THE SIX LAWS OF THE HARVEST

TEXT: Galatians 6:7-10

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
8 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.
9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.
10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

• There are laws governing man and his makeup, concerning spiritual development and maturity to mention just a few.
• But there are no laws more important or significant to us than the principles that govern the harvest we reap.
• In the book of Galatians, Paul has been dealing with one principle – the Galatians are not under the Law of Moses or any legal system; they just need to live pleasing to God.
  o While those believers were not under the law that God gave from Sinai or any other legal code that man might adopt for righteousness; yet still they were under the spiritual laws of God’s operation, and they dare not deceive themselves to the contrary.
• We today in this age of “grace” need this truth brought forcibly home to us.
  o Somewhere we have developed the idea that we can do anything wrong and then use 1 John 1:9 – “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse
us from all unrighteousness,” and we will get by with it.

- In doing this, we are deceiving ourselves and making a mockery of God and His Word.
- Paul says these laws operate today; they are divine; they change for no one; they are absolute and unfailing.
- These laws of sowing and reaping are equally valid for all, whether we are married or single, male or female, young or old, rich or poor, or any other distinction we might make.
- In fact, these laws operate whether we know about them or are totally ignorant of them.

**Law 1: We Reap Much We Did Not Sow**

- Stop and think: Much that we reap, we never planted.
  - Somebody else did and we reap the consequences.
  - Sometimes we reap things that are good, but not always.

- Let’s look at the positive side first.
- We receive many blessings given to us by God for which we have performed no labor whatever.
  - In fact, the Lord wants us to trust Him that he will provide all of our needs even as He provides for the birds of the air (Matthew 6:25-34).
  - The Lord extends His blessings to all men as “he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45).

- But not only are we blessed because of what God has done in our behalf, we are also blessed by what others have done.
  - Others have labored and we have entered into the blessings of
their labors.
  o Because of many who have labored we have entered into the blessings of their labors in the establishment of churches, schools, orphanages, hospitals and all the many other blessing we enjoy so bountifully.

• Not only does this law operate positively, but it also operates negatively.
• We not only enter into blessings God has bestowed upon us for which we have not labored at all, and we not only enter into the blessings and benefits of the labors of others in this life, but we reap the wrong because others came along before us and sowed the wrong.
  o Individually, our parents may have sown within us a critical spirit.
    ▪ Perhaps they were always finding fault with everything and we learned to imitate them and criticize things and people.
    ▪ They may have been fearful and afraid, and so this is the way we have become in life.
  o We reap much of what our parents sowed into us.
  o How that should wake us up as parents.

• We are reaping the results of our government leaders today.
  o When our leaders sow wrong, we who are believers, right along with others, will be involved in reaping the wrong.
  o We cannot escape the consequences of what happens in our midst.

• As a leader: an elder, a pastor, or a Sunday School teacher, what you sow will be reaped by those that you teach or influence.
Those under us may not be reaping what they sowed but what we have sowed in them.

What an awesome responsibility we have.

Law 2: We Reap The Same In Kind As We Sow

- Had anyone spoken to David right after his involvement with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11), and said, “David, before you are through you will have broken every commandment of the Lord on the second table of the Law,” without question he would have replied most emphatically, “Man, you must be crazy, I would never do anything like that!”
  - But He did!
  - He committed murder (2 Samuel 11:15), adultery (11:4); he stole (11:4); he bore false witness (11:8, 21); as well as coveting his neighbor’s wife (11:2, 3).
- But as bad as this was, it was just the beginning, for every one of these sins was to be reaped within his own family.
  - We reap the same in kind as we sow.

- In the 6 days of creation, God ordered everything to produce “after his kind.”
- Notice that 3 times in Genesis 1:11 & 12 this is emphasized: Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth’; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is according to its kind, and God saw that it was good.”
- What was true in the botanical realm is also true in the zoological
realm, so that the entire realm of biology is governed in the natural sphere by this law.

- So abiding is this law that our Lord used it when speaking to Nicodemus.
  - He said: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6).

- Likewise, the Holy Spirit of God reproduces after His own holy nature and character and produces a new nature within the believer.
  - This is His work which we call regeneration.

- No one will ever sow sweet peas and reap cucumbers.
  - Neither can anyone sow that which is wrong and reap that which is right.
  - Paul stresses this fact in our text read verses 7 and 8.

- Paul’s warning is given to those who are believers since only the believer has the Holy Spirit and a spiritual nature, and can therefore, sow to the Spirit.
  - Since everything reproduces after its kind, we do not sow discord and reap unity…
    - We do not sow sin and reap sanctification…
    - We do not sow hypocrisy and reap holiness of life…
    - He who sows to his flesh will reap just what the flesh can produce…
    - But he that sows to the spirit will reap what the Spirit can produce…
  - Even Eliphaz in the book of Job recognized this abiding principle, when he explained: “…they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same” (Job 4:8).
• When David sowed to the flesh, he reaped what the flesh produced.
  o He reaped the consequences of his actions even though he had confessed his sin and been forgiven for it.
• Underline it, star it, mark it deeply upon your conscious mind: confession and forgiveness in no way stops the harvest.
  o He had sown; he was to reap.
  o We are not to be deceived for God will not be mocked.
  o What we sow we will reap, and there are no exceptions.

• The sooner we stop sowing to the flesh, the sooner we will stop reaping the harvest.
• Had David only sinned with Bathsheba, his sin would have been great enough; but David kept on and on in his sin until finally he killed Uriah.
• Since he had sown the more, he was to reap the more.

• Two more examples from Scripture:
  o “They hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai” (Esther 7:10).
  o Jacob schemed to get the blessing due to the firstborn, and Laban later tricked him with the rights of the firstborn (Genesis 19:20-26).
  o Just as Jacob lied, so someone lied to him.
  o As he plotted against someone else, someone else plotted against him.

Law 3: We Reap In a Different Season Than When We Sow

• Too many believers are sowing wild oats through the week and then
going to church on Sunday and praying for a crop failure.
  o But it will not happen, for God will not be mocked by man – any man.
  o Even though we may scheme and connive and try to get around reaping the consequences of our actions, our puny efforts are like trying to stop a forest fire with a toy water pistol.
    ▪ The laws of the harvest abide.

• Ecclesiastes says: “Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days” (11:1).
• It is on the basis of the positive aspect of this principle that the Apostle Paul exhorts the Galatians to sow the good by means of the Spirit of God and, having done that, to “let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9).

• This brings us to this third law.
• The harvest never comes immediately after planting; for, while the earth abides, there is seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter.
  o These shall not cease (Genesis 8:22).
  o There is a time when you plant and there is a time when you harvest, but these are not the same time.
  o The harvest comes in a different season from the planting of the seed.
• This is just as true spiritually as it is physically; it is just as abiding for each and every person on this earth, as it is for the farmer who tills the ground.
  o Also it is equally true whether you sow that which is bad or that which is good.
o Whatever is sown is not reaped immediately.
o The harvest comes in God’s time – His appointed season.

• The picture in Ecclesiastes gives us a clear principle.
o The principle is:
o Do deeds of kindness and they will later return to you again in accordance with the laws of sowing and reaping.
o They will come back to you like in kind; they will come in accordance with the principle of the harvest, namely at a different season from the sowing.
• It will be “after many days” (Ecclesiastes 11:1).

• But the negative aspect is true also.
o Sometimes the Lord in His longsuffering waits years before He disciplines or judges for wrongs.

• Solomon in Ecclesiastes had the wisdom to state the nature of the situation accurately when he wrote, “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil” (Ecclesiastes 8:11).
o Because God does not judge sin instantly, men think they are getting by with sinning, while in reality they are not getting by with anything.
o Psalm 121:4 – “Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”

**Law 4: We Reap More Than We Sow**

• The fourth law of the harvest is one of the most important aspects concerning the harvest there is.
If it were not for this fact, there would be no harvest and yet this is not something preached or seen in print.

If it were not for this fact no farmer would plant anything.
- If he only got back what germinated in the ground, he would be on the losing end of the process.
- What compensates for all his loss & makes sowing the seed profitable is that some seed reproduces itself 30, 60, and 100 fold.

But this is not just true for the farmer; it is true for every person that has ever lived.
- It is true for the Christian & the non-Christian alike.
- It is true both negatively and positively.
- When we sow the wrong, we are going to reap more than we sowed.
- When we sow the good we likewise will reap a harvest of good.

This law is emphasized emphatically in two passages.
• Proverbs 22:8 – “He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow (calamity).”
  - This word means misfortune, adverse circumstances, calamity.
  - God says that when a person sows “wickedness” he shall reap a harvest of adverse circumstances that involve sorrow, grief, suffering, and anxiety.

• A second passage that establishes this principle is found in Hosea 8:7 – “They have sown the wind, and they will reap the whirlwind.”
  - The whirlwind is a Hebrew intensive form, “The violent whirlwind.”

Again, remember David and his sin.
Nathan went on to make 3 charges against David, stating emphatically the sin David had done and then pronouncing the judgment that David would reap because of his sin.

- They are as follows:
  - 1. You killed Uriah (2 Samuel 12:9).
    - The Judgment: The sword will never depart from your house (12:10).
  - 2. You took his wife (12:9).
    - The Judgment: Your wives will be taken before your eyes (12:11).
  - 3. You did this secretly (12:12).
    - The Judgment: It will be done before all Israel.

- The judgment is always greater than the sin because you always reap more than you sow.

- There is a positive side to this as well.
- God’s only criticism of David was this incident with Bathsheba as is seen by the record of the prophet in 1 Kings 15:5 – “David did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.”

- Therefore most of David’s life was sowing the good, not evil, and as a result, God continued to bless many of the Kings of Judah for many years for David’s sake because he had done that which was right.

**Law 5: We Reap In Proportion As We Sow**

- If one does not sow, he does not reap.
  - If he sows sparingly, he reaps sparingly.
If he wants to reap a bountiful harvest, he must sow in a bountiful way.

- If the farmer only cultivates one acre, he can only reap what one-acre can produce.
- However, if he has 100 acres under cultivation, his harvest can be 100 times greater.

A difference needs to be observed between this principle & the previous one which stated that we always reap more than we sow.

Both are true at the same time; yet this principle in no way affects the fact that we also reap more than we sow.

- Both laws have to do with quantity or amount.
- However, the previous law was God’s part, & this law has to do with our part.
- God’s part is that whatever seed is sown is multiplied many fold.
- Our part is that we need to sow all the good that we can.

Paul states this law clearly as he devotes two whole chapters in his Second letter to the Corinthians to the subject of giving.

His statement is, “He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully” (2 Corinthians 9:5).

- If you want to be rich…GIVE!
  - If you want to be poor…GRASP!
- If you want abundance…SCATTER!
  - If you want to be needy…HOARD!”

This law operates both negatively and positively.

The more one sows to the flesh, the more he will reap the corruption
which the flesh alone can produce.

- But equally true, the more one sows to the Spirit, the more he reaps the blessings of a righteous harvest.

- When the young lad gave his 5 loaves and two fish to the Lord Jesus, the Lord took & multiplied them to feed 5,000 men besides women & children.

- In the “Sunday School Times,” Captain Levy of Philadelphia says, when asked how he was able to give so much to the Lord’s work & still have so much left, answered, “Oh, as I shovel out, He shovels in; and the Lord has a bigger shovel than I do.”

**Law 6: We Cannot Do Anything About Last Year’s harvest, But We Can About This Year’s**

- Whatever we did last year, last month, last week, even yesterday is over and past.
  - Nothing we do today can in any way change the record of what was sown and what was or will be reaped as a consequence.
  - Whatever has been produced stands as the record of our lives lived on this earth.
  - The problem with all too many Christians is that they are not forgetting the past and reaching on to what is before (Philippians 3:13, 14).

- If we failed to produce a crop worthy of the Lord’s praise last year our wallowing in self-pity for having wasted time last year will only cause us to fail to produce anything glorifying to the Lord this year.
  - If we did use the opportunities the Lord gave us and produced a harvest of good things, we cannot rest on our laurels.
o This another year, and just because the Holy Spirit led and blessed last year, does not mean that we automatically will produce anything good this year.

• There is not a believer alive that does not have some wasted time, and perhaps many have wasted years.
  o I have, but there is nothing I can do about those wasted years.
  o What I can do by the grace of God is so live now that I produce a full harvest that will glorify the Savior.
  o This is what we all are to do.
  o Regardless of where we are in the Christian life, regardless of how much time we have wasted, regardless of the terrible products we have produced in our lives – we are to go on to maturity.
  o This is the Spirit’s exhortation to all of us.

• We must forget about the past and concentrate on that which is at hand.