

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32

“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”

MARCH 21, 2021

YOU SHALL REAP WHAT YOU SOW

Jim Stauffer

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will 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 6:7–8)

As we analyze these verses we must break them down into at least two categories. Those two for our consideration here are the actual act of sowing, that is doing a thing. Taking an action for a desired purpose. The second of those two is the motivation behind the desired purpose. Motivated by flesh or spirit.

The clear unmistakable truth expressed by the direction of the Holy Spirit is that we will reap what we have sown. The saddest part of this is we can sow a seed that is far different than we planned. While this is an unlikely occurrence, a man could by mistake sow barley when he had planned to sow wheat. As sure as the sun rising in the east, when those seeds germinate and come forth in a plant it will be barley. How surprised the man will be! He thought all along he had sown wheat and it turned out he was mistaken, he had sown barley.

From a spiritual perspective, Paul is saying a man must carefully inspect his heart to be sure his motive is to sow to the spiritual benefit of others and not to please some desire of his flesh. In this text, he specifically refers to the material support of one who ministers to the spirit of men. He says if a man's heart is in the right place he will prefer to provide support for those more important matters (**Luke 10:38-42**) than for matters pertaining to the earthly life of man.

The principle remains and applies to every aspect of life.

Whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. As a result it is necessary for us to determine our own motives as we sow while living here on earth. Am I doing the thing that will bolster the spiritual lives of those to whom it is directed? I might be technically correct but my motive may be to satisfy my own desire to show I am right and they are wrong. What is most likely to happen in that case? I may very well *...reap the whirlwind...* (**Hosea 8:7**). By that is meant simply, the initial purpose may not be achieved, but instead things will be dramatically different than I had intended.

When we attempt to teach God's word to another, there are many considerations that parallel sowing seed in a field. One of the things the farmer must do before sowing his seed is to prepare the soil. If he attempts to force the soil to accept the seed without any preparation, the seed may never enter the soil and thus not produce the intended crop. What we come to understand in farming is not only is it important that we sow the correct seed for the crop we intend to produce, but the success of our sowing depends upon the condition of the soil as well. If and when we ignore that and attempt to force the seed on the soil we are bound to fail. The seed will not be lodged securely in the soil and it will be due to our misguided effort to force our seed upon the soil.

Why does this happen? Sometimes because brethren become frustrated over their disagreement and attempt to force their ideas on others in the sincere belief they are right and others are wrong. It simply does not work that way. It is our carnal nature that does not have the patience to work through difficulties created by a different understanding of Scripture. We must all love the truth and do our best to teach it to one another, but when

our method is one of force rather than one of *...speaking the truth in love...* (**Eph. 4:15**), we have made a serious error in judgment. If, indeed our actions are motivated by a general disrespect for either the position another holds or for that person himself, we have crossed the line and are no longer sowing to the spirit, but rather sowing to our own flesh.

JUDGING, PRE-JUDGING, AND PREJUDICE

By Andy Diestelkamp

Perhaps one of the best known statements of Jesus is *“Judge not, that you be not judged”* (**Matthew 7:1**). Ironically, it is often cited by people to *critique* those by whom they feel criticized. However, Jesus is not condemning all critiques of others. This is made evident by: 1) the inconsistency created if His words are taken as an absolute prohibition, 2) the immediate context (**vs. 5**), and 3) the larger context of Scripture which actually requires making judgments (**e.g. Jn. 7:24; 1 Cor. 5**).

Contextually, what Jesus is condemning is inconsistent and hypocritical judgment. He is addressing the proclivity we have to judge others more critically than we judge ourselves. Of course, this tendency easily produces numerous misjudgments and prejudices against individuals and their “ilk” which, if unchecked by self-control and sound thinking, leads to a host of generational and cultural prejudices which cause strife and division.

Jesus is prioritizing self-critique as being necessarily first in order to then be able to adequately help others with their problems. This does not require perfection from us before forming an opinion, offering a critique, or rendering a judgment. This is again evident by the fact that we are called to do so, yet none of us can rightly claim perfection. For example, parents are not perfect in their own lives or in their parenting, but this reality does not forbid them to train their children (**Eph. 6:4**) which will, of necessity, require critiques and judgments. Still, humility and love must temper all discipline.

God created us to learn, discern, critique, and make judgments. As thinking people, we are constantly doing this; and such judgments are naturally made through the lens of our own limited experiences. This is one of the ways in which we both prosper and attempt to protect ourselves from harm. For example, a woman who was sexually molested by a man will naturally have a tendency to be wary of males. Thus, when she is approached by a male, she may become nervous. Based on her experience, she is making a judgment that

she is in potential danger. This is a pre-judgment. Any circumstance which departs from the norm of perceived safety is immediately judged as suspect. This is a natural process and is not inherently wrong.

However, we are not mere animals who must react with “fight or flight” when confronted by these conditioned responses. As beings created in the image of God, we can and are expected to exercise self-control. We can reason that our initial reaction based on limited information is not logically or justly applicable to all persons despite our experiences and, therefore, does not require “fight or flight.” Thus we check our initial judgments with sober-mindedness, patience, mercy, and love and temper prejudicial responses and behaviors. This is how the mind of the spirit controls the reactions of the flesh and thus bears good fruit (**cf. Gal. 5:16-26**).

Judgments happen in a host of circumstances daily for all of us about everything from the mundane to sublime, from the harmless to the serious. When I experience anything with any of my five senses, my brain immediately begins to process it and make judgments despite the fact that I do not yet have all information necessary to make an accurate or fair judgment; but this fact alone does not stop my brain from thinking or making such judgments. Thus, one intuitively evaluates and makes judgments about everyone’s motives and attitudes and potential based on their appearances, words, and actions. By experience we know that many pre-judgments are inaccurate. Still, while acknowledging that “you can’t judge a book by its cover,” we will look at the cover and make an initial judgment.

This is why it is imperative that God’s Word be the foundation of our learning. Indeed, the ability to discern good from evil is a sign of spiritual maturity (**Heb. 5:14**). Without doubt, the culture in which we are raised and the values imparted by our parents and society at large are formative to the kinds of judgments we make. This is why we need to create a culture of Christ in our hearts and our homes so as to be better people and render better judgments in all cases.

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What Kind of Faith Does God Want us to Have?

According to a story on NPR (July 27, 2019) Walter Dixon had only been married five days when he was sent on his second deployment to Korea. A year later, his obituary appeared in the local paper. He was about a

half-mile from his post when he saw five men from his unit get shot down by an artillery round. "One of 'em's legs were both broken, so I took my field jacket and wrapped around his legs to hold them together," he said. He was then captured and the men were blown up. When the bodies were later found, Dixon's jacket, which carried letters from his wife in the pockets, was the piece that mistakenly linked him to a deceased fellow soldier. After learning of his death, his wife had remarried and had several children by the time he returned from enemy imprisonment.

Walter's wife acted in the faith that the news of his death was accurate, when in fact it was not. Not everything we are told is accurate either. We have to make sure that our beliefs are true instead of accepting what others say. The Bible tells us to *"work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"* in **Philippians 2:12**. We cannot just accept what even the pastor, preacher, or priest says. The Berean Christians were praised for *"searching the scriptures daily"* to verify the teaching of Paul, even though he was an Apostle. We cannot blindly accept what our school teachers teach. After all, they are usually just passing on what they have been taught. **1 Thessalonians 5:21** tells Christians to *"Test all things; hold fast what is good."* If we believe whatever we decide we prefer to believe, our faith is no more useful than someone else's opposite belief. If you have "blind" faith, or rely on what others tell you without verifying it for yourself, you may well make bad decisions based on incorrect understandings or beliefs. Only when you prove your faith to yourself is it truly your own faith! May God bless you as you think on these things.

Matt Hodge

Love Your Family, Too

I ran into a stranger as he passed by,
"Oh excuse me please" was my reply.
He said, "Please excuse me too;
I wasn't watching for you."

We were very polite, this stranger and I.
We went on our way and we said good-bye.
But at home a different story is told,
How we treat our loved ones, young and old.

Later that day, cooking the evening meal,
My son stood beside me very still.
When I turned, I nearly knocked him down.
"Move out of the way," I said with a frown.

He walked away, his little heart broken.
I didn't realize how harshly I'd spoken.
While I lay awake in bed,
God's still small voice came to me and said,
"While dealing with a stranger,
common courtesy you use,
but the family you love, you seem to abuse.
Go and look on the kitchen floor,
You'll find some flowers there by the door.

Those are the flowers he brought for you.
He picked them himself: pink, yellow and blue.
He stood very quietly not to spoil the surprise,
you never saw the tears that filled his little eyes."

By this time, I felt very small,
And now my tears began to fall.
I quietly went and knelt by his bed;
"Wake up, little one, wake up," I said.

"Are these the flowers you picked for me?"
He smiled, "I found 'em, out by the tree.
I picked 'em because they're pretty like you.
I knew you'd like 'em, especially the blue."

I said, "Son, I'm very sorry for the way I acted today;
I shouldn't have yelled at you that way."
He said, "Oh, Mom, that's okay. I love you anyway."
I said, "Son, I love you too,
and I do like the flowers, especially the blue."
anon.

Christian Role Models

The Holy Spirit commands us in **1 Timothy 4:12** to be Christian role models in 6 ways...in Word, Conduct, Love, Spirit, Faith, & Purity. What are these?

In word - Model speech is to always be truthful, gracious and pure.

In conduct - We are to be a model of righteous living--a person who lives out his convictions based on biblical principles. The things you do, the places you go, the things you possess--any aspect of your life is a sermon.

In love - Sacrificing yourself in service of others is a great role model.

In spirit - Minding the things of the Spirit...being spiritually minded, not worldly minded.

In faith - The Greek word translated "faith" can be translated "trustworthiness," or "consistency." This must be something we prove to be.

In purity - The Greek word translated "purity" refers not only to sexual chastity, but also to the intents of the heart. If our heart is pure, our behavior will be pure as well.

Taken from Facebook; Author Unknown

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study
Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship
Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship
Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

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Check out the following websites:

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Sick in need of Prayers:

Alma Baumgartner, Jan Patrick,
Trudy Mullen, Denese Goring,
Brooklyn Boyer, George Root, Tracy
Richardson and L.A. Stauffer.

A special notice to all our brethren,
Randy Harshbarger is suffering from
Covid-19. Let us remember Randy
as well in our prayers.

Bible Classes:

**Sunday Morning - Messianic
Pathway O.T. to N.T. - Jim Stauffer**

**Wednesday Evening - Home and
Family - Ron Peck**

**Sunday Morning Sermon:
God Delivers His People**



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10