



## Beyond the Billfold

By Vincent M. Newfield

The principle of sowing and reaping is powerful and far-reaching. It is active in both the natural and supernatural areas of life. Whatever we plant, we are going to harvest.

Spring is here, and summer is knocking at the door. The trees, flowers, and plants are bursting forth with new life. I can vividly remember planting a new vegetable garden with my father every year around this time when I was a boy. It became an exciting tradition to go to the nursery with him and purchase the seeds and young plants that would produce some of the most delicious vegetables I had ever tasted. We'd plant bell peppers, eggplants, green beans, cucumbers, and of course, my favorite, Creole tomatoes.

I enjoyed many mouthwatering meals from our homegrown garden, and I learned many practical and spiritual lessons at the same time. One of the greatest is the law of sowing and reaping. Galatians 6:7 says, ...*What a person plants, he will harvest* (The Message). This principle is true both in the seen and unseen realm—in the natural and supernatural, or spiritual, areas of life.

Think about it. Because we wanted to eat rich tasting red tomatoes throughout the summer, we *chose* to plant tomato plants. We couldn't get fresh vine-ripened tomatoes by simply wishing we had some. Nor could we get them by planting corn, broccoli, or radishes. The only way to get tomatoes is to plant tomatoes. The same is true in the spiritual areas of our lives. Whatever we want to "eat", we need to plant.

Now, many of us have heard this principle applied to giving offerings. We have sown financial "seeds" into the soil of our local church as well as our favorite ministry, and we've reaped blessings of all kinds. But the truth is, this principle of sowing and reaping goes far beyond the giving of money. It affects **EVERY** area of our lives. Make no mistake—**whatever** we sow, we are going to reap.

There are countless invisible seeds that we are planting all the time. Some the most important are our *attitudes* toward others. The types of attitudes we have with our parents, spouse, children, in-laws, employer, etc., are all seeds that will eventually produce a harvest we will "eat" from. If we sow bad attitudes towards others, we will reap bad attitudes towards us.

Truthfulness is another seed. If we are truthful with others, we will reap truthfulness from others. However, if we are deceptive and withhold truth, we will reap deception and open ourselves up to being deceived. Actually, the Lord impressed on me that to the same degree I sought to deceive others, I myself would be deceived. This really put the fear of God in me.

Other seeds God made me aware of are acts of *kindness* and *love* to others. My maternal grandparents have always been very close and special to me. They're now in their late eighties and aren't able to do everything they used to. I regularly talk with them on the phone and send a letter now and then, but I would love to be able to personally show them acts of love and kindness. Unfortunately, I can't because I now live nearly 700 miles away and only see them twice a year. But God showed me something I *could* do. He said, "There are elderly people all around you in your community and at church. If you'll be kind and loving to them—smiling, telling them hello, giving them a hug, listening to them, etc.—I will make sure someone gives the same love and kindness to your grandparents." And do you know what, He has.

The bottom line is, all our actions towards others—both good and bad—are seeds we'll eventually reap a harvest from. These include our thoughts, words, and prayers. Galatians 6:8 says *The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others—ignoring God!—harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life* (The Message). Now, I'm not saying if you sow one or two bad

actions, you're going to immediately reap the same thing. We all have faults and weaknesses God is working out of us, and thankfully He is merciful. But those things we know in our heart are wrong we need to deal with.

So be careful about what you're planting. Bring the areas where you feel convicted before God and ask Him to forgive you and change you so that you can begin to sow and reap good things—good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over!

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