

Intro - Karma

The concepts and principles of the word **karma** originates from the Southeast Asian religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. The term **karma** connects actions and results, causes and effects for not only past lives, but subsequent or reincarnate lives as well. Good and bad happenings and outcomes experienced in this life are collective results of deeds and character in those previous lives. With **karma** there is a circle or cycle of life - or you could just say, a recycle bin of life. In western pop-culture there has evolved a shallow sense of putting off good karma and bad karma. It's very social, very neutral, very cool. Based on the shape of things we might be in some real trouble in our next life. Whoa!

Hold on a minute my friend... let's try this.

Join me this Sunday to begin a 6-Week series called **Karma**. The biblical truth about the principles of "sowing and reaping" and how they effectively impact and influence our faith and the people we love the most. This series explains why **good karma** just isn't going to be enough! We need truth to meet the day to day demands of honoring and righteously living in covenant relationship with God and with one another! C'mon Reunion, God is at work.

Week One - Karma

8.11.19

Hosea 10:12

Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.

Galatians 6:7-10

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Karma is a word that is used a lot in our current pop-culture. The westernized idea of Karma has become like most everything does in our culture - over simplified. Pop-culture karma means that whatever you do will come back to you at some point. If you are a good person, good things will happen. If you are a bad person, bad things will happen. In western culture eventually our religion, philosophy, political science, nature, humanity, civil justice all become things we park in our garage to show our friends or that we use to take for a spin every now and then. The philosophy of Karma mentioned throughout hundreds of religious books and writings can be summarized by Isaac Newton's third law of motion - 'To every

action, there shall always be an equal and opposite reaction'. If we extend this law beyond physics and apply it to our everyday life, it means that we have to face the outcomes of our deeds, good or bad. The actions take and choices we make every day will either bring happiness or sufferings into our life. Any wrongdoings will eventually turn around and cause us pain and grief. So, good deeds such as helping someone in need will leave you content and instill joy, happiness, and personal growth. To put it simply, we cannot escape from the consequences of our actions. This is the Karmic Law of the Universe, and everyone who believes it, believes that everyone is bound to it.

The deeper concepts and principles of the word Karma originates from the ancient Southeast Asian religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. As stated the term Karma connects actions and results, causes and effects. There are very clear differences in the eastern principles of Karma and the western ideas of Karma. The eastern principles are expressed this way.

The word "karma" means "action," not "fate." In Buddhism, karma is an energy created by willful action, through thoughts, words and deeds. We are all creating karma every minute, and the karma we create affects us every minute. It is common to think of "my karma" as something you did in your last life that seals your fate in this life, but this is not Buddhist understanding. Karma is an action, not a result. The future is not set in stone. You can change the course of your life right now by changing your volitional (intentional) acts and self-destructive patterns." - Buddha Master

In the westernized idea of Karma it has become a fate based belief system of not only past lives, but subsequent or reincarnate lives as well. Good and bad happenings and outcomes experienced in this life are collective results of deeds and character in those previous lives. With western karma there is a circle or cycle of life - or you could just say, a recycle bin of life. As I said earlier, in western pop-culture there has evolved a significantly shallow sense of each person putting off good Karma and bad Karma. As well as a development of even more shallow expressions and understandings of the laws and principles of Reincarnation. In the west our religion, our philosophy, political science, views of nature, ideas of humanity, civil justice and much more have all become things we either rant about or that we park in our garage to show our friends when we want to take them for a spin every now and then.

According to the experts, people have embraced karma because it helps them to explain, accept, or process why something good or bad has happened. This is probably the most important aspect of the law of Karma for us to remember. As Christians we lose sight of the fact that people are deeply impacted by the good and bad circumstances and events of their lives - they want answers. Karma tells them "What we are now determines what we will be. If something negative happens to us, if, for example, we are in an accident or contract a serious illness, we need first to accept things and bear them with equanimity."

The origins of Karma extracted from ancient texts of Hinduism and Buddhism intended and believed for much more than what has evolved. More than sayings like...

- **"What goes around comes around." Unknown**
- **"Nobody deserves misery but sometimes it's just your turn." -Unknown**
- **"Life is like a boomerang - doing bad things to others and karma is turning double back to you." - Anonymous**
- **"Dangerous consequences will follow when politicians and rulers forget moral principles. Whether we believe in God or karma, ethics is the foundation of every religion." - Dalai Lama XIV**
- **"Sin makes its own hell, and goodness its own heaven." - Mary Baker Eddy**
- **"Karma is the universe's way of letting you know that you just thought you got away with it." - Unknown**
- **"How people treat you is their karma; how you react is yours." - Wayne Dyer**
- **"Dear Karma, I have list of people you missed." - Unknown**
- **"I'm going to sit back and laugh when Karma punches you in the face." - Anonymous**
- **"Welcome to the Karma Cafe. There are no menus, you will get served what you deserve." - Unknown**
- **"Do good things and good things happen. Do bad things and bad things happen." - Earl**

Karma - Christianity

Much of what you have heard about Karma today probably sounds fairly harmless and actually pretty practical. Hey, who doesn't want system of right-wrong / good-bad that self corrects and rebalances life in a fair or just way for everyone? So we

can effectively clear the air and cleanly transition from non-truth to truth and biblical to non-biblical let me start with these statements.

- **Karma is not Christianity - Christianity is not Karma**
- **The Mahayana Sutras and Rig Veda are not the Bible - The Bible is not the Mahayana Sutras or Rig Veda**
- **Buddha or Brahman are not God - God is not Buddha or Brahman**

Yet, admittedly the principles of Karma (even the westernized ones) do possess some similarities and commonality to Old and New Testament scriptures regarding the principles of "**sowing and reaping**" but we should be clear.

Being similar and having something in-common to the truth does not make it truth.

I am completely comfortable in a public forum in stating that the Bible contains the absolute Word of Truth, and is indeed the inspired Word of the one true God. I will not be marginalized or dismissed as a crazy Christian believer who does not have an intellect or enough of a competent understanding of world religion or secular ideology to "get it." Listen mate, I have been on my journey, i have read and studied anything worth reading and studying. Yes, I'm still traveling - but know this "I get it"!

It is a journey of faith not a journey of fate. It is not about revenge and retribution it is about repentance and relationship. Over the next six-weeks we will reveal the true principles of **sowing and reaping** though the lens of the truth of God's word.

We will find the good and righteous path to keeping and honoring covenant relationship with God and the people we love the most in this life.

Hosea 10:12

Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.

Galatians 6:7-10

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

8.25.19

Karma and the Principles of Sowing and Reaping

Galatians 6:7-10

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Galatians 5:16-18

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, TO KEEP YOU FROM DOING THE THINGS YOU WANT TO DO.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Content

We are going to address sowing to the flesh today and then we are going to move forward to sowing to the Spirit and not look back. Not as if those temptations and enticements of our flesh do not exist - but rather as if we are not interested, intrigued, or controlled by them. As we move forward in our covenant relationship with God and with one another, the conscious and consistent choice to not sow into

the flesh will become a key towards our spiritual growth and to the enrichment and fulfillment of our covenants with God and others.

Sowing to the flesh is easily identifiable and simple according to scripture. Paul spells out to believers those seeds of the flesh and of corruption in his writing to the churches...

- **sexual immorality**
- **impurity**
- **seduction**
- **idolatry**
- **sorcery**
- **enmity**
- **jealousy**
- **rage**
- **contentious**
- **divisive**
- **sedition**
- **envy**
- **drunkenness**

In the wisdom of Solomon's Proverbs, he wrote about sowing and reaping the seeds of the flesh in a way that he personally knew only all too well. He knew these were seeds that would produce heavy and difficult consequences for not only the sower but for everyone trying to live life with the sower. Solomon, experienced the reality of sowing and reaping of both good and bad seed - his sowing impacted not

only his family but an entire nation. Like Paul, Solomon clearly spells out the very things that God hates. These abominations (as he calls them) are seeds that would produce heavy and difficult consequences for not only the sower but for everyone trying to live life with the sower. Just a warning to you though, these are pretty tough...

There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to Him:

- **eyes that show pride**
- **tongues that tell lies**
- **hands that kill innocent people**
- **hearts that plan evil things to do**
- **feet that run to do evil**
- **witnesses in court who tell lies**
- **anyone who causes family members to fight**

As we hear ourselves speak these words out loud surely it makes you and I think and feel something - that is normal. And I hope you can trust that the intent is not to make anyone FEEL BAD but rather to THINK MORE!

Questions

How does hearing God's response to the sowing of "bad seed" make you feel?

Maybe good - maybe not so good, that's ok. I could be entirely wrong, but more than likely what we are feeling when we hear from God on this subject is the result of some closely related activity or personal sowing of that very kind of seed. And even though it happens TO US ALL, the truth is we that have the ability to control much of what we experience by the type of seed we sow.

How could these negative and bad things somehow, someway or even somewhat be connected to us?

Check yourself - check the seed you are sowing, not what you are feeling. We are getting lost in our feelings. Ask the people you love to give you some honest feedback - seek a revelation knowledge of God's principles of sowing and reaping and spiritual wisdom in discerning Good and Bad Seed. You might be surprised at what you learn about yourself. Remember we are sowing seed every day with what we **think - say - do**. Let's not get lost in our feelings - not the goal. Again, let's use them to press ourselves into learning what is good and what is bad seed. The point is learning - revelation knowledge and spiritual wisdom.

You see we are talking about something so profound and so impactful that it not only influences our feelings but critically reaches and impacts the outcomes of our lives - both in this world and the world to come! And yet, as a people we are continuing to make both real and eternal time decisions and choices about the seed we sow based on our feelings. Crazy right? Exactly! That is why it is also beyond crazy that our cultural and societal behaviors today predominantly seek to experience pleasure and to avoid pain - viewing life and making decisions only in terms of what "feeling" is most present, dominant, or controlling. Think about it - an

entire cultural wave of moral and ethical behavior driven not by truth and righteous reality, but by the moment to moment reactions to what is felt or not felt. Seed sown containing eternal consequences and outcomes but without any real knowledge of the truth of those consequences or genuine concern for the outcomes.

I ask you today (if only for a few moments) to look at our lives and our world through the lens of God's Truth regarding "sowing the seed" that is an ABOMINATION to the God we love. Take your understanding and revelation of sowing and reaping personal. Don't take offense - take it to heart. Because it is personal. It is not an attack or an offense. It is not hate or prejudiced. It is a reality for every human being - all of us. More than Karma... Sowing and Reaping.

9.1.19

Karma and the Principles of Sowing and Reaping

Hosea 10:12

Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.

Galatians 5:22-26

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Good Seed - Good Fruit - Good Outcomes

The driving point behind the Principle of Sowing and Reaping is SOW GOOD SEED!! If we Sow Good Seed the promise of the principle is that we will harvest GOOD FRUIT. That is the Good Outcome that you and I hope and believe for our life, and the lives of those we love. Let's look today at this life changing principle as the opportunity of a lifetime - let's ask the Spirit to reveal to us a truth we have not known, have not followed, did not believe, or have somehow forgotten.

First, we come to understand that it is one thing to overcome the forceful drives of our flesh and not do evil or sinful things with them, but it is quite something else to

overcome the driving forces of our flesh and move forward into the Spirit, to do good things with our life. The proud or arrogant person might be able to boast that he or she is not guilty of any serious or "big sin" conflicts, but bigger than any boast about someone's lack of sin is the question - "Can anyone see any good fruit in his or her life"? Negative goodness is not enough in a life; there must be positive qualities that produce good outcomes and favorable results as well. As you and I evaluate surely we conclude it is important to produce something good with our life. Sow good seed - produce good fruit - favor, blessing, covering, good will, and good outcomes.

As we unpack the principle of Sowing and Reaping we will discover there exists a contrast and tension between works and grace - that is important understand. A desktop computer is booted up and it produces access to information and knowledge - that is its best product. But a computer can never boot up and produce fruit of its product, at least not real spiritual fruit. No, real spiritual fruit must grow out of "real life" not virtual, and, in the case of the believer or the follower of Jesus, "real life" according to Galatians 5:25 is found in **the life of the Spirit**. When you think of "works" you think of effort, labor, strain, and toil; when you think of "fruit" you think of enjoyment, satisfaction, peace of mind, the unfolding of life. Our bottom line here is this - the flesh produces "dead works" but the Spirit produces **"living fruit."**

Hebrews 9:14

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

And amazingly this **living fruit** has in it the seed for even more fruit (an abundance). Love produces more love (Love Beyond Love)! Joy helps to produce more joy' Jesus is concerned that we produce "fruit... more fruit... much fruit" (John 15:2-5), because this is the way we glorify Him. The old nature cannot produce fruit; only the new nature can do that.

Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

The New Testament speaks to us of several different kinds of spiritual "fruit":

People Led to Christ (Romans 1:13)

I want you to know, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles.

Holy Living (Romans 6:22)

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

Gifts Brought to God (Romans 15:26-28)

For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you. I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

Good Works (Colossians 1:10)

so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Praise (Hebrews 13:15)

Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

In our context, the "fruit of the Spirit" as listed in Galatians 5:22-23 has to do with the character of a person who is filled with the Spirit of God. It is important that we do not confuse this with the "gift" of the Spirit; which is salvation (Acts 2:38-39),

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

or, the "gifts" of the Spirit which have to do with service (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

from the work and graces of the Spirit which relate to the actual building and developing of Christian character. Unfortunately some at times have overemphasized the gifts and neglected the graces (work) of the Spirit. Building good and godly Christian character is a priority of the Spirit and should precede and support the display of special gifts and abilities.

The Three Expressions of the Nine Fruits of the Spirit

The characteristics that God wants in our lives are seen in the **Nine Fruits of the Spirit, but are evidenced in Three Expressions**. Paul begins with love because all of the other fruit is really an outgrowth of love. There is a nice comparison of these eight qualities with the characteristics of love given to the Corinthians in 13:4-8.

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

This word for love is **agape**, which means of course **God Love** or **Divine Love**. Interestingly, the Greek word **eros**, meaning "sensual love," is never used in the New Testament. This divine love is God's gift to us (Romans 5:5), and we must cultivate it and pray that it will increase (Philippians 1:9-11).

'and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with

the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

When a person lives in the influence of **LOVE**, then he or she experiences **JOY** - that inward peace and sufficiency that is not affected or controlled by outward circumstances. (A case in point is Paul's experience recorded in Phil 4:10-20.) This "holy optimism" keeps him going in spite of difficulties. Love and joy together produce **PEACE**, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Phil 4:7). These first three qualities express the Godward or Vertical Expression of the Christian life.

The next three express the Manward or Horizontal Expression of the Christian life: **LONG-SUFFERING** (courageous endurance without quitting), **GENTLENESS** (kindness), and **GOODNESS** (love in action). The Christian who is long-suffering will not avenge himself or wish difficulties on those who oppose him. He will be kind and gentle, even with the most offensive, and will sow goodness where others sow evil. Human nature can never do this on its own; only the Holy Spirit can.

The final three qualities are Self-ward or Centered: **FAITH** (faithfulness, dependability); **MEEKNESS** (the right use of power and authority, power under control); and **TEMPERANCE** (self-control). Meekness is not weakness. Jesus said, "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29), and Moses was "very meek" (Numbers 12:3); yet no one could accuse either of them of being weak. The meek Christian does not throw his weight around or assert himself. Just as wisdom is the right use of knowledge, so meekness is the right use of authority and power.

It is possible for our old self or flesh to counterfeit (fake) some of the fruit of the Spirit, but the flesh can never produce the genuine fruit of the Spirit. The qualifier for genuine Fruit of the Spirit is this: when the Spirit produces fruit God gets the glory and the Christian (individual) is not conscious of his spirituality; but when the flesh is at work, the person is inwardly proud of himself and is pleased when others compliment him. The work of the Spirit is to make us more like Christ for His glory, not for the praise or power of men.

Good Seed - Good Fruit - Good Outcome Test

9.15.19

Karma and the Principles of Sowing and Reaping

Proverbs 11:18

The wicked earns deceptive wages, But he who sows righteousness gets a true reward.

Proverbs 26:27

He who digs a pit will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him.

Psalm 126

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad. Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the Negeb! Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

Believe God - Believe in the Lord of the Harvest

Jesus told His followers, "**Believe in the Light, so that you may become sons and daughters of the Light.**" He went on to tell them, "**Believe in God; believe also in**

me." The very foundation of our faith is predicated upon our belief in God. The scripture says...

"Believe and you will be saved, believe and you will be healed, believe that we will live with Him, believe that God exists, believe that God is one, believe in the love that God has for us, believe for the hour is coming, believe my words... believe that you have received it."

Belief in God is key. In our context, of sowing and reaping the sower (us) must believe in the very God who promised the harvest so that we can believe that the harvest will come. The word of God is filled with promises from the Lord of the Harvest. **We can't believe in a promise unless we can believe in the One who made it.** There are promises from the Lord of the Harvest that are both for us and about us - we must believe in God so that we can in faith believe in both. Then in due season the harvest will come. Believe God - Believe in the Lord of the Harvest. Good Seed - Good Fruit - Good Outcomes.

Love God - Believe in the Lord of the Harvest

God's promise to all mankind is His love. There are no conditions, exemptions, or provisions to that promise because God's love is not something God does, but rather it is who God is - God is love.

1 John 4:8-12

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his

only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

God's covenant promise to His people has always included these three - **blessing, covering, and favor.**

Leviticus 26:3-13

If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. Your threshing shall last to the time of the grape harvest, and the grape harvest shall last to the time for sowing. And you shall eat your bread to the full and dwell in your land securely. I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid. And I will remove harmful beasts from the land, and the sword shall not go through your land. You shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand, and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. I will turn to you and make you fruitful and multiply you and will confirm my covenant with you. You shall eat old store long kept, and you shall clear out the old to make way for the new. I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be

my people. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves. And I have removed the weight of your burden and made you walk upright.

As we read this God's Spirit reveals something to us; His original covenant was never going to be exclusively to the ancient Fathers and the Jews in Egyptian captivity. Though they are His namesake, the provisions of that original covenant were destined to be foundations for a New Covenant through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. **All** who believe are **All** called by His name. However, one significant condition of the original covenant would remain. That condition - that we are faithful to our covenant with God through the provisions of Jesus - love God and love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus said, "On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

In loving God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and in loving others as He has loved us, we will soon discover in reality that we are righteously practicing the Principles of Sowing and Reaping. We are **sowing good seed - producing good fruit - and experiencing good outcomes**. This is why it is so essential for us as husbands, wives, parents, leaders, and Christ followers to **love God** and to **believe in the Lord of the harvest**. Sowing and Reaping is the practical process for us to experience and live within God's promise to bless, cover, and favor our lives. Loving means something to real to us - believing produces something real for us. We must come to a significant place in our life - this life means something to us and to God. **The Seed we sow must mean something to us** - it is the gateway to God's blessing, covering and favor. Sometimes that is a difficult process and an even more difficult understanding.

I came across this article in the last couple weeks during my research for this teaching. It is from a sermon by a missionary named Del Tarr who served fourteen years in West Africa through the Global Mission Outreach of the Assemblies of God. His story is a powerful illustration of the price some people pay to sow the seed of the gospel in hard soil.

I was always perplexed by Psalm 126 until I went to the Sahel, that vast stretch of savanna more than four thousand miles wide just under the Sahara Desert. In the Sahel, all the moisture comes in a four month period: May, June, July, and August. After that, not a drop of rain falls for eight months. The ground cracks from dryness, and so do your hands and feet. The winds of the Sahara pick up the dust and throw it thousands of feet into the air. It then comes slowly drifting across West Africa as a fine grit. It gets inside your mouth. It gets inside your watch and stops it. The year's food, of course, must all be grown in those four months. People grow sorghum or milo in small fields.

October and November, these are beautiful months. The granaries are full—the harvest has come. People sing and dance. They eat two meals a day. The sorghum is ground between two stones to make flour and then a mush with the consistency of yesterday's Cream of Wheat. The sticky mush is eaten hot; they roll it into little balls between their fingers, drop it into a bit of sauce and then pop it into their mouths. The meal lies heavy on their stomachs so they can sleep.

December comes, and the granaries start to recede. Many families omit the morning meal. Certainly by January not one family in fifty is still eating two meals a day. By February, the evening meal diminishes. The meal shrinks even more during March and children succumb to sickness. You don't stay well on half a meal a day.

April is the month that haunts my memory. In it you hear the babies crying in the twilight. Most of the days are passed with only an evening cup of gruel. Then, inevitably, it happens. A six- or seven-year-old boy comes running to his father one day with sudden excitement. "Daddy! Daddy! We've got grain!" he shouts. "Son, you know we haven't had grain for weeks." "Yes, we have!" the boy insists. "Out in the hut where we keep the goats—there's a leather sack hanging up on the wall—I reached up and put my hand down in there—Daddy, there's grain in there! Give it to Mommy so she can make flour, and tonight our tummies can sleep!"

The father stands motionless. "Son, we can't do that," he softly explains. "That's next year's seed grain. It's the only thing between us and starvation. We're waiting for the rains, and then we must use it."

The rains finally arrive in May, and when they do the young boy watches as his father takes the sack from the wall and does the most unreasonable thing imaginable. Instead of feeding his desperately weakened family, he goes to the field and with tears streaming down his face, he takes the precious seed and throws it away. He scatters it in the dirt! Why? Because he believes in the harvest. The seed is his; he owns it. He can do anything with it he wants.

The act of sowing it hurts so much that he cries. But as the African pastors say when they preach on Psalm 126, "Brother and sisters, this is God's law of the harvest. Don't expect to rejoice later on unless you have been willing to sow in tears." And I want to ask you: How much would it cost you to sow in tears? I don't mean just giving God something from your abundance, but finding a way to say, "I believe in the harvest, and therefore I will give and sow what makes no sense. The world would call me unreasonable to do this—but I must sow regardless, in order that I may someday celebrate with songs of joy."

9.22.19

Karma and the Principles of Sowing and Reaping

Mark 4:1-9

Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." And he said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

I read a book called Life's Choices written by a wonderful author named John Lawrence. For me Lawrence's book fully captured the intent and heart of the biblical principles of sowing and reaping. He organized these biblical principles of eternal truth into seven laws (good number). I am going to borrow Lawrence's seven laws, but give my take and context on what those laws are and how those laws must mean come something in our spiritual journey of sowing and reaping. If you are thinking of Instagramming or Tweeting John to tell him that I borrowed his laws you might not reach him, unfortunately he passed away in 1995. He was

battling cancer and yet was teaching on the Laws of the Harvest ten days before he died. Thankfully John's inspired work remains for us to use - he tell us that he borrowed them too...

The Seven Laws of the Harvest

One - We Reap Only What Has Been Sown

Most of us have figured out by now that our lives are filled with choices. Choices that affect our outcomes on an everyday basis in everything we do which means **our everyday choices are not without significance or meaning**. Our choices deeply affect not only us, but everyone we touch and love. This is really happening. It's happening in dramatic ways whether we see the fruit of those choices in real time or not. In reality, our choices are the seed we sow... Day in - day out, we reap only what has been sown by the choices we make.

In spite of the far reaching impacts of this law we should not fear it - rather we should embrace it because of its power to be and to do such good in our lives. I admit the idea that our daily choices having such impact and meaning is in itself intimidating, but still we must embrace the opportunity and gift that God gives us through making choices to bring His goodness into our life and the lives of those we love the most. Don't freeze! Even a failure to make choices is a choice. This opportunity to tap into the goodness of God should motivate us to make wise choices in which we can be and do good things with the time we have for the people we love.

Ephesians 5:15-18

Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.

Psalm 90:12

So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.

We need that wisdom, so we can make wise choices! Don't be fearful of looking to the future. There is wisdom in looking ahead to envision the outcomes God has promised through sowing and reaping. It answers your why? Why make good and godly choices? Because we reap only what has been sown.

"We look to the future to find the beginning, not merely to see the end."

Two - We Reap the Same as the Kind We Sow

Galatians 6:7-8

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Whatever we sow, we reap; so that, if we sow good, we will reap good. This principle is an absolute law, not karma - law. **Be not deceived, God is not mocked.** These words introduce not only the law of sowing and reaping, but the fact that **we reap the same in kind as we sow.** This is a real warning and stresses the absolute intense nature of this law.

Be not deceived is *planao*; to cause to deviate, lead astray, deceive. It means, to actively resist from being deceived, led astray, simply do not allow it to happen. The call to courage and diligence in watching and anticipating the constant threat and activity of our spiritual enemies seeking to rain down hell and chaos on our spiritual walk with God. It warns and reminds us that Satan and a world system under his control is ever at work with his original lie, "you surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4-5).

God is not mocked is *mukterizo*; to turn up one's nose at, to treat with contempt, to sarcastically ridicule. We cannot ignore and respond with contempt to God's truth and laws by attempting to live by our own wisdom and ways without serious consequences - that is a flawed system. If anyone had told King David before or even right after his affair with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11) that he would break just about every one of the revered laws of Moses, he would more than likely have denied it. But the laws of sowing and reaping and this law in particular, "**we reap the same in kind as we sow,**" strongly show our need to hear good advice and to pay attention to strong warnings. No need to be defensive or get angry - maybe there is something there we do not see or do not want to see. if there is nothing there see then it truly as they say... all good! But if we get good advice and strong

warnings and do not hear, listen to God's Spirit, we could be like David - in serious trouble and reaping the same in kind as he had sown. Before it was all said and done he had;

- **coveted his neighbor's wife**
- **committed adultery with neighbors wife**
- **had neighbor murdered**
- **stole neighbors wife**
- **lied about coveting neighbors wife, sleeping with neighbors wife, murdering neighbor so he could steal neighbors wife**

David's downward spiral is a big-time warning to each of us of the deceit and intensity of sin, and the devastating consequences of **reaping the same in kind as we sow**. For sure... David repented, apologized, and made things right but his choices sowed a seed that were harvested in his own life. Here is the reality of that story...

Not long after David had brought the ark of God to Jerusalem the season changed to spring and the army of Israel went to do battle with their enemies as the cold and mud of winter was not conducive to war- making.

David, as was sometimes his practice, had not gone out with his army but allowed Joab to lead them. By now, David only led the armies directly when they had some difficulty - as was the case in the battle with the Ammonites. But David did not go because he had other things on his mind.

In the evening, when it was cool enough to be on the roof of the palace, David walked around and saw a woman on top of another building who was bathing. In keeping with his often-impetuous nature David sent someone to find out who she was and then to bring her to him. His immaturity was such that he committed adultery with her, even though she was known to him as the wife of one of his soldiers, a man currently on the battlefield. Bathsheba returned home and in a while discovered herself pregnant by David. David attempted to cover-up his sin by calling her husband home, under cover of inquiring about the battle, but really to get him to be with his wife so that he'd think the child was his. Uriah was a more honorable man than David and refused to even go into his home so long as his fellow soldiers were in harms-way. When David's sneaky plan failed he escalated his scheming and instructed Joab to manipulate the placement of Uriah in the battle so that he'd be exposed and killed by the enemy – which is what happened. After the mourning for her husband, Uriah, David summoned Bathsheba to the palace and added her to his wives.

Nathan, the prophet, confronted David with a parable and David's condemnation of the selfish man in the story convicted him for the taking of Uriah's wife and causing him to be killed by the Ammonites. Nathan reminded David that he had sinned first against the Lord God, and David confessed and repented of that. Nathan told David that while he was forgiven, keeping the Lord God from striking him dead, he would no longer have peace with his enemies, his own wives would be taken and sexually assaulted by a relative, and his illegitimate child with Bathsheba would die. David fasted and prayed but the boy still died. Although his servants could not get him to eat or to drink while the child was sick but not yet dead, once the child died David rose and bathed and worshiped, then he ate; explaining to astonished

servants that there was no longer any chance that the Lord God would relent from His punishment, so he must go on with life. Bathsheba bore David another son whom they called Solomon, but whom the Lord God instructed them through Nathan to also call Jedediah, meaning “loved by the Lord”.

Joab had finally about overcome the resistance at the Ammonite fortress so he sent word for David to lead the final assault so he, not Joab, would receive the credit. David did so, the plunder was great, and the Ammonites were forced to do heavy labor for Israel.

David’s thirty-second Psalm was a wisdom-song in which David used his own refusal to confess his sin, followed by his confession and repentance, as a teachable-moment for others to break free of the trap of prideful isolation from the Lord God. David’s fifty-first Psalm was his repentant reaction after the prophet Nathan confronted him in the matter of Bathsheba.

Hebrews 3:13

But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

- **Three - We Reap in a Different Season Than We Sow**
- **Four - We Reap More Than We Sow**
- **Five - We Reap in Proportion to What We Sow**
- **Six - We Reap the Full Harvest of the Good Only if We Persevere; The Evil Comes to Harvest on its Own**

- **Seven - Last Year's Harvest is Gone, This Year's Harvest is Yet to Come**

9.29.19 Karma and the Principles of Sowing and Reaping

Seven Laws of the Harvest (Continued)

Three - We Reap in a Different Season Than We Sow

It's not that Christian believers are living divergent and interesting lives throughout the week, it's that too often we live diluted and delusional lives and then show up to Sunday worship gatherings and have to pray for a crop failure. In the context of the principles of sowing and reaping - most hope their life-styles won't catch up with them. The Seven Laws of the Harvest remind us - it always does. As we have all learned from Galatians 6:7, God is not going to have man turn up his nose and become the brunt of our hipster sarcasm. No one can turn up his or her nose at God's laws and get away with it - that's real. Sooner or later that defiant and nonchalant choice will return to confront, even haunt. What we sow, we reap, but the thing that is so deceptive is that **we reap in a different season than we sow**. Let's unpack this third law of the harvest from several different angles.

The Foundation of this Law is the Creative Purpose of God

Genesis 8:22

**"While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, And cold and heat,
And summer and winter, And day and night will not cease."**

The harvest never comes immediately after planting. Harvest happens. While the whole earth is doing its thing, there is seedtime and harvest, cold and winter,

sunshine and rain etc. There are as we like to say reasons seasons to life and the reality is that harvest never comes immediately.

Rome was not built in a day. Plants don't grow overnight. The best athletes don't become strong or dominant in a week. Children aren't born overnight. Wisdom isn't gained in Instagram/Snapchat - time, process, experience, success, failure, determination, persistence and life. Then you have something of worth value and substance.

Without question we reap what we sow, but the principle that millennium mankind doesn't want to acknowledge is that we reap in a different season.

One - Because we do not see the immediate results, we have allowed ourselves to believe that there is no harvest coming and we can think, live, and do as we wish and when we wish. According to the laws of the harvest and the principles of sowing and reaping that simply is not gonna' cut it. The harvest will come but in a different season than we sowed our seed.

Ecclesiastes 8:11-12

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. Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life, still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly.

Two - We live in a self-oriented society that says "hey... I'm great amazing and awesome. My interest is the only interest, it's all good." This too is a deception. We have an unlimited menu and access: info, music, culture, appetites, religion, education, politics, causes, cravings and preferences. Our personal landscape changes in the time it takes to upload or download. The law of the harvest does not abide by those demands and expectations.

Three - In 12 hours we can binge watch an entire season of Ozark or Yellowstone see family conflicts, national conflicts all resolved in one hour, or at the most in a mini-series, four hours, but in reality, these things often require months and even years to resolve or change. The expectation of having all the material success, lifetime achievement rewards and advantages from cradle to grave is diluted and delusional thinking. The laws of the harvest are not tethered to those misguided expectations.

Those laws require we wait for those successes, rewards and results. Sowing what is good and waiting on the Lord of the Harvest.

Isaiah 50:11

Don't light your own firebrand to light our path.

Jeremiah 2:13

Don't use your own cisterns, they are broken and hold no water.

Jeremiah 17:15

Don't lean on the arm of the flesh, or our own ability, rather than lean on the arm of the Lord.

Psalm 130:5-6

Wait for the Lord, allow your soul to wait, keep your hope in His word. Let your soul wait for the Lord, more than the watchmen for the morning.

Unfortunately, because many Christian believers today tend to operate more on emotional and feelings rather than on reality and biblical truth, there is little or no faith available to sow and then wait for a later harvest. There is little patience and persistence available to have the perspective of laying up treasures in heaven. King David the warrior poet and song writer knew by his own personal experiences that envy, worry over the prosperity of others, was really a matter of faith and seeing life from an eternal perspective. That is why he was able to write things like...

Psalm 37:7-9

Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret, it leads only to evildoing. For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land.

Again, in the context of the Laws of the Harvest, and robust understanding that we reap in a different season than we sow, it makes sense how Jesus challenged his

disciples about their lack of faith, "oh men of little faith" he said. (Matthew 6:30) I can almost hear him saying, Hey guys... trust me. Have a little more faith in Me. The harvest will come.

The Law of the Harvest says, **We sow in one season; we reap in another.** No harvest comes the moment the seed is planted, but it we wait for God's timing and favor.

1 Corinthians 15:58:

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord."

Pray to the Lord of the Harvest and Don't Pass Out

Luke 10:2

And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

Luke 18:1

Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart.

John 4:35-38

Do you not say, 'There are still four months, and then comes the harvest'? Well, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps can rejoice together. For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows, and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.

Wait Patiently on the Lord Who Will Reward Your Labor

Psalm 27:13-14

I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living. 14 Wait for the LORD; Be strong, and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD.

Psalm 37:7-11

Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret, it leads only to evildoing. For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land. Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; And you will look carefully for his place, and he will not be there. But the humble will inherit the land, And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.

Psalm 147:10-11

He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He does not take pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD favors those who fear Him, Those who wait for His lovingkindness.

Proverbs 20:22

Do not say, "I will repay evil"; Wait for the LORD, and He will save you.

Final Thought on Reaping in a Different Season than We Sow

For every one of us who can wait in true faith we are renewed in strength - we will get stronger, not weaker. We get stronger so that we can continue to serve and love the Lord, while still looking ahead in expectation of his saving work. Stronger so that we are not jumping off and doing what we feel rather than trusting what we know. In the law of the harvest there is no need for us to take matters into our own hands. There will come a time when all that God has promised will be come to us - come to us in reality and fulfillment. Back in real time, us believers can still flourish by tapping deep into our integrity and strength of character (biblical) as we trust and rest in God's grace and power.

10.13.19

Karma and the Principles of Sowing and Reaping

Four - We Reap More Than We Sow

There are no Laws of the Harvest more significant and relative than this one. This law simply means that when the seed we sow is good, we will receive generously and abundantly from the hand of God - a God mind you who owes no one, anything. Yes this Law of the Harvest is simple and yet it is also profound - **the harvest is always greater than the seed planted.** If this weren't a fact, no farmer would ever plant a thing. If the sower only got back what germinated in the ground, he would be on the losing end and spend his farming career poor and frustrated and mad at his dog. Law Four: We reap more than we sow.

Reaping more than we sow is fundamental to the laws of the harvest and is not just an agricultural reality, it is true of almost everything we do in life. In our context, what is true in the natural and physical is also true in the spiritual - whether you are a believer or a non-believer. Although we are always reaching for the good and positive side to this law, we know that this law works in reverse as well. When we sow evil, we will generally reap more than we sowed as well. Hmmm... now that we think about it, I sure some things actually make sense huh? We also know that there are some exceptional circumstances since we all know we live in a sin cursed world with both natural and economic disasters taking place - sadly, it happens. A farmer may sow bountifully and have his crop destroyed by drought or a tornado, or he may reap a good crop and not be able to reap a reward from it because of

economic regulatory factors in his or her country. But beyond those uncontrollable circumstances, in the end they still reap more than we sow.

We Reap More Than We Sow - A Spiritual Context

Hosea 8:7

For they sow the wind, and they reap the whirlwind.

I just don't like how that verse sounds. I get it - I just don't like it. Fortunately for you and I, in the realm of God's Spirit we all live in an age and time of grace. This means that God has made a way of provision through Jesus, by means of genuine repentance and change. That provision of grace shields and protects spiritually/eternally from reaping the abundance caused by our natural tendencies to sow the bad seed of sin and poor choices. But it does not always protect and shield us from natural and temporal consequences. Long story short... because of Jesus, God does not go Old Testament judgment on us - but in real time there is hardship in this world. At the end of the day - we reap more than we sow. However, because of Jesus, we now have this promise - **where sin is present, grace shows up there even more...**

Just for a minute, and not to beleaguer the point, it is extremely important as we come to understand the reality of this particular law (reaping more than we sow) to avoid in every way possible sowing the bad seed that we know is going to bring a harvest of an abundance of everything we do not want for ourselves or the people we love. Here are a couple of practical examples of the unfavorable and hardship

outcomes we could face if we ignore or do not seek to understand and embrace this law.

One

Proverbs 22:8

**He who sows iniquity will reap vanity,
And the rod of his fury will perish.**

Proverbs 22:8 is telling us that when a person sows iniquity or wrong, they will reap trouble and sorrow in abundance. There is a kind of play on words in this passage through alliteration in the Hebrew text. **Vanity** here is more accurately translated as **calamity** or **trouble**. It's the Hebrew word for; trouble, sorrow, distress, misfortune, idolatry, and emptiness. The primary meaning of this word has two interesting aspects: a stress on trouble which moves on to wickedness, and an emphasis on emptiness which moves on to idolatry. So, there is that. And because there is that we move on from it quickly and decisively to sow good seed - produce good fruit - and see good outcomes (in abundance).

Two

James 3:5-6

**So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. Behold, how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!
And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set**

among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.

Is there any more that needs to be said here that James didn't so eloquently already say? Well, let's just add this - James indicates that lack of control and discipline is evidence of spiritual arrogance and weak faith. Following those patterns and behaviors, it doesn't matter how much public prayer and fasting, how much giving and showing up to church - its shallow, it's hollow, and it's just a show. James adds that inner control of the tongue must accompany outward performance. The Law of the Harvest says... we reap more than we sow. The point is well taken - we do not want to sow bad seed through the words we speak and as a result reap a whirlwind.

Final Look - We Reap More than We Sow

Though King David did sin against the Lord (he reaped more than he sowed), as a whole, he walked right with the Lord and sowed what was good. When confronted with his sin by Nathan, he quickly confessed. This made him a man after God's own heart. Most of David's life was sowing good, not evil, and as a result, God continued to bless him and many of the kings of Judah for many years because of the good seed and the abundance of what was sown. Here is the big Ancestors.com moment.

Taken literally, Jesus was a direct descendant of David, the king of Israel. When Matthew began his gospel, he started with an abbreviated family line of Jesus, clearly noting his connections with both Abraham and David. Matthew followed the genealogy of Jesus through Joseph, focusing on Joseph as a son of Jacob who was

descended from the family line of Solomon the son of David. Luke 3:23-38 also notes the literal family line of David to Jesus, though using a different list of ancestors. Many believe Luke's genealogy offers the family line of Jesus from Mary's family. If so, both sides of the family of Jesus descended from David and the bloodline of Jesus goes back to King David not only through his earthly father, Joseph, but also through His mother Mary. Luke's account traces Mary's genealogical line back eighteen generations to King David:

Luke 3:23-31

Now Yeshua Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi....the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel... the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse.

Paul claims in Romans 1:3 that Jesus was from the seed of David after the flesh. This has always been understood to mean that Paul was claiming that King David was the biological ancestor of Jesus.

How is that for Reaping More than You Sow?

10.20.19

Karma and the Principles of Sowing and Reaping

[Seven Laws of the Harvest]

Five - We Reap in Proportion to What We Sow

We have learned in this series that both the promise and warning of Scripture is that we reap what we sow. **We have learned** that life's choices are filled with consequences both good and bad—temporal and eternal. According to the **Seven Laws of the Harvest**, reaping what we sow means; 1) we reap only what has been sown 2) we reap the same in kind as we sow 3) we reap in a different season than we sow 4) we reap more than we sow, and **today** that we look at 5) we reap in proportion to what we sow.

The underlying message for the laws of sowing and reaping is this; AS NOW - SO THEN. That is to say... things are the way they are now because of what was done then. This is a bit philosophical, but it is also really true. You and I are becoming today what we will be the rest of our lives!! Yes, we are a work in progress - that is why it so important to make good progress - not simply maintain what we are or who we are, every day.

The last two laws are closely related, yet there is a very significant and clear distinction between them.

Four - We Reap More Than We Sow

Five - We Reap in Proportion to What We Sow

Those two laws each reveal the fact that we reap more than we sow. Both laws deal with quantity and amount, but the fourth law where the seed we sow is multiplied many times over has to do directly with God's part, the fifth law [we reap in proportion] this ours—we own it. That we reap in proportion to what we sow is paired to human responsibility. It gives a voice and credence to the principles of living by faith, being faithful, being bold, being courageous, being visionary and even being adventurous.

Life eventually asks us all this question: "What would have been or could have been if had only taken a chance?" In the context of sowing and reaping isn't the question really "What could have happened in my life if I had only sown the seed that I had?" There is a sign along the Alaskan Highway that reads: "Choose your rut carefully, you'll be in it for the next 200 miles."

God's promise is that whatever is sown is multiplied many times over. Man's part is that, trusting and having real faith in God's sovereign providence, mercy, and promises, should lead us to **sow all the good we can and leave the results to God**. Here is the amazing thing with God - **our opportunities to sow good seed and to reap in proportion to what sow are still before us. The best, not the worst is still ahead for us all.**

Biblical Foundations of This Law

2 Corinthians 9:6

Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

The apostle Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit and greatly influenced by the wisdom of the Torah when he wrote this to the Christians in Corinth. This is as clear as it gets and summarizes a principle that is found throughout the Bible from beginning to end. Generous sowing leads to generous reaping. John Lawrence who wrote the book *The Seven Laws of the Harvest*, articulated the principles of **generous giving** this way:

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!

I believe that as a church, we have been receiving a revelation that the Laws of the Harvest are real. And we have each in some way experienced in real-time that reality both negatively and positively. But **here is where God wants us to land** - If we sow abundantly to the Spirit, we will reap abundantly in spiritual blessings and consequences. We can no longer sow abundantly to our flesh, or we will reap **in proportion** an abundant harvest of the same. I know what I choose... and by what we have been experiencing it is pretty clear what you have chosen as well.

Our "poster boy" for Sowing and Reaping (King David) is our best reminder: Because David continued to sow to the flesh, his sin snowballed and avalanched on him. He went from coveting Bathsheba to breaking every sin of the second half of the Ten Commandments. He sinned abundantly and reaped abundant consequences.

But the message, the morning, and this moment is for Reunion. This principle and this promise is set for good outcomes and not bad. It is a Jeremiah message...

I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

It is a spiritual law of life that is the very DNA of God, but one that is contrary to the nature or DNA of man. God's blessings, favor and covering that come to us through sowing and reaping is revealed in His Word. Note: These scripture are in complete context to the Laws of the Harvest.

Acts 20:35

In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Luke 6:38

Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.

Matthew 19:29

And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life

Proverbs 11:24-26

There is one who scatters, yet increases all the more, And there is one who withholds what is justly due, but it results only in want. The generous man will be prosperous, And he who waters will himself be watered. He who withholds grain, the people will curse him...

The message here is clear, it is our time to sow generously and faithfully with our lives and ministry, we sow the best of our time, our talent, our treasure, and our truth. We are about to reap a harvest in proportion to what we have sown.

Biblical Evidence for This Principle

God's character, forms the foundation of His Word and provides our motivation for living our lives by this principles of His Word. We need to remember who God is, what He is like, and what He has promised. Not only is He omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, and sovereign, but He is a loving, kind, gracious, and a giving God. It is God's nature to bless us and to give good gifts to us. It's the Gospel - the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ is our best illustration of this.

Romans 8:31-32

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Ephesians 3:20

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

2 Corinthians 9:8

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

Since bountiful sowing is the result of what WE (you and I) are responsible for, "what is needed to make this happen? Bountiful sowing is always about our day to day commitment to biblical principles, personal values, personal discipline, personal character and the clear decision to live a Spirit-filled life. There it is...

2 Corinthians 8:3-8

For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord, begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. Consequently we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work

as well. But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also. I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also.

2 Corinthians 9:5-6

So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, that the same might be ready as a bountiful gift, and not affected by covetousness. Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

Note: The word **bountiful** in 2 Corinthians 9:5-6 is translated from the Greek, **[eulogia]** meaning; **good word, praise, flattering speech**, and in Paul's context - **blessing.**

Let's say that again - He who sows a blessing will also reap a blessing...

This is more Biblical evidence that we reap in proportion to what we sow.

Final Thoughts

Here is where we circle back to revisit all of that talk about **living by faith, being faithful, being bold, being courageous, being visionary and adventurous.** Our sowing is to be the result of faith from singleness of vision and devotion to God. We should be generous because we are trust God for eternal treasures, trusting God

both to supply our present needs, and increase our ability to give and be a blessing. Of course, we should always give out of love for God and people in need, but we also give in faith because we know God has promised to supply our needs, that our giving will not be our lack. In connection with the gifts given by the Philippians to supply his needs, Paul wrote:

Philippians 4:19

And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.

A point of clarification is in order here. The analogy of sowing and reaping in 2 Corinthians 9:6 does not teach that you will get back tenfold or a hundred fold of your giving so you can live a fantasy lifestyle. We sow and give so that God is glorified and others receive a blessing - that's how "we get ours." There is a promise of return, but it is to increase our seed for sowing, greater giving, and increase the harvest of our righteousness, spiritual fruit for the glory of God according to (2 Corinthians 9:1-11).

Last Thought: Sow in Trust - Not in Uncertainty

Ecclesiastes 11:4-6

Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days. Divide your portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth. If the clouds are full, they pour out rain upon the earth; and whether a tree falls toward the south or toward the north, wherever the tree falls, there it lies. He who watches the wind will not sow and he who looks at the clouds will not reap. Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things. Sow your seed in the morning, and do not be idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed, or whether both of them alike will be good.

Contrary to how man typically thinks, these verses and the conditions they describe are designed to promote bountiful sowing, not the opposite which is selfishness, self-centered, narcissistic, greedy and stingy. These verses warn about the dangers of being overly cautious which hinders generous sowing. The point here is don't try to second guess the sovereignty of God. Just trust the Lord. We can't wait for conditions to be perfect. Nor can we wait for things to be free of all risks—absolutely free, absolutely safe. Instead of protecting ourselves, we have to take what appears to us as risks and live by faith. **We Reap in Proportion to What We Sow.**

11.10.19

Karma and the Principles of Sowing and Reaping

[Seven Laws of the Harvest]

Six - We Reap a Full and Good Harvest

Only If We Persist and Persevere; The Evil Harvest Comes In On Its Own

Because this is so true to real life and real time this law becomes exposes a raw nerve very quickly. Even with the word of God clearly explaining how it will be, which of us has not experienced the reality of this law; we reap the full and good harvest only if we persevere, but evil naturally comes to harvest on its own. It doesn't need our help. The evidence shows up in our lives and is expressed in our regret and remorse... If only I paid more attention, if only I were a little more faithful and focused, or disciplined, or persistent. If only I had done what I was supposed to do when I was supposed to do it. Truth is... nobody likes to pull weeds. But this law of the harvest teaches us why it must be done. This is best illustrated through gardening (interestingly we actually have a master gardener and a master rosarian at Reunion). In gardening as in spiritual life, it takes the kind of care only shown through persistence and perseverance in cultivation to keep weeds out and provide for conditions that promote good growth and healthy plants. But the good gardener has the knowledge that weeds will naturally grow on their own and take over a garden without doing a single thing. If we are sowing good seed and expecting good outcomes then we must know that we need to persist and persevere or there will be problems.

Connection Point One - Knowing and Following God's Word Helps Overcome Significant Problems

[The problem with the lack of biblical knowledge]

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children."

Hosea

[The problem with understanding Scripture correctly] -

"For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding."

[The problem with real life application]

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

James 1:22

John Lawrence gave the following illustration of this truth: A large 18-wheeler was parked along a Kentucky highway. The driver was standing by the tractor from which a front wheel had been removed. A preacher stopped to see if he needed any assistance, but the trucker thanked him and said he had already sent for help. He had burned out a wheel bearing, and another was on its way. As the preacher pulled away, his eyes caught the lettering on the side of the cab of the truck: Standard Oil Company of Kentucky, Lubricants Division. He had burned out a bearing—hauling grease.

Important also to recognize and correct that many Christians and leaders fail in their own life while seeking to minister and correct others. It is hurtful and confusing, it is not real ministry, and it is never well received.

Point: We cannot let weeds grow in our own garden while we seek to hoe them out of others.

Matthew 7:3-5

Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but you do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

Connection Point Two - The Principle of Persistence and Perseverance

The key passage for this study from the beginning has been Galatians 6:7-10. Other passages have added to our understanding of sowing and reaping, but it is this passage which focuses our attention on the need of perseverance with a warning, an exhortation, and a promise.

Galatians 6:9-10

And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Anyone who has ever planted a garden knows that you can't plant it and then forget it. If so, very little will come from the planting because of the many forces that work against a good harvest. A good garden requires continuous labor and care in order to reap a good abundant harvest. In the context of a healthy spiritual life and the growth of our faith the force that comes against us is of course Satan. And because the presence of Satan and his demonic forces of evil, with every opportunity for good there is always the problem of an aggressive opposition. This is true not only in the spiritual world but in the physical world as well. Whether we are sowing the seed of God's Word in the soil of human hearts or simply sowing seed in one's garden in the backyard we are faced with opposition.

Mark 4:14-20

The sower sows the word. And these are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them. And in a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, and the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good

soil; and they hear the word and accept it, and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.

To use another metaphor, with building we are always faced with the need for battling the forces of evil. This is illustrated graphically in the life of Nehemiah when he was leading the people in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. They had to rebuild the wall “with one hand doing the work and the other holding a weapon” (Nehemiah 4:1-23). This means the need for watchfulness and perseverance.

We need these kind of exhortations and personal challenges mostly because of our natural tendency to take a day off or to become discouraged or distracted because of the aggressive actions of the spiritual enemies that stand against us. **Evil sows weeds right in the middle of our sowing good seed.** To complicate matters, he attempts to prevent us from not only sowing but cultivating (pulling weeds and feeding the soil) through the many day to day life challenges that tend to discourage and derail us. We don't always recognize what's happening because it takes time to grow a crop or plants. Ecclesiastes 11:1 reminds us... **“cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days.”** When will we find it? Oh yeah... after many days. And sometimes we do not see outcomes in this life at all.

In the Galatians passage Paul used two encouragements to help us persevere and not give up. They are our last two connection points.

Connection Point Three - Do Not Lose Heart [enkakeo]

This Greek word means "to act or respond badly, wrongly," and then "to cease, give up, lose heart, despair." Paul is encouraging believers to avoid this kind of action or reaction - stay with it. Whatever it takes - be all in.

Connection Point Four - If We Do Not Grow Weary [ekluo]

This word is used only in the passive voice which points to the impact of something on one's life which causes them to give up. Such as... becoming faint of soul, weary or slack, give out and give up, lose motivation or moral courage. It appears that the first word stresses the idea of discouragement, a failure of the will. The second word stresses failure in spiritual strength.

Reaping is related to the sowing, not only in the matter of the quality of the seed, but also in regard to the quantity sown (2 Corinthians 9:6). But the quantity sown is related to the concept of endurance through the long haul. While diligence and perseverance in the present will produce proportionate abundance later, Paul is challenging us to remember that "chill, casual, and whatever" right now will produce proportionate poverty later.

"For in due time" is understood as "in its own time." This means harvest time. Harvest time has its own time - God's time. This is God's appointment, and won't be rushed or delayed by the act of anyone other than Him - but because He said it it will come. The reference is to a fixed relation between seed-time and harvest; it carries on the idea of sowing and reaping.

A few years ago there was a story reported about a father and his two children - a boy of eight and a girl of ten years, all good swimmers, who had entered the waters of the Atlantic at one of the Jersey Shore resorts. When they got some distance from shore, they became separated and the father realized his little girl was being carried out to sea by the tide. He called out to her: 'Mary, I am going to shore for help. If you get tired, turn on your back. You can float all day on your back. I'll come back for you. Before long, rescue crews and boats were out on the face of the Atlantic Ocean hunting for one small girl, while hundreds of people to whom the news had spread waited and prayed on shore. It was four hours before they found her, she had been washed out miles from land. They found her calmly swimming on her back and not at all frightened. Tears of joy and relief greeted the rescuers with the little girl as they came to land. When asked how she made it she said, 'Daddy said he would come for me, and that I could float all day, so I swam and floated, because I knew he would come.

"In due time" refers to a right, proper, or a favorable time. The emphasis is on the quality of time and the things that characterize the time as: a time for harvest

Note the contrast in the use of the Greek word *kairos* (καιροϋ), "time, opportunity." In verse 9 it is used of the season for harvest, and in verse 10 where it is translated "opportunity," it is used of the season for sowing. To miss or fail in one is to miss or fail in the other.

Paul also stresses the importance and nature of sowing by the use of different terms for doing good.

One - "In doing good" (vs. 9) is a combination of one word for "doing, executing, producing," (poieo) and another word which means "good" (kalos). Literally it is "doing what is beautiful, helpful, beneficial."

Two - "Do good" (vs. 10) combines two different sets of words, synonyms, to drive home the point. The verb means "be active, work effectively, accomplish, carry out" (ergazomai), and the noun used refers to what is intrinsically good, valuable, fit, useful (agathos).

Conclusion

The need is perseverance in sowing. It's seldom easy, and sometimes we don't see the fruit of our labors in this life. Hebrews 11:33-39 speaks of those who were severely persecuted for their faith, but they persevered because they looked for eternal rewards as sojourners and pilgrims (check out Hebrews 11:13-16). These, we are then told, "having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised," that is, in this life. A really cool illustration of this truth is found in the life of John Wycliffe (oh, we also have someone at Reunion who works for Wycliffe).

You and I have an English Bible in our possession largely because of a man named John Wycliffe. He was known not only as a builder, producing the first English text of the Bible, but also as a fighter. What a leader! When he died, his enemies burned him at the stake and took the ashes of his body and sprinkled them over the Thames River in London. "Forever, we're rid of Wycliffe!" his enemies must have thought. They were wrong. The product of his labors, the English Bible, is with us today because he did more than fight. He stayed at the task.

Wycliffe never saw the fruit of his sowing, but he persevered in faith and we today enjoy the product of his labors. But where does perseverance come from? It comes from knowing God through the Word and leaning on His promises by faith. It ultimately boils down to faith and staying focused on the Lord and His person, plan, promises, and purposes as given to us in Scripture.

Romans 15:4

For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

James 1:2-4

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Psalms 138:8

The Lord will accomplish what concerns me; Thy lovingkindness, O Lord, is everlasting; Do not forsake the works of Thy hands.

11.17.19

Karma and the Principles of Sowing and Reaping

[Seven Laws of the Harvest]

Six - We Reap a Full and Good Harvest

Only If We Persist and Persevere; The Evil Harvest Comes In On Its Own

[continued]

Galatians 6:9-10

9 And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Anyone who has ever planted a garden knows that you can't plant it and then forget it. If so, very little will come from the planting because of the many forces that work against a good harvest. A good garden requires continuous labor and care in order to reap a good abundant harvest. In the context of a healthy spiritual life and the growth of our faith the force that comes against us is of course Satan. And because the presence of Satan and his demonic forces of evil, with every opportunity for good there is always the problem of an aggressive opposition. This is true not only in the spiritual world but in the physical world as well. Whether we are sowing the seed of God's Word in the soil of human hearts or simply sowing seed in one's garden in the backyard we are faced with opposition.

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The sower sows the word. And these are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them. And in a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, and the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it, and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.

Protect the Seed - Pull the Weeds

We must protect the seed we have sown by pulling out the weeds that represent the evil that the enemy has intended for you and all the good seed you have planted. When we have shown that we will protect our good seed by uprooting, exposing and destroying the evil in our lives God will favor you with the resources we need to reap a harvest from the good seed we have sown. Let's mix our metaphor for minute. In building we are always faced with the need for battling the obstacles and forces of evil. There is story of the prophet Nehemiah when leading the people of Judah AFTER GOD TOLD HIM TO rebuild the destroyed walls

of Jerusalem. They had to rebuild the wall "with one hand doing the work and the other holding a weapon" (Nehemiah 4:1-23). They rebuilt the wall in 52 days, in spite of the fact that three different enemies began to attack them while they were rebuilding. You have probably asked yourself a few times in life... "How am I going to rebuild my life while I am having to fight for my life? By doing what only you can do - protect the seed by pulling the weeds. Listen to this...

Nehemiah 4:14

"Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes."

Here is what you need to know - God will fight your enemies and defeat them before your very eyes. So you do what you do - God will certainly do what God does!

These kind of exhortations and personal challenges are important mostly because of our natural tendency to take a day off or to become discouraged or distracted because of the aggressive actions of the spiritual enemies that stand against us.

Evil sows weeds right while we our sowing good seed.

To complicate matters, he attempts to prevent us from not only sowing good seed but cultivating (pulling weeds and feeding the soil) through the many day to day life challenges that have a way of completely discouraging and derailing us. We don't always recognize immediately what's happening to the good seed we've sown because it takes time for it to grow. We just have to know that in order to protect

the seed we pull the weeds. No matter what - come rain, come shine, good days and bad days. There is no time to get lost in our feelings or emotions. Ask yourself the question... "how does it make you feel to get up and look at all the good seed that has been sown in your life only to see it overrun by weeds? That's right - you won't feel good about it! That's the point - instead losing the whole day, the whole week, the whole month - go out and pull those weeds.

Then you will feel better!!!

Ecclesiastes 11:1 reminds us... **"cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days."** When will we find it? **Oh yeah... after many days.** And sometimes we do not see outcomes in this life at all. But we know for certain that "The Lord of the Harvest" will come bring a good outcome.

In the Galatians 6 passage, Paul used two encouragements to help us persevere and to not give up. They are our last two connection points.

9 And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Connection Point Three - Do Not Lose Heart [enkakeo]

This Greek word means "to act or respond badly, wrongly," and then "to cease, give up, lose heart, despair." Paul is encouraging believers to avoid this kind of response

or reaction. In using this one word he is saying.... hold on, stand firm, be resolved, don't get lost and washed out by what you are feeling - stay with it. Nothing profound but completely true - Whatever it takes - be all in. **God can do anything with you.**

Connection Point Four - If We Do Not Grow Weary [ekluo]

This word is used only in the passive voice which points to the impact of something bad or difficult happening in someone's life that causes them to give up. Such as... loss of possession, loss of courage, loss of love, loss of trust, loss of health, hope, and life. It appears that the first word **enkakeo** talks about the ideas and outcomes of discouragement, or a failure of the will. The second word **ekluo** focuses on a crisis of faith or failure in spiritual strength.

In regards to both losing heart and growing weary we should know this!

Reaping is related to the sowing, not only in the matter of [quality] how good the seed is that we've sown, but speaks also to the [quantity] or how much sown (2 Corinthians 9:6). But the quantity sown is related to the concept of endurance through the long haul. While diligence and perseverance in the present will produce proportionate abundance later, Paul is challenging us to remember that "chill, casual, and whatever" right now will produce proportionate poverty later.

"For in due time" is understood as "in its own time", and it means harvest time. Harvest time has its own mind and its own time. Or in this context - God's mind, God's time. The time of harvest for our life is God's appointment not ours, and

won't be rushed or delayed by the act or demand of anyone other than Him. But it is important to know this - because He said it, it will come.

A few years ago the AP reported a story about a father and his two children - a boy of eight and a girl of ten years, all good swimmers, who had entered the waters of the Atlantic from the beach at one of the Jersey Shore resorts. When they got out some distance from shore, they became separated and the father suddenly realized his little girl was being carried out to sea by the tide - having his little boy with him made it impossible to get to her. Calmly he called out to her: **'Mary, I am going to shore for help. If you get tired, turn on your back. You can float all day on your back. I'll come back for you.** Before long, rescue crews and boats were out on the face of the Atlantic Ocean hunting for one small girl, while hundreds of people to whom the news had spread waited and prayed on shore. It was four hours before they found her, she had been washed out miles from land. When rescuers found her she was calmly swimming on her back and not at all frightened. Tears of joy and relief greeted the rescuers with the little girl as they came to land. When asked how she made it she said, **'Daddy said he would come for me, and that I could float all day, so I swam and floated, because I knew he would come.**

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Wycliffe never saw the fruit of his good seed, but he persevered in faith and we today enjoy the product of his labors. But where does perseverance come from? It comes from knowing God through the Word and leaning on His promises by faith. It ultimately boils down to faith and staying focused on the Lord and His person, plan, promises, and purposes as given to us in Scripture.

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11.24.19

Karma and The Principles of Sowing and Reaping

Seven Laws of the Harvest

Law 7: We Can't do Anything About Last

Year's Harvest, But We Can About This Year's

This series on Sowing and Reaping has certainly taught us one thing - life has consequences both good and bad. That is why those life choices we all make are so significant and critical. They alter and impact our life's quality and its outcomes. I find it ironic, that quite often (and even without realizing it) that those smaller almost casual choices are often the ones that end up having the greatest impact. We make a small decision and then all hell breaks loose as a result of just one small decision. It ends up either significantly exposing us or someone we love to evil, or somehow miraculously protecting us from it. ITS CRAZY... sometimes the little things are so big, and then the big things end up being so small. And all of it driven and determined by that process of **Choices Available - Decisions Made - Consequences Faced.** (Luke 16:10).

Law 7 of the Harvest, takes us to our final lesson and consideration. What do we do when the harvest of the past has not been good? (Not good as in) we didn't handle our business of sowing and protecting good seed. What then? What about past failure? How do we respond to loss, grief, sickness, failure, betrayal and disappointment? There are lots of paths to choose from there and in that place. **Quit, run, hide, repeat the same, push replay, blame, anger, fear, self doubt, resolve, self-evaluate, learn, grow, change, fix and start over** - we can go just about any direction from that place of "bad seed, bad fruit, bad outcome." Too

often **we let the bad harvest our past destroy the potential for a good harvest today and tomorrow.**

"Truth is, our human nature is to just let yesterday's negative outcomes keep us from today's positive possibilities."

This where we must learn and embrace Law 7 of the Harvest. **We cannot do anything about last year's harvest, but we can about this year's.** From this law there are four important "harvest concepts" that John Lawrence describes that we will share today.

One - We Cannot Do Anything About Last Year's Harvest.

Two - We Must Learn to Live With the Consequences of Our Failures.

Three - We Must Commit Ourselves to This Year's Harvest.

Four - We Must Not Judge Our Harvest by the Standards of the World and Its Ideas of Success.

Harvest Concept One - We Cannot Do Anything About Last Years Harvest

Whatever we did last year, last month, last week, even yesterday is done and past. There are no time machines to take us back so we can change what we did yesterday. 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. It is either a harvest that will be worthy of duplicating or deleting—or perhaps portions of both—but whatever was produced stands as the record of how we have lived our lives to this

point. The greatest challenge as believers and followers is to do as Paul the Apostle said in his writing...

Philippians 3:13-14

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Here is an important truth - If we failed to produce a crop with a good outcome last year none of our isolation and brooding in self-pity or self-loathing for having wasted or ruined this time will change it. It will only cause us to repeat the same and continue to produce anything good or worthy this year. We can also add to that, producing a good harvest and then in our pride resting and relying too much for too long on a good harvest. The point of the law of the harvest is this - this is another year; and just because the Holy Spirit led and blessed last year, as we were obedient to Him and the Word, does not mean that we automatically will produce anything good this year.

Harvest Concept Two - We Must Learn To Live With The Consequences Of Our Failures

When people believe they are failures or losers and that their wrong or evil sowing will forever ruin their chances for success it tends to define them for life. It twists their thinking and immobilizes any growth and progress, wiping out their ability to use their life and their gifts to do something good with what God has given them.

How Do We Avoid This?

- **Confess our failures to God. (1 John 1:9) This wipes the slate clean.**
- **Know and trust in this truth... we are forgiven through Christ and can move ahead in life regardless of the past. (Psalm 32:1-8; 51)**
- **Learn from our failures and sin: use them as back doors to future success. (Hebrews 5:7-8).**
- **Move forward from the past with renewed to God's will commitment and press on for the future. (Philippians 3:12-14).**
- **See and use the trials caused by failures and loss as character builders and attitude changers. "The tests of life are to make, not break us. (1 Peter 1:6-9)**

As we talked, brooding and isolating in self-pity/loathing for having wasted some part of one's life will only cause us to fail to produce anything glorifying to God, and good in the time we have ahead. Which leads us to number three.

Harvest Concept Three - We Must Commit Ourselves to This Year's Harvest

How we move forward and press on in our lives is found by continuing to plan, prepare and sow for the future and for the God who saved us. Whether we did or did not produce effectively in last year's harvest, there is no time and no reason to sit around in shame, self-pity or guilt, or the opposite - sitting back and relying on the good harvest of the past. We must press on toward the good and upward call of God in Christ. The following passages give us what we need to do by way of pressing on whether we have experienced victory and growth, or loss and failure.

Philippians 3:14-20

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; 16 however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained. 17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. 18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

Hebrews 5:11-14, 6:1-8

Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought

to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

6:1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And this we shall do, if God permits. 4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame. 7 For ground that drinks the rain which often falls upon it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; 8 but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

Hebrews 12:5-14

...and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; 6 For those whom the Lord loves He

disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives.” 7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. 12 Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. 14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

Luke 22:31-34

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; 32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” 33 And he said to Him, “Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!” 34 And He said, “I say to you, Peter, the cock will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me.”

Harvest Concept Four - We Must Not Judge Our Harvest By The Standards Of The World

It is hard to face loss and failure because it is so brutal and terrifying, but in our journey of faith and trust in Jesus our losses and failures can become like a ladder to success. We need to be at peace with the fact that the road to victory is often filled with obstacles, detours, and accidents. But in the end - we will win.

Author Erwin Lutzer wrote in his book, **Failure, The Back Door to Success:**

Perhaps we have forgotten that not many wise, noble, and mighty are chosen by God. We judge ourselves and others by a false standard.

A few noble, wise, and gifted are called. But they are exceptions. God usually chooses the weak, the ordinary, and the despised. Why, then, do so many of us believe we are failures? Perhaps we have a totally false notion of success ...

For the true follower of Jesus, good outcomes are experienced through faithful and intentional commitment to our faith and growing Christ-like character. It doesn't always show up in the numbers, names, and noses, or position, power, prestige, and possessions, or activities, abilities, and acceptance by people. If we judged Jesus on the basis of His possessions, acceptance, names and number of noses that followed Him, He would be considered a failure.

But in our over informed and hate-filled world, people typically use the wrong metrics to quantify and measure what is successful and good. They tend to

measure success by things like who they know, by comparing Twitter followers, Instagram likes, YouTube views, personal talents and abilities, wealth, notoriety, and fame.

Back when I was in Bible College I remember all of the people majoring in "Practical Ministry" gathering in the hall outside Professor Raymond Brown's Systematic Theology classroom, where he posted the results of our tests. I remember hearing responses like "Hey, I got and A" or me usually... "Wow, can't believe I actually got a C"!!! But with every test there was always this one, "I can't believe Brown gave me an F"! As I think back to those responses I realize they are pretty typical of how most view life. So quick to take credit for our successes, and even quicker to blame someone else for our losses and failure. The big picture reality is that we can have everything that the world thinks makes us successful, and still be a huge failure in the eyes of God.

Here is a final observation on the whole good harvest bad harvest narrative.

There is another class of harvest failures: those who mistakenly believe or are delusional about their successful harvest! That too is a bad outcome for our seed and harvest. Best way to avoid it is to stay connected to the gathering community and then find and allow personal accountability through trusted relationships. Enough on that but I hope that the honesty and truth helps.

Conclusion

To finish Law 7, we come back to the same truth we learned in Law 6. To be spiritually and emotionally healthy, to get a good seed good fruit good outcome, we

must forgive, forget, and learn from the past and then with hope (promises of God) focus on that which ahead of us. There is an older article from the "Illinois Medical Journal" that supports why this conversation about learning to move forward from the past is so important.

"There are two days in every week about which we should not worry—two days which should be kept from fear and apprehension. One of these days is Yesterday with its mistakes and cares, its aches and pains, its faults and blunders. Yesterday has passed forever beyond our control. All the money in the world cannot bring back Yesterday. We cannot undo a single act we performed; we cannot erase a single word we said. Yesterday is gone.

The other day we should not worry about is Tomorrow with its possible adversities, its burdens, its large promise and poor performance. Tomorrow is beyond our immediate control. Tomorrow's sun will rise either in splendor or behind a mask of clouds—but it will rise. Until it does, we have no stake in Tomorrow, for it is as yet unborn. That leaves only one day—Today. Any man, by the grace of God, can fight the battles of just one day. It is only when you and I add the burdens of those two awful eternities—Yesterday and Tomorrow—that we break down."

So the truth is, it is not the experience of TODAY that drives most of us crazy—it is usually our regret or bitterness for something that happened YESTERDAY or the fear and anxiety of what TOMORROW may bring. That is why the scripture challenges us to journey just one day at a time.

"Learn from Yesterday - Plan for Tomorrow - Be Present Today"

Actually, by taking care of today we provide for tomorrow—or at least prepare for it. The call of Scripture is **“Today, if you will hear his voice, Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, As in the day of trial in the wilderness.”**

The children of Israel miserably failed and wandered about in the wilderness for forty years because they failed to daily take care of their hearts so that they could keep their eyes on the Lord and trust in Him. The trials they faced were opportunities for growth and the glory of God, but because they failed to daily discipline their lives for godliness, they spent their lives going in circles in the wilderness (1 Timothy 4:7).

The “War Cry” magazine reminds us of an important principle. “A loose wire give out no musical note; but fasten the ends, and the piano, the harp, or violin is born. Free steam drives no machine, but hamper and confine it with piston and turbine and you have the great world of machinery made possible. The unhampered river drives no dynamos, but dam it up and we get power sufficient to light a great city. So our lives must be disciplined if we are to be of any real service in this world.”

What are the tests of life? They are tools in the hand of God designed to shape us into the character of Christ. Their design is not to break us, but make us by conforming us into His image. Again, while we should never want to fail, we all do and we need to learn to use our failures as stepping stones to growth and sowing a harvest for the glory of God.

**We cannot control the length of our life,
but we can control its width and depth.**

**We cannot control the contour of our countenance,
but we can control its expression.**

**We cannot control the other person's annoying habits,
but we can do something about our own.**

**We cannot control the distance our head is above the ground,
but we can control the height of the contents we feed into it.**