

Devotion 12
God's Principle of Sowing and Reaping

Thursday, Week 2

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
(2 Corinthians 9:6-7)

Pastor Brad Cusson relates this story: "My wife grew up on a farm in South Dakota. One of the first times we went for a visit, her father took me to a farm auction. After the auction, my father-in-law talked a few minutes with some "cronies," and I picked up on the fact that even though the machinery was fairly new, it still hadn't fetched a very good price. Later, when I asked him why this was so, he said it was well known that the farmer did not take good care of his equipment."

One reaps what he or she sows. This is a principle that God seems to have built into our very existence. One reaps what he or she sows. If you study hard, work hard, practice hard, you will (almost always) be better off than if you don't. It's just the way it is. It's almost a "natural law," but not quite.

In the text above, God reveals to us that it works the same way in our lives of stewardship. We will reap what we sow; that is, we will harvest from our stewardship life just what we put into it. Now some have taken this to mean, "If I give money to God, He will in return give me lots more money." But that's not what this says. It says simply, "*The harvest will be in direct proportion to the sowing.*" This means just what it says. But think about what this means! As we give of our time, abilities and money to the work of the kingdom, the harvest will be in direct proportion to this! This is exciting! This is a real gift of God! This is meant to make us cheerful givers!

There is one instance where this "universal principle" of reaping what you sow is broken. You know where it is. It is with Jesus. Because of our sin, all that we deserve to reap is death, hell, and destruction. But thanks be to God, Jesus came and took our place—He reaped what we sowed—and in its place gave us life in Him. Only by building on this one grace-filled exception to the principle can we sow generously in our lives of stewardship as God has blessed us in Jesus.

There was a seminary professor of mine, now with the Lord, who wrote the excerpts that constitute the following prayer. Would you pray it with me?

Prayer: Dearest Jesus, inspire us, Your people, to see the kingdom tasks You lay before us. Prevent us from losing our enthusiasm, vision, or commitment. Root out indifference from our hearts. Through Your Word and Sacraments, kindle in us a burning zeal for the souls of people. Demonstrate to us the straight, clear line connecting stewardship and effective work in Your kingdom. Empower us to believe Your Word, be excited at the possibility, and act on Your Word, "What you sow, that is what you will reap." Amen!