

**A STUDY IN GALATIANS**  
**Part 1 – “The Law of the Harvest”**  
**Galatians 6:7-9**

It must seem very odd to begin a study of Paul’s letter to the Galatian church at the end of the letter; however this text forms the heart of the Apostle’s appeal to the church to return to the faith that brought them eternal life.

***Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:7-9 NIV).***

Paul has been called a towering intellect as the church’s greatest interpreter of Christ, and so he is; however, he was also a man of great emotion. In none of his epistles does Paul write in greater emotion than in this letter. Enemies of the gospel had gone into Galatia after his initial missionary work and establishment of the church trying to undo the work. The Judaizers claimed that becoming a Christian involved far more than accepting the work of Christ through the grace of God. They believed the Gentiles must come under the Law of Moses in order to become a Christian. In short, they insisted that they become Jews first.

The language of this letter shows us that the apostle realized there was much more at stake than a mere misunderstanding of theological perspective. He saw clearly that the whole future of Christianity was at stake. To make Christianity a mere sect within Judaism instead of a universal faith for all men was much more than a disagreement between learned men of theology!

Thus coming to the end of the letter, having used every argument in his arsenal, he makes this sweeping declaration that *God cannot be mocked. A Man reaps what he sows.* It is there we must begin!

You see, the order that is in the world is the work of God. The scientist has learned to depend upon this order. Through these principles he has been able to make his calculations, chart his course, taking us literally to the moon and back. The farmer depends on this same order. Across the centuries they have depended on certain laws of nature. As they cooperate with these laws they have been able to provide enough foodstuffs for themselves and their neighbor. The natural step for us to take is the declaration that the same laws govern God’s work in the moral and spiritual realm. **Using this same principle we can see three basic laws.**

**LAW ONE: IF YOU SOW, YOU REAP.**

I know that sounds so simple as to go unstated; however, it is the undeniable truth in the realm of nature and the realm of the spiritual. In this context Paul has been contrasting two ways of life. One way of life is called the “way of the flesh.” The other is the way of the “Spirit.” Every time we respond to one of them we sow a seed. The law of the harvest is that when you sow, we can expect to reap. It is another way of saying that there are consequences to every choice we make in our lives.

I have often rephrased this principle as a part of a larger proverb: *You get what you get because you go where you go; if you don't like what you're getting, don't go where you're going.*

## **LAW TWO: YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW.**

That's really the second part of that proverb. It is the primary principle Paul states in our text. Isn't it that the truth of nature? If you want to harvest corn, you certainly aren't going to plant wheat! Corn produces corn, wheat produces wheat. The same kind of certainty exists in the moral and spiritual realm. You will reap exactly what you sow.

There are many examples of both of these in the Scripture. The life of Jacob when he deceived his father, Isaac, to get the blessing is only one. He was sowing falsehood and deceit and he reaped the destruction of his relationship with his brother from that day forward. Later his own sons would deceive him in an even greater way, selling Joseph into slavery. Of course the best example of sowing good seed is in the life of Jesus. What was his harvest? Paul tells us that in Philippians:

*In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11 NIV).*

## **LAW THREE: YOU REAP MORE THAN YOU SOW.**

***Multiplication is the law of the harvest.*** We could not survive if this principle were not true. Think of the enormous benefit it is to be able to plant, harvest, and still have both harvest enough to eat and replant! God's laws are both immutable and perfect. James understood this so clearly:

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do. Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business. **Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.***

*When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. (James 1:2-18).*

We have all been given spiritual seed for the sowing by the Holy Spirit of God dwelling within us. However, we have also been given sinful seed by the nature of Adam dwelling within us. When Jesus paid the price for our redemption through the Cross that grace which we now have access to in Him has given a choice of which seed to sow!

*Remember when I said, You get what you get because you go where you go; if you don't like what you're getting, don't go where you're going. If you sow a seed to the flesh, it gives birth to sin, and sin grows to maturity to bring a harvest of destruction and death. However, if you sow a seed to the Spirit it grows to produce a harvest of the "crown of life."*

One last word: this text has often been used as a dire warning to believers that they must live their lives in fear and guilt for past failures. Somehow, it has become easier for many to use motivation to "good works" with shame and guilt rather than the grace and forgiveness that God has given so freely to us. Paul's letter to this church was not about judgment and recrimination. He uses strong words to be sure, but they are words of hope and encouragement.