

Sowing and Reaping

By Scott F. Moller

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life” (Galatians 6:7-8).

The Word of God teaches this very basic principle: every man sows and every man reaps what he sows. It is taught from the books of Moses and the Proverbs of Solomon to the teachings of Jesus and the letters of Paul. Every person sows seeds, and every person reaps the fruit of what they sow. Again and again mankind is warned by God that this principle is at work in their lives. God provides this warning because of His love for us. He knows the destruction that will be reaped by sowing seeds of unrighteousness. He also knows the eternal rewards that await those who sow seeds of righteousness.

This truth is at work in every person's life. And yet, the world does everything in its power to deny the existence of this principle. In part, this is due to the deception of Satan who hates all men and wants to see their destruction. Second, it is because *“men loved darkness ... because their deeds were evil”* as Jesus taught in John 3:19. The world goes about living by the “if it feels good, do it” attitude, ignoring and denying the obvious consequences of their actions. We are surrounded by sorrow and destroyed lives due to sowing to the sinful nature. Look at all of the unnecessary consequences: broken relationships, divorce, teen pregnancy, abortion, STD's, addictions of all kinds, depression, financial ruin, suicide – just to name a few. Where is the warning? Where are the wise teachers? The world continues denying the root causes of this destruction, never seeming to be able to see the correlation between the actions and the results.

**Every man sows
Every man reaps
Every man reaps what he sows
Every man reaps more than he sows**

Sadly, many in the Church today do not seem to grasp this principle either. This is, in part, due to ignorance of the Scriptures, due to lack of teaching in the Church, and in some cases, due to willful rebellion. Many in the Church seem to think they can play with fire and not get burned. But the facts tell a different story. In many cases, the Church is experiencing similar results to those listed above. For example, the divorce rate in the church is almost identical to the divorce rate in society as a whole. Christians need to understand there is danger for them also to sow unto their sinful desires. They need not suffer worldly battle scars. They have freedom in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit to sow works of righteousness.

The other side of the coin that is often missed is stated by Solomon in Proverbs 11:18b: *“but he who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward.”* The Scriptures clearly teach that God rewards those who sow unto righteousness. Jesus himself states in Matthew 16:27: *“For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.”* To be sure, there are many temporal benefits of not sowing to the flesh. These benefits are

mostly the avoidance of the negative consequences of sinful choices. They are not usually the health and wealth gospel of temporary benefits that is often preached. No, when the Bible speaks of rewards it most often is referring to the future age to come.

First and foremost is the gift of Salvation which is the reward of eternal life. Of course, this is God's greatest reward because it means eternity with Christ vs. eternal separation and punishment for our sins. But, unfortunately, this is the only reward most Christians ever seek after. They miss the fact that the Bible teaches there are more rewards to be sought after. Paul teaches in Ephesians 6:8: "*you know that the Lord will **reward** everyone for whatever good he does*" and Jesus promises in Revelation 22:12: "*Behold, I am coming soon! My **reward** is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.*"

These rewards that Paul and Jesus are speaking about cannot be salvation because these rewards are for works. Salvation is a gift for faith not a reward for works. In other verses Paul speaks of the prize or crown he is seeking as his reward. But beyond that we are not given much more of a description of these rewards. All we know for certain is that the rewards are promised by God and they are eternal. Sadly, many Christians are not seeking these promised rewards, either because they are unaware of them or they do not value them. We should not forget Jesus' encouragement in Matthew 6:20: "*store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.*" We do not know why God has not revealed more about these rewards. Maybe these rewards are beyond our current understanding or maybe God is simply testing our faith. God has His purposes to not reveal everything to us in this age. But we can be sure that God's rewards are of great worth and should be diligently sought after.

Perhaps some may be discouraged as they better understand the Biblical principle of sowing and reaping. Some may look back at their sinful past and the consequences it has wrought them. Some may think of the time they have wasted seeking after temporary or worldly rewards missing out on the eternal rewards God has to offer. But be encouraged that God is merciful and compassionate. We can start anew with him each day. He is ready and willing to forgive us our sins when we confess them to him. We cannot change the past but we can live for Christ today. Let us be like Paul who said in Philippians 3:13: "*Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.*" Press on with the time you have and leave the rest in God's hands. He does not disappoint!