

# Principles of Sowing and Reaping

- 1) Preliminary considerations.
  - a) Sowing and reaping in an agricultural sense involves the planting of seed and harvesting of crops.
  - b) The physical process of sowing and reaping crops is used in Scripture to portray certain spiritual realities.
  - c) Such an analogy is understandable as the bulk of biblical audiences were agrarian.
  - d) The spiritual reality of sowing and reaping governs humanity.
  - e) As there are various physical laws that govern the reality of mankind (e.g. gravity, thermodynamics, etc.), there also exist spiritual “laws” that, if violated, will bring about certain consequences.
  - f) God stated that seed time and harvest would be perpetual realities that would exist in the physical realm (Gen 8:22).
  - g) Correspondingly, the spiritual reality or law of sowing and reaping continues to exist and remain operative for the duration of the angelic conflict (Gal. 6:7).
- 2) Various biblical concepts portrayed by sowing and reaping.
  - a) Sowing and reaping is analogous to the Word of God and its function in relation to volition (Mark 4:1-20).
    - i) The seed is the Word of God (vv. 4, 14).
    - ii) The sower is the communicator of sound doctrine (vv. 3, 14).
    - iii) The field or soil represents the volition of individuals that hear the truth whether they accept it or not (vv. 15, 16, 18, 20).
    - iv) Their volitional response to the truth is compared to the conditions that might exist in any given field, with the soil (volition) as the variable, while the seed being sown remains unchanged.
    - v) The birds of the air represent men that are committed to the viewpoint of Satan and actively seek to undermine the Truth (vv. 4, 15, cf. 1 Tim. 4:1ff.).
    - vi) Volitional responses:
      - (1) The first volitional response is that of the negative unbeliever (vv. 4, 15).
      - (2) The next volitional response is that of the shallow or superficial believer, initially excited by sound doctrine but lacking any real commitment to the pursuit of the Truth (vv. 5-6, 16-17).
      - (3) The third category of volition is the believer that never truly breaks off the pursuit of the cosmos, placing the pursuit of the details of life above the pursuit of the Truth (vv. 7, 18-19).
      - (4) The final category is comprised of the few believers that are intellectually honest and pursue the Truth diligently; thus, producing the fruit the farmer seeks, to varying degrees (vv. 8, 20).

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- (a) The thirty-fold believer is the one who produces some SG3, but not at a consistently high level (due to negative volition and/or lack of Bible doctrine).
  - (b) The sixty-fold believer is the one who produces a high level of fruit, but still has room to grow.
  - (c) The hundred-fold believer produces a great crop of SG3, eventuating in the bestowal of the wreath.
- b) The agricultural analogy is used to teach the reality that believers and unbelievers will live side by side in the world until the time of the end (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43).
    - i) The field is the entire world (v. 38).
    - ii) The farmer is Messiah (v. 37).
    - iii) In this case, the good seed refers to those that have believed the Word of God, believers (v. 38).
    - iv) The enemy is Satan (v. 39).
    - v) The tares are imposters, unbelievers attempting to pass themselves off as believers (v. 38).
    - vi) The time of the harvest is the Second Advent, when the wheat (believers) and tares (unbelievers) are separated (v. 39 cf. Matt. 25:31-32
    - vii) The reapers are angels (vv. 39, 41).
  - c) Sowing and reaping is used to communicate information regarding the superiority of the resurrection body to the physical body that currently houses the soul (1 Cor. 15:35-44).
  - d) It is also employed to exhort believers to exercise patience, citing the example of the Father and the concept of the early and latter rains (James 5:7-8).
  - e) Solomon utilizes this concept to teach the principle of diligence; he rebukes the lazy person and exhorts one to have a proper work ethic (Eccl. 11:4, 6).
  - f) The Mosaic Law uses the sowing of two kinds of seed to teach the doctrine of separation (Lev. 19:19, Deut. 22:9 – on a practical level, it prevented crosspollination with a resultant loss of production.).
  - g) This teaching is used to illustrate that God Himself will reestablish national Israel in their land (Jer. 31:27-28).
  - h) The fact that lower creation does not engage in agricultural pursuits is used to teach believers that they are to faith-rest their Ph2 provision and not pursue the details of life (Luke 12:22-24).
  - i) The reality of sowing and reaping governs the finances of every believer (1 Tim. 5:17-18).
    - i) Each believer that receives sound doctrine and partakes of the benefits of an adjusted ministry is instructed to provide financial blessing for his teacher (1 Cor. 9:7-14).

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- ii) God, who is not effectively disregarded or disobeyed in this or any other matter, will reward based on the standard of measure (Luke 6:38).
- iii) This is the first priority of each individual believer in the local church and is the first priority of the church corporately (1 Cor 9:7-11, 1 Tim. 5:17-18, 2 Tim. 2:6).
- iv) The adjusted believer recognizes that God is the source of our material blessing. Furthermore, it is to be used to benefit others, especially fellow royal family members in the local church (cf. 1 Tim 6:17-19, Titus 3:14).
- v) Proper applications in this area will result in eternal reward for the believer.
- vi) Every believer is responsible to determine the how much “seed” he intends to sow (2 Cor. 9:7).
  - (1) The decision to give is voluntary (“as he has purposed in his heart).
  - (2) Giving must not be done grudgingly or reluctantly (“not grudgingly”).
  - (3) Giving is to be done without pressure or coercion (“under compulsion”).
  - (4) We are to give cheerfully or gladly as this is pleasing to God.
- vii) In the analogy, if we sow or give sparingly our harvest will be small, but he one who gives generously will reap abundantly (cf. Prov. 11:24-25).
- viii) The failure to properly apply in the area of giving manifests a lack of confidence in God’s provision and indicates a problem with greed (Luke 12:15, Col. 3:5).
- j) Sowing and reaping in relation to SG3 (Gal. 6:7-9).
  - i) Paul commands his audience, “Do not be deceived.”
  - ii) He points out the God is not to be mocked or treated with contempt in the matter of grace giving.
  - iii) The apostle then refers to the immutable divine law, “...for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”
  - iv) There are two choices for the believer. Sow to the flesh or sow to God the Holy Spirit.
  - v) “Sowing to the flesh” refers to actions that are done under the OSN.
  - vi) The one who sets his priorities on pleasing self or personal interests falls in this category.
  - vii) The end result will be a harvest in ph. 3 that will be destroyed (cf. 1 Cor. 3:15).
  - viii) Sowing to the Spirit is divine good production while under the FGHS (cf. vv. 9-10).
  - ix) Eternal reward, referred to here as “eternal life,” is the harvest of what is sown to the Spirit.
  - x) Here the harvest is at some unspecified future date.

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- xi) The time between the sowing and harvest may seem rather prolonged so Paul issued a fitting exhortation in v. 9, “And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary.”
  - (1) The believer must guard against discouragement and losing one’s motivation to apply Bible doctrine.
  - (2) The last half of v. 9 guarantees those that don’t succumb to discouragement or weariness, a maximum harvest of eternal reward.
- xii) Although vv. 7-9, primarily refer to our ph. 3 harvest, we must be careful not overlook some related ph. 2 ramifications.
  - (1) Sowing to the Spirit through the consistent application of sound doctrine will result in blessing and happiness in time (Psa. 19:11, Prov. 8:32, 29:8, John 15:7).
  - (2) Believers that sow to the flesh by gratifying the desires of their OSN over the application of sound doctrine will reap DD in time (Prov. 22:8, Heb 12:5-12).