

Sowing and Reaping

Can you imagine a gardener walking into the Farmer's Co-op and having the following conversation?

Gardener: Hey there. I need to get a refund.

Co-op clerk: Okay. What's the problem?

Gardener: Do you see this package of tomato seeds?

Co-op clerk: Certainly. Those are some of our best sellers.

Gardener: Well, I planted these and instead of getting tomatoes, I got squash. I want my money back.

Co-op clerk: Oh, that just happens sometimes. Sometimes when you plant seeds for tomatoes, you get squash. We don't refund for that.

Gardener: What?! I've never heard of anything like that.

Co-op clerk: Oh, yeah. It happens more than you might imagine. But here's what you can do. Sometimes it happens in reverse too. So why don't you buy some squash seeds, then maybe you can get some tomatoes.

That, of course, is ridiculous. Nothing of the sort would ever happen. When you plant tomato seeds, you get tomatoes. When you plant squash seeds, you get squash. If you get okra, then no matter what you thought you planted, you planted okra seeds. If you get corn, then no matter what you thought you planted, you planted corn. In the garden, you reap what you sow.

It works the same way with your spirit. **Galatians 6:7-8** say, "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."

We need to recognize this from two angles.

First, whatever you sow is what you'll get. If you're sowing angry words, you'll reap anger. If you're sowing gossip and slander, you'll reap discord. If you sow jealousy and selfish ambition, you'll reap disorder and every vile practice (cf. **James 3:16**). If you're sowing lies, you'll reap shattered relationships. If you're sowing pride and arrogance, you'll reap loneliness. If you sow to the flesh, from the flesh you will reap corruption.

This is a natural law like gravity. You can no more sow to the flesh and avoid reaping corruption than you can leap, unaided, from the Empire State Building and avoid splatting on the ground. You need to think about this as you make your daily choices. What seed are you sowing as you read that magazine, watch that show, listen to that song, tell that joke, communicate in that way, drink that beverage, visit that establishment, talk with that person? If you are sowing seeds of the flesh, you can expect it to produce only one thing eventually—corruption.

However, if you are sowing seeds to the Spirit, you can also expect only one thing—life. Isn't that great? As long as you sow to the Spirit, you will get life. You never get corruption by sowing seed to the Spirit. Instead, you will always produce the Spirit's fruit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Certainly, spiritual growth is ... well ... growth. This will not happen overnight. It will happen over time. But it will happen.

Second, whatever you're getting is what you are sowing. Don't deceive yourself. If you are not getting life, then you are not sowing to the Spirit. If you are getting corruption, you are not sowing to the Spirit. If you are not getting love, joy, peace, etc., you are not sowing to the Spirit. No doubt, you may be doing some seemingly spiritual things like "going to church" or reading your Bible on occasion, but you are not sowing to the Spirit.

This is a natural law. Whatever fruit you are getting is the test to tell what kind of seeds you are sowing. So, if you are constantly having fits of anger, constantly in strife and dissension with others, repeatedly succumbing to sexual sin and sensuality, or repeatedly putting other things before God, then you need to back up and see what seeds you are sowing. Think about an example. If you repeatedly have angry explosions (a work of the flesh), you don't need to tell yourself, "I need to quit having angry explosions." Rather, you need to consider what seeds you are planting which produce that fruit. You might need to work on your own expectations, your communication, your attitude, your motivation. Then you need to consider what seeds you can sow to overcome those explosions. Perhaps some time spent in meditation on God and His power and control will remove the fears you have that cause you to react with angry explosions. Perhaps looking at your own mistakes and sinfulness in the face and making amends with others will help you overcome the intolerant, holier-than-thou attitude that you carry to feel better about yourself and thus keep you from feeling the need to explode at others

to make them look bad and you look good. There may be different things that produce this fruit in you. You don't need simply to learn the fruit; you need to consider the seeds.

The point is when you see a fruit growing in you, you are learning what seeds you are planting. Don't just try to lop off the fruit. Start sowing different seed.

What seeds have you sown this past week? What seeds will you plant this coming week?

--Edwin L. Crozier