant apple seeds, you'll get apple trees - that's **what KIND of seed** it is. If you plant corn kernels, you'll get corn stalks. If you plant an avocado seed expecting to get grape vines, you are just plain stupid. So, why is it that some people think they can plant any old kind of "seed" in their lives, as far as God and spiritual things are concerned, and expect to reap a good crop? Here are three areas in particular where Christians need to be more aware of the law of sowing and reaping:

1.) Sowing to the Flesh with the Sins of the Flesh

Paul warns us that if we sow to our sinful, fleshly nature, **we will reap corruption**, which is sin, confusion, emotional turmoil, broken families, financial problems, disease, and even early physical death. Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). Some Christians think they can live any old way they want to, **continually sowing to their flesh**, because they know God will forgive their sins if they belong to Jesus Christ, and they will still go to heaven. That's true, if they are truly saved, but a life of sin and living in the flesh, with its consequences of corruption, may make the journey to heaven very difficult. Jesus did not just die on the cross to give us fire insurance from hell, but also to give us **an abundant life here on earth** (John 10:10). We will not experience that abundant life if we continue to wallow in sin and disobedience to God, and sow seeds of corruption to our flesh. Whether the seeds are seeds of alcoholism, drug addiction, overeating, sexual sins, anxiety and fear, bitterness and anger, or something else, **they all bring "fruit after their own kind"** in the form of disease, early death, severe consequences such as prison in some cases, broken relationships, dysfunctional families, and the like.

- **Galatians 6:7-8** "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."
- **Galatians 5:16 & 19-25** "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." "Now **the works of the FLESH** are evident, which are: adultery, fornication (sexual sins), uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath (hot temper), selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies (false religions), envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like....." "But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience (longsuffering), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified (put to death) the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

- **Romans 8:13** "For if you live **according to the flesh**, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."
- **Proverbs 13:14-15** "The law of the wise (God's wisdom) is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death. Good understanding gains favor, but **the way of the transgressors is HARD.**"

Just because you do not see the consequences happening immediately in your life or in someone else's life, doesn't mean that you or they are getting away with anything. This is what it means by "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked." You can't fool God, and the consequences will catch up with you eventually. Ecclesiastes 8:11 says, "Because **the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly**, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil." Some people, especially the unsaved, but also some Christians, think they are getting away with their sin. **They think that the harvest time will never come** where they will reap their crop of corruption. Don't be a fool! The extreme consequences of being a fool and disregarding God's warnings are mentioned in Proverbs:

- **Proverbs 1:22-33** "How long, you simple (naive, ignorant) ones, will you love simplicity? For scorners delight in their scorning. And **FOOLS hate knowledge**. Turn (repent) at My reproof; surely I will pour out **My Spirit** on you; I will make My words known to you. Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out My hand and no one regarded, because you disdained (ignored) all **My counsel**, and would have none of My reproof, I will also laugh at your calamity.....when distress and anguish come upon you. Then you will call on Me, but I will not answer; they will seek Me diligently, but they will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear (reverent obedience) of the Lord, they would have none of My counsel and despised all My reproof, therefore **they shall eat the fruit (consequences) of their own way**, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away (rebellion) of the simple will slay them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to Me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil."

Remember, do not confuse FORGIVENESS from God with **ESCAPING the CONSEQUENCES** of your sin here on earth. You can be totally forgiven by God, but may still have to live with the **consequences of your WRONG CHOICES in this life**. For instance, if you rob a bank or liquor store, you will still have to go to prison and pay your debt to society. God will FORGIVE you if you come to Jesus Christ for salvation and forgiveness, but you may still have to serve your full prison sentence. Another illustration - ATTITUDE SINS. If you hold onto **anger, bitterness, and resentment, or if you WORRY all the time**, you will most likely suffer depression or physical illness of some sort, because God did not make our bodies to handle all that emotional poison. **REMINDER: "Sin will take you places you never wanted to go; sin will cost you more than you wanted to pay; and sin will keep you longer than you wanted to stay."**

2.) Sowing and Reaping in the Financial Realm

The so-called "prosperity preachers" have gone overboard, and because of them, some Christians have not understood what God's word really says about **financial and material blessings from God**. If we follow the law of sowing and reaping, we see that the person who holds onto "their money" tightly, and is stingy in their giving to the Lord (sows sparingly), will also reap fewer and smaller blessings from the Lord. The person who is generous and cheerful in their giving, with the attitude of "It's the Lord's money anyway, I'm just giving back to Him part of what He's given me" will receive (reap) greater blessings from God, and all of their needs will be taken care of in a generous manner by God. To the one who is faithful in tithing and giving offerings, the Lord even promises to "open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings" that will be over and above what we need. Jesus promises that **"with the SAME MEASURE that you use, it shall be measured to you again."** This is the law of sowing and reaping, just using different words.

- **II Corinthians 9:6-7** "But this I say: **He who sows sparingly** will also reap sparingly, and **he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully (generously)**. 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 (all your needs supplied) in ALL THINGS, may abound to every good work."
- **Luke 6:38** "**Give, and it shall be given unto you**; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom (drop in your lap). For with the SAME MEASURE that you use, it shall be measured to you again."
- **Malachi 3:10** "Bring all the tithes (offerings) into the storehouse (of the Lord), so that there will be provision in My house; and prove (test) Me now in this, says the Lord, whether I will open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a BLESSING until there is MORE THAN ENOUGH."

3.) Sowing and Reaping from Our Words and Attitudes

The Word of God has a lot to say about our tongue and our words, and since Jesus said out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, we could also say **it involves the whole heart and attitude as well as our words**. When Jesus said, "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear" He is speaking about a person with **an attitude of attentive listening to God's word**. These are people who are excited to hear what God's word will say next, and **their ATTITUDE is one of readiness to OBEY** and heed whatever the Lord says to them. To these people, Jesus says, God will give more and more, and it will be according to the same measure they use. If they use a small measure (not very excited about hearing and obeying God's word), **they will receive or REAP a harvest according to that same measure**. If we listen, take heed and obey with a large measure (an attitude of faith and obedience to God, and being hungry for more of Him), He will pour out larger blessings. Then, our WORDS should flow out of a HEART of gratitude for all His blessings. Negative words and attitudes will block and prevent God's blessings from coming to you. This is the same law of sowing and reaping.

- **Mark 4:23-24** "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear. And He said to them, 'Take heed what you hear. **With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you**; and to you who hear more will be given.'"
- **Deuteronomy 28:1-2** "And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently (pay attention) to the voice of the Lord your God, to observe and to do all His commandments **ALL these BLESSINGS shall COME UPON YOU**, and overtake you, if you shall hearken unto (obey) the voice of the Lord your God."
- **Proverbs 12:13-14** "The wicked is ensnared by the transgression of **his lips**, but the righteous will come through trouble. A man will be satisfied with good **by the fruit of his mouth**, and the recompense of a man's hands will be rendered to him."
- **Proverbs 12:2-3** "A man shall eat well by **the fruit of his mouth**, but the soul of the unfaithful feeds on violence. He who guards **his mouth** preserves his life, but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction."
- **Proverbs 18:20-21** "A man's stomach shall be satisfied from **the fruit of his mouth**, and from the produce of **his lips** he shall be filled."
- **Matthew 12:34-37** "..... For **out of the abundance of the HEART the MOUTH speaks**. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For **by your words** you will be justified, and **by your words** you will be condemned."
- **James 3:5-10** "Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And **the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity**. The tongue is so set among our members that **it defiles the whole body**, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind."

But **no man can tame the tongue**. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so."

We see from these Scriptures how powerful a weapon our words, mouth and tongue can be. Our words can be used by God to bring blessing to others, or our mouth can be "set on fire by hell" and totally used by the devil to cause destruction. Do you remember, when you were a kid, saying that "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me"? We all probably said that little rhyme, but it is not really true - WORDS really DO hurt us! God's word has a lot to say about the POWER of the tongue - our words - both to hurt and to heal. You may know firsthand the power of someone's words to hurt you: the words of a parent who said you were not wanted, or that you "ruined" their life; the words of other children making fun of you when you were little; the words of other teenagers saying you were ugly, or you couldn't join their group; the words of a parent or teacher saying you would never amount to anything, or you were just a "screw-up." Words have the power to destroy self esteem, or **to build up and encourage**. Your own words have the power to shape the rest of your life. You can repeat the words of those who have hurt you or abused you, you can repeat the words of the devil as he plants temptations in your mind, or you can repeat the words of God! Just know that whatever "seed" you plant by the words you speak will bring forth a harvest "after their own kind". **If you speak CORRUPT words**, it goes right back to Galatians 6:8, "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." Ephesians 4:30 also tells us that the corrupt and negative words we speak grieve the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "**The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life**" (John 6:63). If you speak the words of Jesus, godly words, words full of grace, you will be sowing seeds of life and grace and will reap a harvest of blessing, in your own life, and in the lives of those who hear you.

- **Ephesians 4:29-30** "Let no **CORRUPT communication** proceed out of your MOUTH, but what is good for necessary **edification**, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not **grieve the Holy Spirit** of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."
- **Colossians 4:6** "**Let your speech always be with GRACE**, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one."
- **Psalms 39:1** "I said, 'I will guard my ways, lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain **my mouth** with a muzzle, while the wicked are before me.'"
- **Psalms 34:13** "Keep **your tongue** from evil, and **your lips** from speaking guile (dishonesty, deceit)."
- **Proverbs 15:1-2** "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness."
- **Proverbs 4:23-24** "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from you **a deceitful mouth**, and put **perverse lips** far from you."
- **Proverbs 8:13** "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the **PERVERSE MOUTH** I hate."

What is a PERVERSE MOUTH? A perverse mouth is one of the things GOD HATES, because He knows how much damage it can do. Perverse means "turned away from, or opposing what is right or good; **CORRUPT**; improper, stubborn, obstinate." Ephesians 4:29 also tells us that the words that come out of our mouth should be "what is good" and for edification. Edification means to build up - the opposite of "tear down", which we do many times by our harsh, sarcastic, angry words. The way to counteract someone else's harsh angry words is found in Proverbs 15:1, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." **Sowing seeds of kindness** by speaking "a soft word" instead of more angry words, will cause you to reap a harvest of blessing. Sowing more "seeds" of anger into a situation by **speaking more angry words will only add fuel to the fire**, and that brings us back to the tongue being "set on fire by hell" (James 3:5-10). James also tells us that "**no man can tame the**

tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so." It is true that no mere man can tame his own tongue, but with the power of the Holy Spirit, you can ask Him to control it, as part of the "fruit of the Spirit" in your life. The fruit of kindness, gentleness, love, joy, and self-control - fruit produced by the Holy Spirit in your life, if you allow Him to, can control your tongue (Galatians 5:22-23). Your words are "seed" being planted in your life, and your mouth should not produce both seeds of blessing and cursing, but of blessing only.

A final word and question: is there no hope for a Christian who finally repents and turns away from their sins to ever escape the consequences of what they've done? Of course there is, because our God is a God of grace and mercy. Grace is His favor in giving us good things we don't deserve, and mercy is God not giving us the punishment we do deserve. He will fully forgive you and restore you to service in His kingdom, if you truly repent and turn away from your sin, but you may carry a few battle scars from your old life. That doesn't mean you shouldn't pray for God to heal you or restore your family or financial situation. **Don't give up in prayer**, but it just may take time, as you are battling against spiritual forces that want to keep you in bondage to all your old ways. Just humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and **He will lift you up** and **restore to you** His blessings.

- **Joel 2:12-14 & 25-26** "'Yet even now,' declares the Lord, 'Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping, and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments.' Now return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in loving kindness (mercy), and relenting of evil. **Who knows whether He will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him.**" "Then **I will make up to you for the years that the locust has eaten**, the creeping locust, the stripping locust, and the gnawing locust, My great army which I sent among you. And you shall have plenty to eat and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; then My people will never be put to shame."
- **James 4:8-9** "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and **He will LIFT you up.**"

Yes, our gracious Redeemer God may redeem and restore much of what has been lost through your disobedience, but there are some consequences that even He will not reverse. If your children are now grown, but you failed to bring them up properly "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord", or you were an absent or abusive parent, **God will not turn back the clock** to give you back those years when they were young. However, God can restore you to a good relationship with your adult children, and you can heal the wounds as you make amends. If someone has died, God will not bring them back just so you can have another chance. You can ask God's forgiveness, and make amends in some other way, perhaps to their family. Whatever you do, do not take God's mercy for granted. Do not think you can go back into your old ways for "just one more time" and then be able to get back to the same place of recovery where you were. Don't take that chance.