

Ageless Wisdom for Better Finances

Part 1: The Law of the Harvest

Galatians 6:7

Summary: Applying the timeless idea of sowing and reaping can transform our lives and our finances.

Main Ideas:

Four lessons from the harvest:

Lesson #1 – The Harvest is Proportional to the Sowing. (Comparison)

Lesson #2 - The Harvest Comes Later than the Sowing. (Anticipation)

Lesson #3 - The Harvest is Greater than the Sowing. (Multiplication)

- What you reap will always come back greater than what you sow.
- If you never plant it, God can't *multiply* it.
- God Can't Multiply What You Haven't Sown!
- It's only as you put what you have in the hands of Jesus that it's multiplied.

Lesson #4 - The Harvest is Determined by the Sowing. (Replication)

We are Harvesting Today what we Planted Yesterday.

We can't do anything about what we are reaping today, but we can change what we may reap tomorrow!

Invitation:

What are you harvesting today?

What have you sown in the past?

What do you want to reap next year?

What will you start planting today?

Discussion Questions:

1. What is one thing that stuck out to you in this week's message?
2. Share an example of a time when you sowed something and had to wait a long time to see the results. How did you stay motivated?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6. What stands out to you? How does this verse challenge or affirm your current attitude toward generosity?
4. What are some steps you can take this week to begin sowing now with a future harvest in mind?
5. How can your group pray with you?

Transcript:

In Galatians 6:7, the Apostle Paul highlights an “absolute principle” in Scripture: **“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked, for whatever a person sows this he will also reap.”**
Galatians 6:7

Throughout the rest of Galatians 6, Paul helps us apply this principle to our money and possessions.

Paul also taught this in 2 Corinthians 9:6: **"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously," 2 Corinthians 9:6.**

Four lessons from the harvest based on Paul's teaching in Galatians 6 and 2 Corinthians 9:

Lesson #1 – The Harvest is Proportional to the Sowing. (Comparison)

Plant one seed, and you'll get one plant (hopefully). Plant a dozen, and you'll get a dozen. Invest minimally in God's kingdom, and you'll reap minimally; invest greatly, and watch as God brings in a harvest you can't contain. "Pressed down, running over, pouring into your lap."

Here's a startling biblical truth: *In some ways, your generosity toward God and others often determines his generosity toward you.*

"Comparison"- Compare what one sows to what they harvest. Here's how Solomon put it: "Whoever is kind to the poor is lending to the Lord—the benefit of his gift will return to him in abundance" (Proverbs 19:17). Solomon was a man of generosity. Example: it was a tradition for the king to sacrifice one bull during his inauguration. But 1 Kings 8 tells us that Solomon sacrificed *a thousand* bulls and probably threw a feast for the people! How's that for giving "above and beyond"? Is it any coincidence that the only time God said to someone, "Ask me for whatever you want, and I'll give it to you," he said it to an extravagant giver? God is extravagant to the extravagant. He is generous to the generous. You can't out-give God!

Illustration: Rockefeller...

Proportional- Plant nothing, harvest nothing. Plant a little, harvest a little, plant a lot?...

Lesson #2 - The Harvest Comes Later than the Sowing. (Anticipation) *"in due time we will reap," Gal. 6:6-10.*

The hard part about harvesting is that it takes time to see your planning/sowing pay off. It requires faith to till the soil, to sow the seed, fertilize and weed and water and hope for rain when water is scarce. That's why many people never see the harvest for their efforts. They start off well, but they give up too soon. We live in a generation of instant gratification. I know I'm like that. When I diet, I want to see the results right away. I want to eat salad one time and see the difference the next morning. But life doesn't work like that. Real change takes time to develop.

This is certainly true in agriculture. I heard of a practical joke a pastor and a few small-town buddies played on his neighbors when he was a kid. He grew up on a farm, so he always had access to lots of seeds. So, after their neighbors would aerate their lawns, he and his buddies would sneak out at night and throw random seeds into their yards. He said the hard part about the joke was that it took so long to see the results. But sure enough, within six months or so, there were watermelons and sunflowers popping up in yards all over the neighborhood!

Results take time. What you sow today, you won't see returned until the next season in life. Sowing is all about faith in the future. And while it's worth the wait, we often don't act like it.

"Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary"- Gal 6:9.

Lesson #3 - The Harvest is Greater than the Sowing. (Multiplication) *2 Cor. 9:8-11... NASB*

In the harvest, what comes back to you is always greater than what you sowed. If you plant a wheat seed, it will turn into a wheat stalk that can produce hundreds of wheat seeds. The "Lesson of Greater" says that what starts small multiplies into something much bigger than what you began with. **What you reap will always come back greater than what you sow.** Jesus talked about a harvest of 30, 60, and 100 fold (Mark 4:20). God's principle of multiplication. By the way, this principle is also evident in every living thing God ever created. It started with Adam and Eve and the garden He created for them. Every tree with seeds, herb, plant, every animal

from the birds to the bunnies- they have all been created with the expectation of multiplication. He said it to man and woman- “Be fruitful and multiply.”

When Scripture applies this multiplication principle to money, it teaches us that the harvest is greater than the planting in both the *magnitude* of what you reap and the *kind of fruit* you reap. Paul says in **Galatians 6:8** that we reap eternal life from the Spirit by our sowing; in **2 Corinthians** he calls this the “harvest of righteousness.” God often uses generosity to give us gifts far greater than money.

Think of it this way: Which would you rather have—a lot of money or the ability to be truly happy and satisfied with what you have? Only a fool would say, “Give me the money.” Why? Because the reason you want more money is to be happier and more satisfied. What if there was a better way to get to that end? In Matthew 6:21, Jesus challenges his disciples to be generous with their money because “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” It’s the same principle. Invest your treasure in heaven, and watch your heart follow it. Having your heart set on heaven is a *far* greater gift than having more cash.

Further to this point, **If you never plant it, God can’t multiply it.** One of the clearest pictures of multiplication occurs in John 6, where Jesus is standing before 5,000 hungry people (more like 15,000 if you include the women and children). He takes a little boy’s lunch, five loaves and two fish—a “Hebrew Happy Meal”. You know the story: After Jesus takes the loaves and fish and blesses the food, he distributes it to his disciples until everyone is fed and there are 12 basketfuls leftover.

God Can’t Multiply What You Haven’t Sown!

It’s God’s principle of multiplication. **It’s only as you put what you have in the hands of Jesus that it’s multiplied.** We tend to reverse that. *Well, if God multiplies what I have, then I’ll give it away.* But God says, “Give it away, and it will multiply!”

Lesson #4 - The Harvest is Determined by the Sowing. (Replication) what you sow is what you get. ⁷*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a person sows, this he will also reap. ⁸For the one who sows to his own flesh will reap destruction from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit.” Gal 6:7-8.*

Can’t plant onions and expect to get strawberries! Can’t plant negativity and expect to reap optimism. Anger and expect to find joy. Hate and expect to find love as the produce. Some people wonder why it is that things seem to go so well for others while all they seem to be able to find is trouble. If that’s us, we need to examine or ask, “What have we been sowing in life?” ...

Also, if you do not sow, you will not reap. (don’t bury your “talents”).

Some people stand in front of the stove saying, “Give me heat.” But they have never put any wood into the fire box! They have never chopped, split or stacked. They have made no investment, but expect a return. They are consumers rather than contributors. If lucky, they may enjoy the heat produced by others, but they never provide warmth to anyone but themselves. Ever consider the similarity of the words miserable and miserly?

You can only harvest what you plant. In other words, if you haven’t *sown* it, you will never reap it.

Conclusion:

We are Harvesting Today what we Planted Yesterday.

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked for whatever a person sows, this he will also reap,” Gal. 6:7.

What are you harvesting today? Could be good, could be not so good.

I know a lot of you hate that. You're living for God *now*, but the consequences of past mistakes keep rearing their ugly heads. You can't do much to change the harvest that you're reaping today—even if you pray about or if you ask for forgiveness. Yes, God forgives us as soon as we come to him.

God won't always eliminate the tough harvest you're living through immediately. The financial difficulties you're experiencing, the materialism in your kids, the dissatisfaction in your own heart ... these may be a harvest of a self-focused past, of an unbelieving or even ungenerous past.

What have you sown in the past?

Those old seeds that you planted *sent down roots* that are producing a harvest you never saw coming, never anticipated. They're like those unwanted berry vines that keep invading your garden. They're hard to kill. Some of those roots may have formed habitual patterns that need attention. But God can change that by empowering you to sow new seeds, seeds of the Spirit if you'll allow Him. Takes time to send down new roots that when watered and nurtured produce new daily and life patterns. New fruit, new harvest tomorrow from the new seeds you sow today.

We can't do anything about what we are reaping today, but we can change what we may reap tomorrow! The old proverb states: *The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second-best time is today.* It's time to start sowing different seeds so you can reap a different harvest. **What do you want to reap next year?** It is only possible if you start sowing for it **today**.

We can't do anything about what we are reaping today, but we can change what we may reap tomorrow!

What will you start planting today?