

Galatians 6:6-10

Gal 6:6 (NKJV) Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. ⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. ⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Tonight we want to begin to look at v7-8 and what is often referred to as the “law of sowing and reaping”. Natural laws and physical laws are things that never change, such as the law of gravity, the law of thermodynamics, the law of the conservation of matter (matter can be neither created or destroyed), or Ohm’s law in electricity. In the same way that there are physical laws that govern our physical world, there are also spiritual laws that govern our spiritual world. In the same way that the natural laws never change, God’s spiritual laws never change. They are fixed, permanent, unchanging, and eternal.

Now, the first thing that we want to notice is that apparently this law of sowing and reaping is something about which any believer can actually be “**deceived**”. The AMP says “**do not be deceived and deluded and misled...**” Mr. Wuest translates it as “**stop leading yourself astray....**” I remember when I was younger that there was a great Baptist preacher by the name of R. G. Lee, and he had this really famous sermon that he preached all across America called “Payday Someday”.¹ Now, hermeneutically, it is important that we do not lift this passage out of its immediate context. Paul has just talked to us about the ministry of restoring a brother who was caught and trapped in some sin that most likely he never suspected that he would commit, and what Paul said that the believer was to do was to restore that brother, to help that brother. He then encouraged us to bear someone else’s burdens and since it was in the present imperative, it was a command to continually be engaged in doing this and by so doing we would be fulfilling the actual law of Christ. Then he said that we were to “**examine**” our own lives, to test ourselves to make sure that we had the right motives when we were helping people. I.e., if we do the right thing for someone and help them, it is not something that we begin boasting about.

Then, for whatever reason, v6 almost seems out of character with what went before it and what comes after it. The majority of the commentaries interpret this to mean that Paul is talking about compensation for those who teach the word, but that seems completely out of character with the entire context. Personally I cannot see how that should be the interpretation. Please note that the verb for “**sharing**” is the Greek word “*koinoneo*” which is a word that refers primarily to having fellowship with someone. It is the idea that we all share equally in the good things that God is doing in our life. We have a common fellowship and a common destiny and so we should be sharing together in how God may be using our life to help other people. The actual term for “**good things**” in v6 is “*agathos*” and is a word that is used in the New Testament to refer to moral and spiritual excellence.² Paul used the word in [Romans 10:15](#) to actually speak of the gospel.

¹ Precept, *Galatians 6*, ep.

² MacArthur, 182.

Ro 10:15 (NKJV) And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Personally, even though many commentators do, I do not see this verse as referring to the provision of some monetary compensation that a local church may pay its pastor. Just in the context of what Paul is addressing, that seems totally out of character that he would put just one verse on a subject like pastoral compensation into a passage like this. It just seems out of character with the rest of the chapter as well as the entire letter. There is nothing about the letter to the Galatians that would even intimate that this had become an issue in the churches.. There is nothing in this letter that would even give the reader that impression.

Now, when we first look at v7, there are three concise statements that Paul makes – “**do not be deceived**”, “**God is not mocked**”, and that we will reap what we sow. Now, the term “**do not be deceived**” is translated in the Greek Interlinear as “**do not be led astray**”. What makes it such an interesting verb is that it is in the imperative mood and the present tense, but it is also in the passive voice. What the passive voice seems to imply, and this is very important, is that the believer is not to be deceived by others. Normally in the passive voice, someone else is impacting the individual. Now, you should readily see how important that is to how this verse is to actually be interpreted simply because the decision has to be made as to whether or not it is talking about the believer deceiving himself or the believer being deceived by someone else. If it is addressing the believer himself, then the word “**man**” in v7 is referring to the believer himself. However, if it is speaking of someone else (i.e, the passive voice), then it is not referring to the believer. So, this has an enormous bearing on how we actually interpret this passage. I would be completely amiss if I did not tell you that there is a great deal of debate and disagreement on that to which it is referring. For me personally, the entire context of the passage both before and after v6-7 has to be the determining factor in how the verses are interpreted.

For instance, John MacArthur offers one explanation of how this verse could be translated based on the entire context of Galatians that these Galatians are not to be deceived by all of the Judaizers or false teachers who had been leading them astray. He presents this in his commentary, but does not necessarily believe that it is the way it should be interpreted. On the surface, this would seem to fit well with the passive voice issue of someone else deceiving you. If you remember in [Galatians 3:1](#), Paul said,

Gal 3:1 (NKJV) O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?

Then if you add on top of that the way that Paul addressed false teachers in [Galatians 1:6-9](#) when he said,

Gal 1:6 (NKJV) I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Obviously, this Galatian heresy, as it is often called, was a driving force behind the letter to the Galatians – that they were being greatly deceived by false teachers. The problem with false teachers is that they are generally teaching in the name of God. I.e., they are not saying that they are teaching in the name of Satan, so as long as they seem sincere and remain somewhat charming and charismatic in their demeanor and personality, people will be inclined to accept their false teaching without exercising any kind of meaningful discernment. False teaching and false teachers are without any question one of the greatest threats to a local church, just as they were such an obvious threat to the churches in Galatia. As we get closer to the coming of Christ, the Scriptures clearly indicate that the influence and impact of false teachers will become even greater. Much of this may be simply because we have so much more technology and ways to reach and influence people.

However, and this is what I personally believe to be the proper teaching on this passage, is that the passive voice is not referring to someone else deceiving us (even though that is surely possible), but more to the individual believers deceiving themselves. It is not difficult to be self-deceived about anything – about our life, about our spirituality, about others, about our attitudes – anything actually. That is why Paul says “**do not be deceived**” which could be translated as “**You yourself do not be deceived**”, or “**you make sure that you do not deceive yourself**”. I think that is how to handle the passive voice, and it certainly seems to make more sense in the context in which it is used especially when he says in v9 that we are not to “**grow weary while doing good**” and that we are not to “**lose heart**”. Those encouragements do not seem in any sense of the word to be addressing anything to do with false teachers, but with us not deceiving ourselves.

If I can it this way, whenever I sin against God, there is always an inescapable level of liability that will eventually have some kind of negative consequence in my life. I do not know how to define that consequence or its scope or even its timing, but Paul is clear that if a man sows to the flesh that he will “**reap corruption**” which simply means that the person is brought into a lesser state, a lesser condition. There will always be some kind of self-inflicted negative consequence for not taking the things of God seriously in our lives. Think of it this way. Whenever a believer refuses to acknowledge the reality or seriousness of sin in their life, it is at that very point that they have become deceived. Just think of how John stated this in [1 John 1:8](#) when he said,

1Jn 1:8 (NKJV) **If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.**

The word for “**deceived**” is “*planao*” and it means to roam from the truth, to go astray, to be seduced, to wander.³ When it is used in the passive voice, which it is, it means simply to be deceived, to be misled.⁴ I.e., it is a very easy thing to mislead ourselves, to not be honest with ourselves. In this context, it seems to refer to someone who knowingly is sowing to their flesh, but for whatever reason they think that God is just going to overlook all of that and they are going to reap good things, spiritual things. As a believer, I simply cannot scorn God or take God lightly. To do so is to treat God with contempt. I say that simply because the word “**mocked**” is a word that specifically refers to the nostrils, to someone’s nose. This is the only place that this word is used in the New Testament, and it is the specific idea of turning up one’s nose in scorn against someone, to mock them, to demean them, and to literally treat someone with

³³ Strong, # 4105, ep.

⁴ Zodhiates, 1165.

contempt.⁵ I hope that we all appreciate with great reverence that God is not going to allow His children to mock Him without some repercussions. We simply cannot outwit God. Whatever habits, attitudes, opinions, or mindsets that we postulate towards God, we can be assured that we will reap whatever it is that we sow. This is a spiritual maxim that we simply cannot underestimate or overlook.

I thank God for His patience and longsuffering with us, and certainly we do not want to presume on that goodness in any way. However, way too often we take God's goodness for granted. We ignore His warnings. We treat His Word much too lightly. We forget about His sovereignty and find ourselves blaming Him for uncomfortable things that happen in our life. We have become much too settled in taking His church lightly. The list is virtually endless of ways that we might find ourselves ignoring God and disregarding the value of His Word in our life. The problem with the principle of sowing and reaping is that our self-deception is the very thing that actually prevents us from recognizing that this principle works in every realm of our life – whether physical, moral, or spiritual. The Bible declares that the wicked **“sow to the wind, and they reap the whirlwind”**. It seems as if Christians can justify and rationalize anything that they are doing or any attitude that they may have that is contrary to what God would desire for their life. It never ceases to amaze how often people who claim to be Christians seem to have little to no commitment whatsoever to the Christian life. People just seem to drift in and then drift out. It is as if we have completely forgotten about the law of sowing and reaping.

The problem with this law is that in most every case that we rarely if ever reap what we sow immediately. When a seed is planted, the harvest is always much later, and generally the harvest is much greater than what was planted. Then to make it worse, the reaping that occurs from taking the things of God lightly are often reaped by our children and even may impact their eternal destiny. It is the maxim that I have often taught that what we excuse in moderation our children will excuse in excess. A child's character is generally the direct by-product of what someone else has planted in their life, and as they grow older, what was planted begins to sprout and manifest itself in their life. God warned Israel that they should **“be sure that your sin will find you out”**. Every area of our life is important, not only to God, but to others as well. Why is that? It is because we will always reap what we sow. It appears that this is why God has actually built this law of sowing and reaping into the very fabric of all of life – to be a constant reminder that all of us, Christian or non-Christian, will reap what we sow, and God simply does not want us to be deceived about that reality.

The truth of this passage is really very sobering that our actions always have consequences that follow. Stated another way, how we choose to live today will determine how we will be living in the future. Our present conduct determines our future condition, and because of that we have to bear the responsibility for our behavior.⁶ Whatever we plant, that is what we will reap. Unfortunately, we can sow seeds of destruction for our own life. How many people have you seen like that in your life? They made all the wrong decisions, and now their life's direction seems almost irreversible. If we plant corn seeds, we get more corn. If we plant bean seeds, we get more beans. If we plant tomato seeds, we get tomatoes. That law will never change – whether in the natural world or in the spiritual world. So, if we plant faithfulness, we will get more faithfulness. If we plant mercy, we get more mercy. However, if we plant indifference and neglect, we get more indifference and more neglect. If we plant laziness, we get more laziness. If

⁵ Zodiates, 999.

⁶ Ryken, 257.

we plant discord, we get more tension. This law never changes. When we plant sin in our life, we have no say in the outcome. We will always get self-destruction. It is like the husband and wife who are always arguing, always debating, always allowing resentment to come into their relationship. The results are inevitable. They are constantly sowing the seeds for the destruction of their marriage. They will simply find themselves drifting further and further apart, and eventually reaping loneliness, bitterness, and complete disillusionment about their marriage.⁷ Why? It is because they planted the wrong seeds in their marriage and never understood the law of sowing and reaping. No matter who you are and no matter what you think, you cannot escape the reality of this law. It is always operative, always working. This is true in every area of our life – every area. If you sow to the flesh you WILL reap corruption. You cannot change that law or that reality.

I am always amazed at people who constantly sow to the flesh and then when the harvest comes in they blame God for the harvest. Any man is an utter fool if whatever reason he thinks that he can do whatever he wants to do without having any accountability or suffering any consequences for what he has done. Let me say it another way, so listen carefully. You cannot become a spiritual person later.⁸ That is a lie, a falsehood, a deception. You cannot become what God wants you to be and have what God wants to provide to you without being a spiritual person now. God is not mocked. The man who thinks that he can fool God is only fooling himself. No man has ever mocked God and gotten away with it. Goliath mocked God and had his head chopped off by a just a young boy. Herod mocked God and was eaten by worms ([Acts 12:21-33](#)). Church, there will be a harvest. Listen finally to [Matthew 13:39-42](#) and we will close.

Mt 13:39 (NKJV) The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.⁴⁰ Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,⁴² and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.⁴³ Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Galatians*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1987.

Precept Austin. n.d. <http://www.preceptaustin.org>.

Ryken, Phillip Graham. *Galatians: Reformed Expository Commentary*. Edited by Richard D. Phillips, Phillip Graham Ryken, & Daniel M. Doriani. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2005.

Strong, James. *The New Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001.

⁷ Ryken, 259.

⁸ Ryken, 259.