

# A man reaps what he sows

## Four lessons from Galatians 6:7-10

Choices? Priorities? There are many calls on our limited supply of energy, time and resources. In Galatia then, as is always the case, there was work to be done in the churches. There were also broader social needs. Each believer had his and her own personal concerns. What would the Lord have us do? Paul encourages us to see life as a garden.

### 1. God made this law – v7

The fact that God created the universe with that link between 'cause' and 'effect' ensures that we can study, understand and manage the world we live in. This link is a law. What we say and do have consequences. You and I are not exempt. "Do not be deceived. God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows". It may take time. We may never see the fruits. But what we sow will eventually bear fruit.

### 2. There are good and bad seeds – v8

Then Paul points out that not all seeds are good seeds. We can invest some of our energy, time or resources in sinful pursuits, to please our sinful nature. Even for bad seeds, the law remains true: "A man reaps what he sows". Good and bad seeds, even small ones, will grow and eventually bear fruit. This is a warning if we are sowing bad seeds. And a great encouragement if we are sowing good seeds!

### 3. Don't become weary, don't give up – v9

Sowing can be hard work. It may involve planning, preparing, sacrifice and self-denial. You can easily become weary and discouraged. The good seed may take very long to grow, or you can't see the urgently needed fruit. The indifference and passivity of those around you can also discourage you. Sometimes the good work you do will be criticised by others. Some will even say that your good seeds are really bad seeds! Those who benefit from your good seeds may not notice your sacrifice or forget to say 'thank you'. The need around you may be so great that you wonder how effective your little contribution is! The apostle Paul wrote out of personal experience: "Let us not become weary in

doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

### 4. Make use of opportunities - v10

Perhaps you have noticed that it is usually people with a strong sense of responsibility that often end up with a 'burn-out'. Why? Some are perfectionists and cannot rest until they consider every need 'perfectly' met. But most of these people have a loving and caring nature and wish to mitigate every need they see. They find it very difficult to say 'no'. So they also take on the work God "prepared in advance" for someone else to do (Eph. 2:10). I think that is why Paul adds that moderating statement: "Therefore, as we have opportunity let us do good...". Like Esther, God can place you in the right place at the right time to act on His behalf. The Good Samaritan was also in the right place at the right time.



Wherever we go, we are called to sow good seeds. But sometimes we have no opportunity to do so. We should then not feel guilty when we cannot help. Furthermore, some projects, some ministries are simply not our field of service.

Should Christians use their limited energy, time and resources on general social projects? Paul answers, "let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

Sometimes we may be called to seek opportunities. Passivity is not a Christian virtue. In his previous letter, the apostle Paul writes, "Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously" (2 Corinthians 9:6).

### Sowing and forgetting

Over the years, you can forget the different good deeds you have done and good words you have written or spoken. We often do. But even those forgotten seeds will continue to grow and bear fruit. That's the way it works in God's world!

Here one last encouragement to not become weary in doing good: "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them" (Hebrews 6:10). He never forgets!

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