

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

“...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE...” ~ EPHESIANS 4:12



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DON'T BE DECEIVED: “YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW”

By Andrew Dow

Deception has been Satan's primary tool from the beginning (Gen 3:4; 2 Cor 11:3). The success with which he has wielded this weapon should alarm us. Unfortunately, a vast number of Christians are still falling for the same old tricks. They prefer to follow after Satan's fabrications than God's truth (cf. Rom 1:25). We need to immerse ourselves in the word of God so that we will not fall into Satan's trap!

Paul, in his many travels, encountered people who had been deceived into believing things that were untrue. The churches of Galatia were such people. Paul said that **“there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ”** (Gal 1:6–7). These churches were made to doubt the gospel of Christ and accept **“a different gospel.”** Toward the end of the epistle Paul guards against further deception. He writes, **“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap”** (Gal 6:7).

Sowing and Reaping

The imagery used in this verse is agricultural. Whether we own a farm, have a backyard garden, or grow plants on our windowsill, we are all familiar with this illustration. Agriculture was so prominent in the first century that similar illustrations are found throughout the Scriptures (cf. Matt

13:24–32; Luke 8:4–15; 2 Tim 2:6; Jam 5:7–8). Furthermore, Galatians 6:7 was not the first time Paul used agricultural language in this very epistle. Similar language was employed in chapter 5. Paul contrasts **“the deeds of the flesh”** (Gal 5:19–21) with **“the fruit of the Spirit”** (vv. 22–24). Paul’s point in this contrast is to show that, when it is *planted* in one’s life, the Spirit *grows* and *bears fruit*. Paul carries this illustration into chapter 6 where he warns the churches of Galatia not to be deceived—**“Do not be deceived... for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap”** (Gal 6:7).

Kind begets kind. It has been this way from the beginning when God said, **“Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit AFTER THEIR KIND with seed in them”** (Gen 1:11). We can observe this: if you plant a tomato seed, a tomato will grow; if you plant a watermelon seed, a watermelon will grow. There is no way around this truth. Paul explains it this way, **“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”** (Gal 6:8). Some have been deceived, believing that they can plant fleshly things in their life (e.g., pornography, greed, ungodly friends) and still bear **“the fruit of the Spirit.”** What you plant in your life will grow.

Mocking God

Paul wrote, **“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked”** (Gal 6:7). **“Mocked”** may be translated as, “to turn up the nose or sneer at” (Thayer, 419). I’ve never seen someone literally turn up their nose at God, but I’ve seen plenty of people do so by the way they live their lives! This

is what happens when we hear what God says, but turn around and do what we think is best. Despite sincere intentions, people turn up their noses at God; and they've been deceived into thinking they can get away with it.

As we noted previously, people often plant one thing (flesh) in their life, expecting to grow something different (fruit of the Spirit). All the while they hope that God doesn't notice the evil they're doing. Jesus said, **“Nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light”** (Luke 8:17). Don't be deceived, God will not be mocked! He will not have you turn your nose up at Him. To the contrary, all things will be brought to light at the harvest. At that time, the fruit of what you have planted in your life will be full grown and exposed.

What Are You Planting?

Paul warned the churches of Galatia to avoid being deceived. Specifically, they were in danger of coming to believe that they could live a fleshly lifestyle and enjoy the benefits of a godly lifestyle. The warning needs to be heard today as well. We must all honestly ask ourselves, *what am I planting in my life?*

Are you planting the seed of flesh? **“The deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these”** (Gal 5:19–21). Are you putting **“things like these”** into your life? Then these are the very things that will grow out of your life! **“For the one who sows to his flesh will from the flesh reap corruption”** (Gal 6:8a).

Are you planting the seed of the Spirit? **“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control”** (Gal 5:22–23). Are you filling the soil of your life with the word of God, pure thoughts (cf. Phil 4:8), and righteous actions? Then these are the fruits you can expect to see growing out of your life! **“The one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life”** (Gal 6:8b). Brethren, never be deceived into thinking that you can live a double-life. You will always reap what you sow!

NOTES: _____

AM LESSON:
Keep On Rejoicing
(1 Peter 4:12–5:11)

PM LESSON:
by Jim Rains

“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES...”
(MATTHEW 28:19-20)