

Galatians 6:8 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

Galatians 6:1
Galatians 6:2
Galatians 6:3
Galatians 6:4
Galatians 6:5
Galatians 6:6
Galatians 6:7
Galatians 6:8
Galatians 6:9
Galatians 6:10
Galatians 6:11
Galatians 6:12
Galatians 6:13
Galatians 6:14
Galatians 6:15
Galatians 6:16
Galatians 6:17
Galatians 6:18

Galatians 6:8 [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 \(NASB: Lockman\)](#)

Greek: [hoti o speiron \(PAPMSN\) eis ten sarka heautou ek tes sarkos therisei \(3SFAI\) phthoran, o de speiron \(PAPMSN\) eis to pneuma ek tou pneumatou therisei \(3SFAI\) zoen aionion.](#)

Amplified: For he who sows to his own flesh (lower nature, sensuality) will from the flesh reap decay and ruin and destruction, but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

ASV: For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life.

Barclay: He who sows to his own lower nature will from that nature reap a blighted harvest. He who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap life eternal. ([Westminster John Knox Press](#))

ESV: 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. ([ESV](#))

KJV: For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

NET: because the person who sows to his own flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit. ([NET Bible](#))

NIV: The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ([NIV - IBS](#))

NLT: Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: If he sows for his own lower nature his harvest will be the decay and death of his own nature. But if he sows for the Spirit he will reap the harvest of everlasting life by that Spirit. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: because the one who sows with a view to his own evil nature, from his evil nature as a source shall

reap corruption. But the one who sows with a view to the Spirit, from the Spirit as a source shall reap life eternal.

Young's Literal: because he who is sowing to his own flesh, of the flesh shall reap corruption; and he who is sowing to the Spirit, of the Spirit shall reap life age-during;

FOR THE ONE WHO SOWS TO HIS OWN FLESH WILL FROM THE FLESH REAP CORRUPTION: hoti o speiron (PAPMSN) eis ten sarka heautou ek tes sarkos therisei (3SFAI) phthoran:

- **Sows to his:** Ro 6:13 8:13 13:14 Jas 3:18
- **Reap:** Pr 22:8 Jer 12:13 Ho 10:13 2Pe 2:12,19 Rev 22:11
- [Galatians 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

EVERY THOUGHT, WORD, DEED SOWS EITHER TO THE FLESH or THE SPIRIT!

For (hoti) ("confirmatory" = Eadie) - Paul now explains why God absolutely cannot be mocked (despite men thinking they can in fact mock Him!) by elaborating on the two different endpoints (corruption... eternal life) based on the character of the "seed" one chooses to sow. In other words, he is in a sense illustrating the principle that a man shall reap what he sows by contrasting sowing to the flesh versus sowing to the Spirit.

Billy Graham...

Life is a glorious opportunity, if it is used to condition us for eternity. If we fail in this, though we succeed in everything else, our life will have been a failure.

However, the interpretation of Galatians 6:8 is not as clear as you might surmise or you may have been taught. The most "popular" interpretation seems to be #1 but there are some excellent expositors of Scripture who hold interpretation #2.

(1) Some commentators feel that the descriptions of sowing to the flesh and sowing to the Spirit describe genuine believers.

Clearly, genuine believers can still "sow to the flesh" because they still possess the fallen flesh (see more detailed discussion below). The result of sowing "evil seed" is corruption which is interpreted by these commentators as a loss of rewards and/or a curtailment of growth in holiness (sanctification).

(2) Other commentators (e.g., Charles Haddon Spurgeon, John Piper, Kenneth Wuest, John Eadie, Charles Simeon, [et al - see below](#)) interpret the sowing to flesh that reaps corruption as a reference to an unregenerate person whose end is corruption.

C H Spurgeon for example writes...

All who commit any of the sins in this long black catalogue are **sowing to the flesh**, and **not to the Spirit**, and **when a man sows to the flesh what will the harvest be?**

**“He shall of the flesh reap corruption,”
— putridity, rottenness, death!**

The sin that the sinner thought was sweet as honey turns bitter as gall to him. There are many men and women, in this world, who have lived in sin till it has become its own punishment; and if it is not so in this world, it will be so in the world to come.

What a dreadful thing sin is when it comes to the full! If there were no fire that shall never be quenched, and no worm that shall never die, you need not want any worse hell than that of wicked men by themselves, with nobody to control them, no public opinion to hold them in check; you need not even turn the devil in with them, just leave them to themselves, with no restraint upon their wickedness, and I can hardly imagine that hell itself can be worse than those sinners would soon become.

Ah, my friend, if you **go on living in sin** (**Ed:** See following notes regarding the verb tense for "sows" in Gal 6:8), you will wake up, one day, surrounded by the fruition of your own guilt in all its awful enormity. On every hand, the harvest of your sowing to the flesh will stare you in the face, and God will place in your hand a sharp

sickle, and will say to you, "Reap here! Reap there!" You will say, "I cannot do it," but you sowed it, so you must reap it. What terrible misery there will be for you there; yet it will only be your own sin in its ripeness, your own transgression fully developed; and that awful harvesting will be infinitely more than you will be able to bear. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The man who gripped the widow's throat, the other day, and took away her few sticks of furniture, will look upon her tearful face to all eternity! The man who led a fellow-creature to sin will see her pale sorrow-stricken face before him for ever and over; he may try to escape from it; but he will not be able to do so. Does that description fit anyone here, and does he complain that I am very personal in my remarks? That is what I am and what I mean to be, in the hope that he may repent of his great transgressions, and looking to Jesus upon the cross, may receive forgiveness of his sins ere it is too late.

John Brown notes that...

Passage... is considered by many interpreters as having a particular reference to the disposal of pecuniary substance. They understand that the apostle is saying, he who expends his money in gratifying the flesh shall have a poor return--he shall purchase to himself nothing but ruin; but he who lays it out in accordance with the views and desires of a spiritual mind, that man shall be richly compensated in the treasures of eternity. This is no doubt a truth, but we do not apprehend that the words of the apostle so much embody that truth as the more general one (**Ed**: as emphasized in these notes) ([An exposition of the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians](#))

To help us accurately interpret Galatians 6:8, let us keep in mind several specific observations that are undeniable...

(1) The verb **sows** in both uses in Gal 6:8 (**to the flesh... to the Spirit**) is in the **present tense**. The present tense generally describes continuous activity, habitual behavior and thus often reflects one's general lifestyle or the general direction of their life (their thoughts, their acts). The present tense speaks of direction not perfection.

(2) Paul says nothing specific about **rewards** or loss of rewards for the Christian in Galatians 6:8. One might argue that a reference to rewards at the judgment Seat is implicit, but it is not specifically stated and thus it is a suppositional statement which is always tenuous when seeking the most accurate interpretation.

(3) The reaping of **corruption** stands in direct opposition to the reaping of **eternal life**.

(4) In the NAS, the phrase "**eternal life**" is found 41x in 41v - Mt 19:16, 29; 25:46; Mk 10:17, 30; Lk 10:25; 18:18, 30; Jn 3:15, 3:16, 36; 4:14; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:50; 17:2, 3; Acts 13:46, 48; Ro 2:7; 5:21; 6:22, 23; Gal 6:8; 1Ti1:16; 6:12; Titus 1:2; 3:7; 1Jn 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20; Jude 1:21. The majority, if not all, of these uses refer to salvation. Paul uses the phrase "eternal life" eight other times in his letters and in each use the context indicates he is referring to salvation. This identical phrase is found once in the OT, in the Septuagint translation of Daniel 12:2 where it also speaks of salvation.

(5) **Flesh** and **Spirit** are in opposition here as they are in Galatians 5 (Gal 5:16-note, Gal 5:17-note) where the "fruit" (literally "deeds") of the **flesh** is directly contrasted with the fruit of the **Spirit** (Gal 5:19-23).

(6) In Gal 5:21-note Paul warns that the person who continually practices ("practice" = present tense) the deeds of the flesh (compare "sows to the flesh") **will not inherit the kingdom of God** (synonym for salvation, "eternal life").

Even if one favors the interpretation that sowing to the flesh as a general lifestyle depicts a non-believer whose life ends in corruption, this law of sowing and reaping clearly has a **specific application for believers**, because as **Warren Wiersbe** writes ...

all that we do is either an investment in the flesh or the Spirit.We shall reap whatever we have sown, and we shall reap in proportion as we have sown.

Note: Dearly beloved of God (Ro 1:7-note, 1Th 1:4-note), is Wiersbe's comment not a sobering thought, one that should cause each us to order our steps (Ps 119:133KJV, Dt 32:29KJV!) in alignment with God's will?! It is as if every thought, word and deed is "depositing" funds in one of two investment accounts... either the flesh or the Spirit! May God's Spirit and His grace enable us to victoriously live out Paul's exhortation in Eph 5:16-note and to pray faithfully Moses' prayer for fruitfulness Ps 90:12-note, all for the glory of His Name in Christ (Ps 115:1-note, Mt 5:16-note).

**Believers who choose
to sow to the flesh reap temporal corruption!**

Non-believers have no choice but to sow to the flesh and reap eternal corruption!

Adoniram Judson (bio) missionary to Burma alluded to the **eternal impact** of sowing and reaping when he wrote that...

A life once spent is irrevocable. It will remain to be contemplated through eternity... the same may be said of **each day**. When it is once past, it is gone forever. All the marks which we put upon it, it will exhibit forever... each day will not only be a witness of our conduct, but will affect our everlasting destiny...

**How shall we then wish to see
each day marked with usefulness... !**

It is too late to mend the days that are past. The future is in our power.

**Let us, then, each morning,
resolve to send the day into eternity
in such a garb as we shall wish it to wear forever.**

And at night let us reflect that one more day is irrevocably gone, indelibly marked.

John Stott analyzes Galatians 6:8 noting that...

This is another sphere in which the '**seed-time and harvest**' principle operates. Paul moves from the particular to the general, from Christian ministers and their support to Christian people and their moral behaviour. He reverts to the theme of the **flesh** and the **Spirit** which he has treated at some length in Galatians 5:16-25. There in Galatians 5 the Christian's life is likened to a battleground, and the flesh and the Spirit are two combatants at war with each other upon it. But here in Galatians 6 the Christian's life is likened to a country estate, and the flesh and the Spirit are two fields in which we may sow seed. Further, the harvest we reap depends on where and on what we sow. ([Stott, J. R. W. The message of Galatians: Only one way. Leicester, England; Downer's Grove, Ill., U.S.A.: Inter-Varsity Press](#) or [The Bible Speaks Today NT- 22 Vol](#))

John Eadie notes that...

The previous verse (Gal 6:7-note) presented the mere figure of sowing and of reaping, with certainty of reaping what may happen to have been sown. But the seed may be of two kinds, or the seed may be sown with two different purposes, and each purpose naturally and necessarily leads to its own result. ([Commentary on the Greek text of the epistle of Galatians](#))

The one who sows - As noted above both uses of the verb sows in Gal 6:7 are in the present tense which pictures habitual sowing.

Sows to his own flesh (*eis ten sarka*) says **John Eadie**

does not present the flesh as the field in or on which the seed is sown... The preposition is **eis** which is to be taken in an ethical sense, 'with a view to,' (**Ed**: "in the interests of" - Vine) and **sarx** (see also below) is the unregenerate nature—the leading sense of the word throughout the epistle—the nature which specially belongs to him—*heautou*, but not emphatic. The "**flesh**" is thus neither the field nor the seed; but that for the gratification of which the seed is sown, or that which forms the ruling end to the man's desires and actions, which governs and moulds the aspirations and workings of his present life. ([Commentary on the Greek text of the epistle of Galatians](#))

Wuest adds that "The word **to** in the expressions, "**to** the flesh" and "**to** the Spirit," is from (the Greek preposition) **eis**, which latter is not used here in its local use, for instance where seed is dropped into the ground, but in the sense of "**with a view to**." Sowing **with a view to** the evil nature refers to the act of a person choosing those courses of conduct that will gratify the cravings of the totally depraved nature. In this context, these words refer to the Galatians who in following the teachings of the Judaizers, catered to the desires of the evil nature. All false systems of religion are so adjusted that they appeal to the fallen nature of man ("the flesh"), satisfying his religious instinct for worship, **while at the same time allowing him to go on in his sin**. The teachings of the Judaizers catered to the fallen natures of the Galatians in that they made **no demand for the necessity of regeneration nor for faith in an atoning sacrifice that paid for sin**. In addition to that, their teachings stressed **asalvation-by-works** religion, which glorifies man, not God, and which allows him to go on in his sin while seeking to buy the favor of God by his so-called good works. This could only lead, Paul says, to **corruption** in their lives.

Vine notes that "**own**" "is inserted apparently in order to suggest that the selfishness of such sowing is its plain condemnation, for whatever has oneself for its object is, on that account alone, alien to Christ who "pleased not Himself," Ro 15:3.

Sows (4687) (**speiro** from **spao** = draw out, pull) literally means to scatter (seed) and the opposite of reaping or gathering. **Speiro** is used figuratively to describe the sowing of the "seed" of the Word of God, the Gospel (= "the word of the kingdom" - Mt 13:19, cp Mk 4:14 15, 16, 18), "the ideas and precepts that have been implanted like seed in their hearts, ie, received in their hearts (Mk 4:18)." (Thayer). Jesus used **speiro** repeatedly in His parables (Mt 13:3, 18, 24, 31)

As noted earlier, Paul uses the **present tense** for **speiro**, which could be paraphrased "the one who continuously, as the habitual practice of their life sows to the **flesh**."

Flesh (4561) (**sarx** [word study]) is used 147 times in the NT. A simple definition of **sarx** is difficult because **sarx** has many nuances (some Greek lexicons list up to 11 definitions!). The diligent disciple must carefully observe the **context** of each use of **sarx** in order to accurately discern which nuance is intended. The range of meaning extends from the physical flesh (both human and animal), to the human body, to the entire person, and even to all humankind!

In the present context, Paul uses **flesh** in its moral/ethical or spiritual sense which is typified by an outlook orientated toward self, a propensity/predilection to commit sin, an active adversity/opposition to God and a relentless pursuit of one's own ends in self-sufficient, independence from God. In this ethical sense **sarx** is portrayed as a dominating power that sets a person's course in opposition to God (Ro 7:5, 18, 25; 8:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13; 13:14; Gal 5:13, 16, 17, 19, 24; 6:8; Eph 2:3; Col 2:18, 23) which brings with it inevitable spiritual death or separation from God (Ro 8:6, Ro 8:13; Col 2:13).

Flesh is the ugly complex of human sinful desires that includes the ungodly motives, affections, principles, purposes, words, and actions that sin generates through our bodies. **Sarx** as used in this manner denotes the entire fallen human being—not just the sinful body but the entire being, including the soul and mind, as affected by sin. To live **according to the flesh** is to be ruled and controlled by that evil complex. Because of Christ's saving work on our behalf, the sinful flesh no longer reigns over the regenerate man or woman. Nevertheless, every born again believer needs to understand that there is still a remnant of fallen flesh within our physical bodies of flesh. The distinction is that now in contrast to unregenerate men, believers possess the power of the Spirit to say "yes" to God and "no" to the **flesh**, whereas before our identification with Christ (as described in Ro 6:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11-see **notes** Ro 6:1-3; 4-5; 6-7; 8-10; 11), we had no choice but to obey the demands of the flesh. The upshot as Paul teaches in Gal 5:17-note is that "the flesh (present tense = continually) sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, for these are (antikeimai = present tense = continually) in opposition to one another". The unbeliever can live **only** in the flesh, while the believer can now walk by the power of the Spirit (Gal 5:16-note). However, believers can fall back into the trap of living according to the Spirit, but this is not their general practice. Because of Christ's saving work on our behalf, the sinful flesh no longer reigns over us, to debilitate us and drag us back into the pit of depravity into which we were all born. Paul repeatedly encourages believers to overcome the deeds of the flesh in the only way possible - by living in the power of the Spirit (cp Gal 5:16-note, Gal 5:18-note, Gal 5:25-note)

John Piper defines the fallen flesh as...

the old ego that is self-reliant and does not delight to yield to any authority or depend on any mercy. Flesh craves the sensation of self-generated power and loves the praise of men... in its conservative form it produces legalism -- keeping rules by its own power for its own glory... (in its more liberal form) produces grossly immoral attitudes and acts (Gal 5:19ff-note) The flesh is the proud and unsubmitive root of depravity in every human heart which exalts itself subtly through proud, self-reliant morality, or flaunts itself blatantly through self-assertive, authority-despising immorality. ([Walk by the Spirit!](#))

Flesh is opposed to God and godliness. Being isolated from mere substance, it may be defined as a fallen nature, a disposition to sin. Flesh manifests self, and in that evaluation of it, the body may be indirectly included, but without any contributing import. The Apostle spoke of himself thus (Ro 7:18-note). The usual expression of the flesh is through the body, but evil tendencies are not always referred to under the term flesh. There are evil desires of the mind (Ep 2:3-note), and there is a "filthiness" of the "spirit" (2Co 7:1-note). Some "works of the flesh," such as "hatred" are wholly unrelated to the body. There is that which is called "fleshly wisdom" (2Co 1:12)-the wisdom of men as opposed to the wisdom of God-, and a "fleshly mind" (Col 2:18-note) which characterizes Gnosticism. The term flesh, being ethical in character, is similar to such expressions as "the old man," "the body of sin" (Ro 6:6-note), "the body of flesh" (Ro 7:24-note), "law in my members" (Ro 7:23-note), "members which are upon the earth" (Col 3:5-note).

Furnish says that...

The flesh thus seeks to exercise control over man's life, and while it is not a power outside of and over against man in the same way as sin and death, it threatens always to become the quisling tyrant, holding man in bondage to the demonic forces of the world. Since this quisling power itself provides death its opportunity, it is no less God's enemy, "hostile" to him (Ro 8:6, 7-note) and to his Spirit (Gal 6:8). (Furnish, Theology and Ethics

in Paul, 117)

Thus the term **flesh**, ethically refers to that part of man which, because of the fall, is opposed to God and to holiness. It is a fallen nature which, though expressing itself through the deeds of the body, is, nevertheless, to be identified as that which is immaterial and related to the material only as all that is immaterial is resident in, and expressed through, the material.

Even the pagan world understood the principle of sowing and reaping, **Aristotle** writing...

And thou didst sow shamefully and didst reap miserably [kakoos]. [Rhet." iii. 3, 4]

How Does a Believer Sow to His Own Flesh?

Remember that non-believers have no choice - everything they do is sowing to the **flesh**, for flesh inherited from Adam (Ro 5:12-note) is all they possess. Only those **in Christ** have a choice of sowing either to the flesh or Spirit. Note also that there is no "middle ground", no "neutral zone" so to speak (cp Jesus' teaching on the principle of "masters" in Mt 6:24-note, see also Josh 24:15, 1Sa 7:3, 1Ki 18:21, Gal 1:10, 2Ti 4:10-note, Jas 4:4-note, 1Jn 2:15-note, 1Jn 2:16-note, 1Jn 2:17-note)

John Stott explains that

Every time we allow our mind to harbor a grudge, nurse a grievance, entertain an impure fancy, wallow in self-pity, we are sowing to the flesh. Every time we linger in bad company whose insidious influence we know we cannot resist, every time we lie in bed when we ought to be up and praying, every time we read pornographic literature, every time we take a risk that strains our self-control we are sowing, sowing, sowing, to the flesh ([Stott, J. R. W. The message of Galatians: Only one way. Leicester, England; Downer's Grove, Ill., U.S.A.: Inter-Varsity Press](#) or [The Bible Speaks Today New Testament](#))

Bob Deffinbaugh observes that...

Sowing to "the flesh" is investing in that which is physical, mortal, and thus passing, rather than eternal. It is the proverbial "*going around only once*," "*gusto grabbing*" of every age. Since this world, along with our earthy bodies, is to be done away with, why are we investing in that which corrupts? Sowing to the flesh is like buying truckloads of potatoes and putting them in a bank vault, hoping to prosper from them in ten years time. Paul's reminder that we reap what we sow is a solemn word of warning to those who think that they can be blessed spiritually while living in and to the flesh. What we do in this life has consequences, both for the present and for eternity. To think that we can expect God to bless that which is of the flesh is an insult and an offense to God (**Ed**: And a vain attempt to "mock" Him). How can we possibly expect a righteous and holy God to bless unrighteousness? ([Sowing and Reaping](#))

John Brown expounds on what **sowing to the flesh** looks like in the unregenerate...

The man who is entirely occupied with the sensible and present things, though he should not be what is ordinarily termed immoral--nay, the man who is strictly honest, and honourable, and punctiliously religious, so far as external morality and religion go,--who yet does not look at "things unseen and eternal," (2Co 4:18) that man, too, sows in the flesh. And both of these classes of cultivators of this field which the Lord has cursed, shall reap the same kind of harvest. Both shall "reap corruption." "To reap corruption" is a phrase which, had we met with it by itself, we should have said naturally signifies to obtain, as the result of our exertions, that which is corruptible and perishable. In this light it is strikingly true of the man who sows in the flesh. Let him be as successful as his heart can desire in the attainment of the pleasures, honours, and wealth of the world, what has he got? Nothing but corruption. Short-lived, transitory, perishing are the leading characters of all things natural and earthly. But when we notice that "corruption" is contrasted with "life everlasting," and we compare the passage before us with the passage in the Epistle to the Romans 8:13, with which it is obviously parallel. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," we cannot doubt that "corruption" is here equivalent to death or misery--the second death, everlasting misery. 'The man who cultivates the field of the flesh shall find his labours end in his own ruin; a carnal life, whether spent in the grossest pollutions of open and unrestrained profanity, or in the strictest observances of a merely worldly religion and morality, must end in the destruction of the soul.'... That very corrupted nature which the one has indulged will be the source of his misery--the various carnal dispositions which he has cherished shall be, as it were, the fiends which shall torment him forever. Lust, avarice, ambition,

reigning with unabated, perhaps increased force in the soul, while no means of gratifying them in any degree are afforded, must make the irreclaimably wicked inconceivably miserable in their final state... it surely deserves notice that, in very many passages of Scripture, the misery of the irreclaimably impenitent is represented as the native, necessary, result of their own conduct. ([An exposition of the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians](#))

From (ek) - Literally out of.

As **Butler** (Analytical Bible Expositor) says...

**Sow wild oats and you will reap wild oats.
Sow good seed and you will reap good fruit.**

Reap (2325) (**therizo** from **théros** = summer, harvest time ~ time of harvests) conveys the picture of cutting ripe grain and gathering the bundles together. To reap, to harvest, harvest, reaping.

The immutable law of sowing and reaping dictates that we can be assured that we will reap what we sow, but we can never know exactly how much we reap until the time of the harvest.

Therizo - 21x in 17v in the NT.

Matthew 6:26 "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor **reap** nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?"

Comment: Context is "Why you need not **worry** (see study of fascinating Greek word = **merimna**)." Why should we not worry from Mt 6:26 (cp Lk 12:24)? What are we to God? How do you treat those (people, things) in your life who are "valuable"?

Matthew 25:24 "And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed...' (Mt 25:25) Mt 25:26 "But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed.'

Luke 12:24 "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor **reap**; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds!"

Luke 19:21 for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down and **reap** what you did not sow.' Lk 19:22 "He said to him, 'By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down and **reaping** what I did not sow?"

John 4:36 "Already he who **reaps** is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who **reaps** may rejoice together. 37 "For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows and another **reaps**.' 38 "I sent you to **reap** that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor."

1 Corinthians 9:11 If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we **reap** material things from you?

2 Corinthians 9:6 Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also **reap** sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also **reap** bountifully.

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also **reap**. 8 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. 9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will **reap** if we do not grow weary.

James 5:4 Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the **harvesting** has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

Revelation 14:15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and **reap**, for the hour to **reap** has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." Rev 14:16 Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was **reaped**.

Therizo - 24x in 23v in the **Septuagint (LXX)**. -Lev 23:10, 22; Ruth 2:3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 14 (= "*reapers*" in Ruth); 1Sa 6:13; 8:12; 13:21; 2Kgs 4:18; Ps 126:5 (speaks of spiritual "reaping"- for more **see note**); Ps 129:7; Pr 22:8 (speaks of spiritual "reaping" which results from sowing the seed of unrighteousness or injustice - for more **see note**) ; Ec 11:4; Job 4:8 (**see note**); Job 5:26; 8:12; 24:6; Jer 9:22; 12:13

Ecclesiastes 11:4 He who watches the wind will not sow and he who looks at the clouds will not reap.

Comment: This proverb criticizes those who are overly cautious. The farmer who waits for the most opportune moment to plant when there is no wind to blow away the seed, and to reap when there is no rain to ruin a ripe harvest, will never do anything but sit around waiting for the right moment. ([NETBible Ecclesiastes 114](#))

Jeremiah 12:13 "They have **sown** wheat and have **reaped** thorns, They have strained themselves to no profit. But be ashamed of your harvest Because of the fierce anger of the LORD."

Comment: This passage describes the Babylonian armies living off the land, utilizing all that was of value and destroying what they did not consume. Strictly speaking, the thought is not what a man sows that shall he reap, but what a man sows he shall not reap, that the harvest shall fail and all the labor expended shall be lost. Nevertheless, in a sense this lack of harvest (which was consumed and destroyed by the enemy) is the "fruit" of Judah's sinful sowing of the seeds of idolatry and apostasy which reaped the righteous anger of Jehovah which was manifest by His allowing the enemy to destroy Judah. Beware, dear reader, lest you reap the righteous indignation of Jehovah in your life - make the daily, conscious choice to sow seeds of righteousness, not rebellion! God's ways have not changed. He will allow the "enemy" to wreak havoc and destruction on "your land" (it could be financial disaster, it could be in the area of your health, fathers it could be a dire consequence suffered by one of your children, etc, etc.) But praise God, it is never too late to repent and return to the LORD! cp Hos 6:1, Jer 3:22, Lam 3:40, 41, Acts 3:19, 20. We may reap the consequences of our rebellion, but God is gracious and kind and merciful to those who seek Him in brokenness and humility - Isa 55:7, Lam 3:32, 33.

Will reap corruption - Cause and effect. Corruption is the rotten fruit which is harvested!

Wiersbe applies the universal truth of sowing and reaping to believers writing...

While it is true that the Christian is not under condemnation (Jn 5:24; Ro 8:1), it is also true that he is not free from the harvest of sorrow that comes when we sow to the flesh (Gal. 6:7, 8). When King David committed adultery, he tried to cover his sin, but God chastened him severely. (Read Ps 32:1-2, 3-4, 5, 6-7, 8, 9, 10-11-[note](#); Ps 51:1, 2-4, 5-7, 8-10, 11-13, 14-16, 17-18, 19-[note](#)) to see what he lost during those months.) When David confessed his sins, God forgave him; but God could not change the consequences. David reaped what he sowed, and it was a painful experience for him. "But I am one of God's elect!" a Christian may argue. "I belong to Him, and He can never cast me out." Election is not an excuse for sin—it is an encouragement for holiness... God in His grace forgives our sins when we confess them (1 John 1:9), but God in His government allows us to suffer the painful consequences of those sins... God put away David's sin, but warned him that the sword wouldn't depart from his own household, and it didn't (2Sa 12:1-14). What a tragedy it is to reap the consequences of forgiven sin!

Corruption - Speaks of decay and degeneration, of going from "better to worse"! Be careful because decay in one's character will inevitably, inexorably produce decay in one's life regardless of whether he is regenerate or unregenerate. For believers to sow to the flesh is "crazy" considering that God has caused us to escape "the corruption which is in the world by lust" (2Pe 1:4-note)! Why do we so easily crawl back into the cesspool of the fetid flesh when we could be experiencing the favor of the Most High God by walking in His Spirit, choosing life rather than death (Things have not changed much since Dt 30:15, 19, Pr 11:19, 12:28, 13:14, 14:27 - May we today be among the remnant who choose the fear of Jehovah and not the converse - Pr 1:29).

Jude records that mockers will **sow** their corrupt seeds of ungodliness...

In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts. (Jude 1:18)

But in **Philippians** Paul records what ungodly men will "**reap**" noting that their...

end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. (Php 3:19)

Corruption ([5356](#)) (**phthora** [[word study](#)] from **phtheiro** = to shrivel or wither, spoil , ruin , deprave, corrupt , defile, to destroy by means of corrupting, to spoil as does milk. Ethically **phtheiro** was the opposite of **sozo**) refers to a state of ruin or destruction with the picture of deterioration, dissolution, disintegration, ruin, perishing, decay or rotting like organic matter (breakdown of organic matter). **Phthora** was sometimes used of decaying food, which turns from that which is beneficial to that which is harmful.

The basic idea of **phthora** is not a sudden destruction owing to external violence, but a dissolution brought about by internal decay. It describes decomposition which brings to mind the picture of loathsome decaying matter replete with maggots and other macabre microbes! Figuratively the idea is that of the horrible thought of the "rotting" of one's morals which become more depraved with greater loss of integrity as a result of "slow internal decay".

Phthora pictures a departure from the original or from what is pure or correct and aptly depicts the moral filth and pollution of the world without God! It is the very opposite of "the divine nature."

A T Robertson writes that the precise meaning of *phthora*...

turns on the context, here plainly the physical and moral decay or rottenness that follows sins of the flesh as all men know. Nature writes in one's body the penalty of sin as every doctor knows.

Corruption - decomposition or rotting of an organism and the accompanying stench! The utter depravity of the fallen flesh and the resultant moral decomposition of the world opposed to God is driven by its sinful lusts or evil desires.

Vine comments that *phthora* is...

the result of the withdrawal of life (which alone maintains the physical organism in effective being) is the dissolution of the body; this process is called corruption, and is attended by conditions repugnant to the senses of the living. This idea of repulsiveness is extended to the moral sphere... *Apoleia* and *phthora* signify not the destruction of being but of well-being, not an end of the existence of a person or thing. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson or Logos](#))

Phthora was used in Greek to refer to destruction of a fetus and thus to a miscarriage or abortion (Epistle of Barnabas 19:5), which was said to make the mother unclean for 40 days. It was used in Greek to describe the ruination of a person through an immoral act such as the seduction of a young woman.

WHO CONTINUOUSLY SOWS TO THE FLESH? WHAT IS CORRUPTION?

Here are some interpretations (in no particular order) of "**sows to the flesh... will reap corruption**"...

- John Piper's comments (click)
- [Charles Haddon Spurgeon's comments \(click\)](#)

John Eadie writes that *phthora* in Gal 6:8 "means something more than that *"the flesh is a prey to corruption, and with it all fleshly desires and practices come to nothing"* (Alford, after Chrysostom and De Wette). 1Co 6:13, 15:42, 50. It is here opposed to **'eternal life'**, and **must have its strongest and most awful signification**, as in 1Co 3:17, 2Pe 2:12-note. It may have been suggested by the use of **sarx**; but in meaning it is tantamount to **apoleia** [word study], Phil 3:20-note. Compare Mt 7:13-note, Ro 9:22-note... The meaning, then, is different only in form from Ro 8:6-note, *"the mind set on the flesh is death"*. Ro 8:13-note, Ro 7:23-note. ([Commentary on the Greek text of the epistle of Galatians](#))

Kenneth Wuest - Sowing with a view to the evil nature refers to the act of a person choosing those courses of conduct that will gratify the cravings of the totally depraved nature. In this context, these words refer to the Galatians who in following the teachings of the Judaizers, catered to the desires of the evil nature. All false systems of religion are so adjusted that they appeal to the fallen nature of man, satisfying his religious instinct for worship, while at the same time allowing him to go on in his sin. The teachings of the Judaizers catered to the fallen natures of the Galatians in that they made no demand for the necessity of regeneration nor for faith in an atoning sacrifice that paid for sin. ([Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans](#))

Dobson, Feinberg, et al - For he that soweth to his flesh. The one who is constantly (Greek present tense) sowing with a view to the promotion of his own corrupt, sinful nature; that nature which is opposed to God and unrenewed by the Holy Spirit. Shall of the flesh reap corruption. Physical, moral, and spiritual rottenness and ruin. ([Dobson, E G, Charles Feinberg, E Hindson, Woodrow Kroll, H L. Wilmington: KJV Bible Commentary: Nelson](#))

Earl Radmacher - It is a vain attempt to "mock" God for a Christian to think that if he sows to his flesh he can escape the harvest of destruction and judgment that comes upon those who participate in sin (Gal 5:19–21; Hos. 8:7). Corruption is a term used for a field in which the produce is too rotten to harvest (Heb. 6:8). Some interpret corruption to imply eternal destruction, either through losing salvation or through never having been truly saved at all. Others understand a tragic loss of rewards for the carnal believer (1 Cor. 3:12–15; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:12). ([Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. The Nelson Study Bible: NKJV. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Albert Barnes...

From the flesh, or as that which indulgence in fleshly appetites properly produces. Punishment, under the Divine government, is commonly in the line of offences. The punishment of licentiousness and intemperance in this life is commonly loathsome and offensive disease; and, when long indulged, the sensualist becomes haggard, and bloated, and corrupted, and sinks into the grave. Such, also, is often the punishment of luxurious

living, of a pampered appetite, of gluttony, as well as of intemperate drinking. But if the punishment does not follow in this life, it will be sure to overtake the sensualist in the world to come. There he shall reap ruin final and everlasting.

Corruption. (1.) By disease. (2.) In the grave--the home to which the sensualist rapidly travels. (3.) In the world of woe. There all shall be corrupt. His virtue, even the semblance of virtue, shall all be gone. His understanding, will, fancy--his whole soul--shall be debased and corrupt. No virtue will linger and live on the plains of ruin, but all shall be depravity and woe. Everything in hell is debased and corrupt; and the whole harvest of sensuality, in this world and the world to come, is degradation and defilement.

R A Cole - So here the opposite of phthoran, **corruption**, is *zoēn aiōnion*, **eternal life**, one of the many biblical expressions for salvation. To see 'salvation' in terms of 'life' is as old as the Old Testament (e.g. Ps 16:11, to take a random example); but in the New Testament the concept takes on a new richness, as shown in an excellent article in BAGD, since 'life' is no longer merely, or even primarily, physical. (Cole, R. A. Vol. 9: Galatians: An introduction and commentary. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Page 231. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press)

George Clark comments that "**shall of the flesh reap corruption**" speaks of "moral corruption, eternal death, the opposite of eternal life. ([Galatians](#), [Ephesians](#), [Philippians](#), [Colossians](#))

McKnight - That the antithesis of flesh and Spirit has been in Paul's mind since he began these injunctions at verse 1 becomes clear with Gal 5:8. What we envision here is a divisiveness that was leading to shunning sinning brothers and sisters, to arrogant leadership, to comparing one's righteousness with another's, and to outright ugly treatment of teachers. Such kinds of behavior are "works of the flesh" (Gal 5:19, 20, 21). So Paul enters with the strongest foundation that one can perceive: God is the Judge, and people cannot sneer at him. Paul knows that "moral indifference would be an imperfection in God, not a perfection." If a person lives to the flesh, that person will "reap destruction" (condemnation); if a person lives "in the Spirit," that person will "reap eternal life." What Paul is saying is what I have said on numerous occasions in this book: while works do not save us, no one is saved without works. Why? Very simply, because works are the sure indicators of a person's heart, orientation, and status before God. Every judgment in the Bible is a judgment according to works (cf. Mt. 7:13-27; 16:27; 22:1-14; 25:1-46; 2Co 5:10; Rev 20:11-15). A person's final standing before God will be determined by that person's relationship to Jesus Christ as revealed in his or her works. While it is absolutely true that our grounds of acceptance is the sacrifice Jesus Christ made on our behalf, our connection to that sacrifice is by way of a faith that works itself out in the many good works in a person's life. ([McKnight, S. The NIV Application Commentary: Galatians. Page 287. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House](#))

Burton...

Yet in view of the Pauline use of *pneuma* (Ro 8:21, 1Co 15:42, 50), the reference to the **flesh** in the immediate context, and the antithesis of **eternal life** in the second member of the sentence, it seems probable that by *phthoran* Paul means that **corruption** and death of the body, from which, for those who have not lived according to the spirit, there is no rising to **eternal life**. ([The Epistle to the Galatians Commentary](#))

Adam Clarke...

In like manner, he that sows to the flesh--who indulges his sensual and animal appetites, shall have corruption as the crop: you cannot expect to lead a bad life and go to heaven at last. According as your present life is, so will be your eternal life whether your sowing be to the flesh or to the Spirit, so will your eternal reaping be. To sow, here, means transacting the concerns of a man's natural life. To reap, signifies his enjoyment or punishment in another world. ([Galatians 6 Commentary](#))

John Calvin...

For he that soweth to his flesh. Having stated the general sentiment, he now divides it into parts. To sow to the flesh, is to look forward to the wants of the present life, without any regard to a future life. They who do this will gather fruit corresponding to the seed which they have sown, — will heap up that which shall miserably perish... And what else does this mean, but to be so entirely devoted to the flesh, as to direct all our thoughts to its interests or convenience? ([Galatians 6:6-10 Commentary](#))

NLT Study Bible...

Those who trust in human effort and those who think they can do as they wish are in the same position: They live to satisfy their own sinful nature. Such people harvest decay and death. Those who live by the Spirit's power and trust in God will harvest everlasting life. ([New Living Translation Study Bible. 2008. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc](#))

Timothy George...

In a perfectly balanced construction, he claimed that “he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (KJV). We see here drawn out on a canvas of eternity a scenario of the end results of the two catalogs of virtues and vices Paul enumerated in Gal 5:19-23. If we continue to indulge in the works of the flesh, moving deeper and deeper into the pit of depravity, then we can be certain of the harvest we will receive—corruption.

The word **phthora**, “destruction,” “decay,” “corruption,” conveys the idea of a putrid corpse in the process of decomposition. As we saw in our earlier discussion of the works of the flesh, **sarx** as an ethical principle involves far more than the physical or material aspect of the human. Nonetheless, the consequences of sin are nowhere more vividly seen than in the ravaging of the human body through disease, decay, and death. As Burton correctly observes, “Paul here affirms that devotion of one’s self to the material, bodily side of life, brings physical death unrelieved by the Christian hope of resurrection which rests upon the indwelling of the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead.” However, we should not be misled by this graphic depiction of utter decay and desolation into thinking that the final destiny of those who sow to the flesh is annihilation or nonexistence. Hell is both final and eternal. In Rev 21:8 the role call of those who will find their place in the fiery lake of burning sulphur is remarkably similar to Paul’s category of evil in Gal 5: the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters, and all liars. Apart from eternal separation from God, the most horrible thing about hell is the incorrigibility of those who go there. “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still” (Rev 22:11, KJV; italics added). This is the “corruption” of the second death. Like a chalk artist, Paul painted a vivid portrait of the dark side of reality—the certainty of judgment, the harvest of destruction and death, the inescapable and eternal outcome of sowing to the flesh. ([George, T. Vol. 30: Galatians The New American Commentary. Page 423. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers](#))

Hendriksen...

Sowing to the flesh means to allow the old nature to have its way. So also, sowing to the Spirit means to allow the Holy Spirit to have his way. The one who does the latter is walking by the Spirit (5:16), and is being led by the Spirit (5:18). What happens to these contrasted representative individuals? Already in this life, but especially in and after the resurrection at the last day, he who has been sowing to please his flesh will from the harvest-field of the flesh reap destruction, decay. On the other hand, he who has been sowing to please the Spirit will from the harvest-field of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

The two terms “corruption” and “life everlasting” must be understood in a double sense: quantitative and qualitative. With respect to the former, the two are alike: both last on and on and on. “Corruption,” for example, far from amounting to annihilation, indicates “everlasting destruction” (2Th 1:9). “ ([Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. NT Commentary Set. Baker Book](#))

John MacArthur...

Although his trust in Christ saves him from spiritual death, a sinning believer can nevertheless reap **corruption**, suffering physical death and many other tragic earthly consequences, as did some of the unrepentant Corinthians (1Co 11:30). ([MacArthur, J. Galatians. Chicago: Moody Press or Logos or Wordsearch](#)) (Note that MacArthur does not interpret sowing to the flesh as an unbeliever, which is surprising considering his stance on passages of a similar ilk.)

Jamieson, Fausset, Brown...

corruption—that is, destruction (Php 3:19). Compare as to the deliverance of believers from “**corruption**” (Ro 8:21). The use of the term “**corruption**” instead, implies that destruction is not an arbitrary punishment of fleshly-mindedness, but is its natural fruit; the corrupt flesh producing corruption, which is another word for destruction: **corruption** is the fault, and **corruption** the punishment (see on 1Co 3:17; 2Pe 2:12). Future life only expands the seed sown here. Men cannot mock God because they can deceive themselves. They who sow tares cannot reap wheat. They alone reap life eternal who sow to the Spirit (Ps 126:6; Pr 11:18; 22:8; Ho 8:7; 10:12; Lk 16:25; Ro 8:11; Jas 5:7).

Matthew Henry...

If we sow the wind, we shall reap the whirlwind. Those who live a carnal sensual life, who instead of employing themselves to the honour of God and the good of others, spend all their thoughts, and care, and time, about

the flesh, must expect no other fruit of such a course than corruption—a mean and short-lived satisfaction at present, and ruin and misery at the end of it. ([Galatians 6 Commentary](#))

Joseph Beet...

If to gratify our own flesh be our aim, the flesh will be to us a source of corruption. For corruption is inseparable from flesh of all kinds: by its own nature it goes to ruin, and in repulsive forms. For this reason (1Co 15:50: cp. 1Co 15:42) it cannot enter the kingdom of God. It is needless to say that Paul refers here to the ruin of eternal death. On the principle that a man's actions will reappear in their results, Paul declares that they who choose as their aim gratification of the flesh will as an appropriate and inevitable consequence receive back from the flesh that corruption which essentially belongs to it. ([Galatians 6 Commentary](#))

K L Boles...

Those who follow the desires of their sinful nature will be too selfish to share in the mutual responsibilities Christians owe one another (vv. 1–10). Instead they will think only of their own desires and ambitions, and the pursuit of these desires and ambitions will likely ruin their lives here, and will surely ruin their hopes of life in eternity. It would seem that this ultimate destiny is primarily what Paul has in mind. (Boles, K. L. Galatians & Ephesians. The College Press NIV commentary. Joplin, Mo.: College Press)

C F Pfeiffer...

A selfish Christian soweth to his flesh, spending his resources to gratify his own personal desires. He may expect to reap corruption. That which might have brought reward by being invested in the Lord's work will be nothing but a decayed mass, a complete loss in terms of eternity. ([Pfeiffer, C F: Wycliffe Bible Commentary, 1981. Moody](#))

John Wesley...

Reap corruption-Death everlasting. (Wesley's Notes)

Charles Simeon ([Bio](#))...

Our final state will be exactly answerable to our present conduct—Under the metaphor of a sower the text affords a striking discrimination of character: Some “sow to the flesh”—To sow to the flesh, is to seek in the first place our carnal ease and interests. This we may do notwithstanding we are free from gross sins. Every one comes under this description who “sets his affections on things below.”

They whose life is so occupied will “reap corruption”—

The present enjoyments they will have are both corruptible and defiling. The future recompense will be everlasting destruction. This is elsewhere affirmed in the plainest terms.

Others “sow to the Spirit”—

The Holy Spirit invariably inclines men to the love of God, and of holiness. The new nature of the regenerate affects also spiritual objects and employments. To sow to the Spirit therefore is to seek and delight in spiritual things.

They who do this will reap everlasting life—

A life of devotedness to God can never issue in misery. God has promised that it shall terminate in glory.

Thus, not our pleas and pretences, but our life and conduct, will determine our eternal state—Our harvest will accord with the seed we sow. These different ends are inseparable from the different means. The punishment, however, will be as wages earned; the reward as a gift bestowed.

Infer—

1. What extreme folly is it to live regardless of God and our own souls!

No husbandman expects to reap wheat, when he has sown only tares. How absurd then to hope for heaven while we seek not after it! Let us be convinced of our folly, and learn wisdom even from the children of this world.

2. How absurd would it be to be diverted from our duty by any difficulties we may meet with in the discharge of it!

The husbandman does not regard inclemencies of weather, much less would he be deterred from his work by the advice or ridicule of the ignorant and supine. Shall we then be discouraged, whose seed-time is so precarious, and whose harvest is so important? Let all go forward, "sowing in tears that they may reap in joy." ([Galatians 6:7, 8 The Ground of God's Final Decision](#))

Mohrlang...

The point of the warnings in 6:7 becomes clear in 6:8 as Paul relates these verses with word links involving sowing and reaping. Paul's metaphor envisions two lifestyles of sowing, one "to the flesh" or sinful nature, and the other "to the Spirit" (flesh and Spirit are contrasted elsewhere in this letter at Gal 3:3; 4:29; and Gal 5:16-25). The expected results, according to Paul, would be apparent at the time of reaping; those oriented to the flesh should expect to harvest the tragedy of destruction (identified in the NLT as "decay and death"), whereas those oriented to the Spirit should expect a harvest of eternal life. (Mohrlang, R., & Gerald L. Borchert. Cornerstone biblical commentary, Vol 14: Romans and Galatians. Page 331. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers)

Herman Ridderbos...

Corruption is not the cessation of human existence, but is the positive existence of grief and woe, temporal and eternal. That nothing less is meant is apparent also from the second clause. Whoever sows in the Spirit, devotes his life to Him and lets himself be governed by Him; he shall reap eternal life from the Spirit (**Ed**: Do not misconstrue what he is saying - he is not saying sowing to the Spirit MERITS eternal life, for that is only obtained by grace through faith. He is saying that in some way which only eternity will fully disclose, believers are "contributing" to their future "eternal life". We simply cannot say much more until we are there!). For the Spirit is the grand life-giver and preserver operating through an inner law of life laid down by God. *Eternal life* speaks of the whole of life, both of body and soul, the glorified life of the resurrection on the new earth. The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia. ([The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia](#))

Warren Wiersbe...

"Sowing to the flesh" means living for the flesh, investing time and money on things that will not last; "sowing to the Spirit" means spending time and money on things eternal. How many Christians use their time and money (and money is merely time minted so we can spend it again) on things fleshly—and they wonder why they never grow in grace or reap spiritual fruits! Certainly it takes faith and patience to sow to the Spirit, but God promises the harvest in due season. It takes time to grow a spiritual harvest. We must be faithful sowers in our activities. ([Wiersbe, W. W. Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books](#))

Dunman and Ogilvie - It is probable that Paul knew Jesus' picture of the separation of sheep and goats in Matthew 25. So he is talking about a final judgment when we will be rewarded with "life" or "death" according to how we have sown. (The Preacher's Commentary Series, Volume 31: Galatians/Ephesians/Philippians / Colossians / Philemon. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc)

In sum, while some excellent expositors (eg, MacArthur, Wiersbe) interpret sowing to the flesh as sinning believers and corruption as "loss of rewards", the majority of conservative commentaries (recent and old) interpret these phrases as referring to unbelievers who will reap eternal corruption separated from the holiness of God. Although, I also favor this interpretation based on the specific facts listed above ([See here](#))

BUT THE ONE WHO SOWS TO THE SPIRIT WILL FROM THE SPIRIT REAP ETERNAL LIFE: o de speiron (PAPMSN) eis to pneuma ek tou pneumatou therisei (3SFAI) zoen aionion:

- **sows to the spirit:** Ga 6:7 Ps 126:5,6 Ec 11:6 Isa 32:20 Jas 3:18
- **the Spirit:** Mt 19:29 Lk 18:30 Jn 4:14,36 6:27 Ro 6:22 1Ti 1:16 Titus 3:7 Jude 1:21
- [Galatians 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

But - Introduces a striking set of contrasts - flesh/Spirit, corruption/eternal life.

Sows - as noted above, "**sows**" is in the **present tense** which depicts one's lifestyle. **Present tense** does not picture perfection but direction, for no believer ever achieves perfection (in this life but only the life to come). It is absolutely impossible for an unregenerate person to sow to the Spirit, for they do not possess the Spirit of Christ. All their sowing is solely to the flesh and so all

their earthly endeavors (thoughts, words, deeds) are but corruption! This sounds harsh but it is absolutely Scriptural. That we as believers can now even participate in such "holy horticulture" as sowing to the Spirit should be cause for great joy, humility, thanksgiving, and praise at "so great a salvation!" (He 2:3-note) May we never lose a sense of awe and wonder over what our great God hath wrought in each of our lives at the time of redemption and regeneration made possible by the payment of such a precious price, the blood of the Lamb, God's very own Son (cp 1Pe 1:18, 19-note)

SOWING EITHER TO THE SPIRIT or FLESH

To reemphasize, **sowing** is not something "mystical" -- We "**sow**" with our thoughts (even our motives! 1Co 4:5), our words (Mt 12:37) and our deeds (cp our "good works" Ep 2:10-note). It follows that essentially all of our life (sleep might be an exception) is characterized by continual sowing -- every moment of every day we are either sowing to the flesh or the Spirit.

Lenski writes that...

The sowing is figurative for what has already been stated literally in Gal 5:16: walking by (the) Spirit; Gal 5:18: being led by (the) Spirit; Gal 5:25: living and keeping in line by (the) Spirit; thus the opposite is walking, being led, living, and keeping step with the flesh. Our life here is a sowing of the one kind or of the other. (Lenski New Testament Commentary - The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians to the Ephesians and to the Philippians)

To the Spirit (pneuma) - Almost all commentators agree this is *pneuma* with a capital "S", the Holy Spirit and not the human spirit, for only the Holy Spirit could bring about supernatural results (eternal life) (cp Jn 6:63, Ro 8:6-note).

As **George Clark** says **to the Spirit** signifies to the "Author, Guide, and Sanctifier of the new man." ([Ref](#))

From the Spirit - Literally "out of" (ek) the Spirit.

Will reap - What a glorious promise and motivating hope we have to look forward to in that future "payday" (especially if we are intentionally and zealously continuously seeking to sow to the Spirit).

John Brown comments that...

The Spirit as opposed to the flesh is the new mode of thinking and feeling produced by the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the gospel, understood and believed. To sow (to) the Spirit... is just to use the appointed means of improving and perfecting this new mode of thinking and feeling, the yielding ourselves up to His influence, the following it out to its fair results on our behavior. He sows to the Spirit who "lives by the faith in the Son of God," and abounds in all those holy dispositions and habits which are enumerated in the end of the preceding chapter, the "fruit of the Spirit." Such a person will have a harvest of everlasting bliss and happiness... " ([An exposition of the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians](#))

Life ([2222](#)) (**zoe [word study]**) in the present context refers to **supernatural life** in contrast to a life subject to eternal death (Jn 3:36). This quality of life speaks of fullness of life which alone belongs to God the Giver of life and is available to His children now (Ro 6:4-note, Ep 4:18-note) as well as in eternity future (Mk 10:30, Titus 1:2-note). As Wuest says zoe speaks of "the life which God gives to the believing sinner, a vital, animating, spiritual, ethical dynamic which transforms his inner **being** and as a result, his **behavior**."

J R Miller writes that...

The final harvest that comes from our sowing—is in our own character. It is not only a reward to be put into our hand in heaven, which is promised—something which is to be given to us. The reward will be in us! It will consist in likeness to Christ... The truest reward for a godly life—is godliness wrought into the character! **The truest retribution for a wicked life—is to be left to sin forever—in the ways the sinner has chosen and learned in this world!**... "It is appointed unto men once to die—and after that to face judgment!" Hebrews 9:27 ([The Seeds We Are Scattering](#))

Edwards commenting on "**eternal life**" in the sense of a "reward" writes...

Eternal life is used here as a special quality of life which comes as a reward for faithful service. While the term "eternal life" frequently is used in reference to the free gift of eternal life (HEAVEN, John 3:16), there are times it is also used in the sense of reward (1Ti 6:19, Gal 6:8, etc.). In the coming kingdom, there will also be

a colossal reversal of fortunes. Many who are prominent now will find themselves surpassed by faithful servants who turned their back on the glitter of this age to pursue the things of eternity. Realizing these great promises, there is no good reason why we shouldn't give ourselves unreservedly to the cause of advancing Christ's kingdom. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain. ([The Letter of Mark](#))

Moody's Today in the Word...

Paul exhorts us to live always with a view toward pleasing the Spirit because if we do, one day we will reap an eternal harvest. In other words, Paul is calling us to orient our lives around the coming of Jesus and the day when He will reward His people for their faithfulness. Eternity will commence, and at that point it will matter whether or not we have lived by the power of the sinful nature or by the power of the Spirit (Gal 6:8). ([MBI - Today in the Word](#))

Eternal life - Speaks of both the **present possession** and the **future hope** (absolute certainty of future good) of **all** believers. As noted earlier in this discussion, **eternal life** is a phrase repeatedly used in the NT (and once in the Septuagint - Da 12:2) as a synonym for salvation and the new life that regeneration brings to everyone who by grace places their faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Hoerber

In Gal 5:21 Paul speaks of inheriting "the kingdom of God," here of reaping "eternal life." The first focuses on the realm (sphere, context) that will be inherited (as Israel inherited the promised land); the second focuses on the blessed life that will be enjoyed in that realm. (Concordia self-study Bible. "Lutheran edition of the NIV study Bible")

See **John Piper's** discussion of "**Eternal Life**" in the comments on Galatians 6:9-10.

John Eadie comments on "*but he who is sowing to the Spirit, from the Spirit shall reap life eternal*" ...

As in Gal 5:16, etc., the Spirit is not the higher or renewed part of man's own nature... but the Spirit of God; and there is no heautou (own) with it as with sarka (*his own flesh*). Sowing to the Spirit produces "**eternal life**" as its harvest. Mt. 19:16, 17, 25:46; Mk 10:17, 30; Lk 10:25, 18:18; Jn 3:15, 16, 5:24, etc. **Aionios** is an epithet of quantity, not of quality. Compare its use with doxa, 2Co 4:17, 2Ti 2:10, 1Pe 5:10; with soteria, Heb. 5:9; with paraklesis, 2Th 2:16; with kleronomia, Heb. 9:15.

The future verb (*shall... reap*) refers to the harvest at the end of the world, though indeed it is enjoyed even now. Jn 3:36, 5:24, 6:47. The clause is virtually the same in meaning with to "*mind set on the Spirit*", Ro 8:6, 13. The zoen aionion (eternal life) has reference specially to blessedness in the future world, as the fruit of present grace and holiness, and as the object of hope. Ro 2:7, 5:21, 6:22; 1Ti 1:16; Titus 1:2, 3:7. The life created by the Spirit, and sustained through believing oneness with Christ, can have neither pause nor end. It is immortal from its living union with Him who "only hath immortality."

The **continued and wilful indulgence of our unrenewed nature becomes its own penalty, as it does not realize the end of its being, and unfitting itself for blessedness, sinks and darkens into ruin**; but the work of the Spirit of God, fostered within us and consciously elevated into predominant and regulative influence, ripens surely into blessedness. The process in both cases is a certain one—*therisie* (will reap)—as certain as that between sowing and reaping; and the identity of the harvest with the seed sown is emphatically marked—*ek tes sarkos... ek tou pneumatos. (to the flesh... to the Spirit)*. The apostle now encourages to the second kind of sowing in Gal 6:9f ("But in well-doing") ([Galatians 6 Commentary Online](#))

A W Tozer writes that...

The way to deal with a law of God is to work along with it. By faith and obedience we can put every divine law to work for us. And the law of sowing and reaping may be brought to our service and made to toil for our everlasting good. So kind is God and so thoughtful of His creatures.

"He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." There it is, and we have but to submit to it to gain from it an everlasting reward. Deeds done in the Spirit, in obedience to Christ and with the purpose of bringing honor to the Triune God, are seeds of endless blessedness. The first gift of life is not by works, but by faith in the work of a sufficient Redeemer; but after the miracle of the new birth has been accomplished, the Christian to a large extent carries his future in his hands. If he denies himself and takes up his cross in meek obedience, his deeds will become seeds of life and everlasting glory. He may forget his deeds of love or think them small and useless, but God is not unmindful. He never forgets. The sweet harvest of a life well lived will be there to meet the sower after the toil is ended and the heat of the day is past. (Tozer, A. W. *The Next Chapter After the Last*. Camp Hill,

J C Ryle soberly reminds us...

**Our state in the unseen world of eternity
depends entirely on what we are in time.**

The life that we live upon earth is short at the very best, and soon gone.

"We spend our days as a tale that is told." (Ps 90:9.)

"What is our life? It is a vapor—so soon passes it away, and we are gone." (Jas 4:14)

The life that is before us when we leave this world is an endless eternity, a sea without a bottom, and an ocean without a shore.

"One day in Your sight," eternal God, "is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2Pe 3:8-note)

**ETERNITY HINGES
UPON TIME**

In that world time shall be no more. But short as our life is here, and endless as it will be hereafter, it is a tremendous thought that eternity hinges upon time.

**Our lot after death depends, humanly speaking,
on what we are while we are alive.**

It is written, "God will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger." Ro 2:6-note, Ro 2:7, 8-note

We ought never to forget that we are all, while we live, in a state of probation. We are constantly sowing seeds which will spring up and bear fruit, every day and hour in our lives. There are eternal consequences resulting from all our thoughts and words and actions, of which we take far too little account. "For every idle word that men speak they shall give account in the day of judgment." (Mt 12:36.) Our thoughts are all numbered, our actions are weighed. No wonder that Paul says, "He who sows to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal 6:8.) In a word, what we sow in life we shall reap after death, and reap to all eternity.

There is no greater delusion than the common idea that it is possible to live wickedly, and yet rise again gloriously; to be without religion in this world, and yet to be a saint in the next. When the famous Whitefield revived the doctrine of conversion last century, it is reported that one of his hearers came to him after a sermon and said—"It is all quite true, sir. I hope I shall be converted and born again one day, but not until after I am dead." I fear there are many like him. I fear the false doctrine of the Romish purgatory has many secret friends even within the pale of the Church of England! However carelessly men may go on while they live, they secretly cling to the hope that they shall be found among the saints when they die. They seem to hug the idea that there is some cleansing, purifying effect produced by death, and that, whatever they may be in this life, they shall be found "fit for the inheritance of the saints" in the life to come. But it is all a delusion.

**Life is the time to serve the Lord,
The time to insure the great reward.**

The Bible teaches plainly, that as we die, whether converted or unconverted, whether believers or unbelievers, whether godly or ungodly, so shall we rise again when the last trumpet sounds. There is no repentance in the grave—there is no conversion after the last breath is drawn. Now is the time to believe on Christ, and to lay hold on eternal life. Now is the time to turn from darkness unto light, and to make our calling and election sure. The night comes when no man can work. As the tree falls, there it will lie. If we leave this world impenitent and unbelieving, we shall rise the same in the resurrection morning, and find it had been "good for us if we had never been born." (Mark 14:21.)

I charge every reader of this paper to remember this, and to make a good use of time. Regard it as the stuff of which life is made, and never waste it or throw it away. Your hours and days and weeks and months and years have all something to say to an eternal condition beyond the grave. What you sow in life that now is, you are sure to reap in a life to come. As holy Baxter says, it is "now or never." Whatever we do in religion must be

done now.

Remember this in your use of all the means of grace, from the least to the greatest. Never be careless about them. They are given to be your helps toward an eternal world, and not one of them ought to be thoughtlessly treated or lightly and irreverently handled. Your daily prayers and Bible-reading, your weekly behavior on the Lord's day, your manner of going through public worship—all, all these things are important. Use them all as one who remembers eternity.

Remember it, not least, whenever you are tempted to do evil. When sinners entice you, and say, "It is only a little one,"—when Satan whispers in your heart, "Never mind—where is the mighty harm? Everybody does so,"—then look beyond time to a world unseen, and place in the face of the temptation the thought of eternity. There is a grand saying recorded of the martyred Reformer, Bishop Hooper, when one urged him to recant before he was burned, saying, "Life is sweet and death is bitter." "True," said the good bishop, "quite true! But eternal life is more sweet, and eternal death is more bitter."

(Ryle ends with a series of questions, the one most related to our subject at hand being the following).

How are you using your TIME? Life is short and very uncertain. You never know what a day may bring forth. Business and pleasure, money-getting and money-spending, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage—all, all will soon be over and done with forever. And you, what are you doing for your immortal soul? Are you wasting time, or turning it to good account? Are you preparing to meet God?

(Except from [Thoughts on Immortality](#))

Octavius Winslow has the following devotional on Gal 6:7-8...

It is a self-evident truth, that there can be no harvest where no seed has been sown. But the fact that there is coming a moral harvest in each individual life- a future reaping of present sowing- is a truth equally demonstrable. The life that now is, is the seed-time of a life that is to come. The future of human destiny derives all its complexion and its form from the present of human character. The spring does not more certainly deepen into summer- nor the summer fade into autumn- nor the autumn pale into winter- nor the winter bloom again into spring, than does our present probation merge into our future destiny, carrying with it its fixed principles, its unchanged habits, and its tremendous account.

And what, my dear reader, are you sowing? I wish this question to have all the earnestness and force of a personal appeal. With what seed, again I ask, are you sowing for the future? If you are unconverted, nothing is more true than that you are sowing to the flesh! You may be rigidly moral, deeply intellectual, profoundly learned, exquisitely refined, outwardly religious, generous, and amiable, and yet all the while you are but sowing to the flesh, and not to the Spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and nothing but flesh. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," it is spiritual and divine, heavenly and holy; and, what is more, it is imperishable. No lowly seed of divine truth, or grace, love, or service, sown in this present life of suffering and toil, shall ever be lost. All other things shall perish- the world with its loveliness and love, the "lust, of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," all shall pass away and vanish; but not one seed of grace implanted in the heart of man by the Holy Spirit shall ever perish. The Divine image once restored to the soul shall never more be obliterated. Nothing done by Jesus, or for Jesus- no sin laid down, no cross taken up, no holiness cultivated, no labor wrought, no service done, no cup of cold water given- nothing, the fruit of love to God and of faith in Jesus Christ, shall ever be lost. Oh, who does not earnestly desire that in his heart and life may be sowing the good incorruptible seed, that shall, though long buried and concealed, yield a golden harvest of future joy, bliss, and glory? ([Octavius Winslow. Daily Walking with God - April 3](#))

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OT Example of Sowing and Reaping - The Effects of Sin by Theodore Epp 1 Samuel 21:1-10

When he fled to Ahimelech, the priest, David resorted to an untruth.

Ahimelech was afraid that David's presence before him was the beginning of trouble, but David sought to quiet the priest's fears by saying, "The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place" (1 Sam. 21:2).

This was a sad chapter in David's life, but he was not forsaken. God permitted these tests in order to teach David some very valuable lessons. The Lord was preparing him for the throne where he would have to meet

much greater tests.

David did not know that his lies would bring trouble to Ahimelech. David was hungry and asked for food.

While conversing with the priest, he saw Doeg, chief herdsman for King Saul, near the sanctuary. This man was an Edomite, not an Israelite, who wore a cloak of religion to cover up the true condition of his heart.

He was a tool of Saul's, cruel and unscrupulous, and it is likely that David's heart skipped a beat when he saw this wicked man.

Had David stayed with Samuel no harm would have come to Ahimelech and his fellow priests; but David's presence among them, of which they were entirely innocent, proved to be their death warrant (1Sa 22:9-18).

One person's sin can sometimes have far-reaching effects on others. (Gal 6:8)

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Galatians 6:8 Spiritual Sowing - Devotional by C H Spurgeon -- Sowing looks like a losing business, for we put good corn into the ground never to see it anymore. Sowing to the Spirit seems a very fanciful, dreamy business; for we deny ourselves and apparently get nothing for it. Yet if we sow to the Spirit by studying to live unto God, seeking to obey the will of God, and laying ourselves out to promote His honor, we shall not sow in vain. Life shall be our reward, even everlasting life. This we enjoy here as we enter into the knowledge of God, communion with God, and enjoyment of God. This life flows on like an ever-deepening, ever-widening river till it bears us to the ocean of infinite felicity, where the life of God is ours forever and ever. Let us not this day sow to our flesh, for the harvest will be corruption, since flesh always tends that way; but with holy self-conquest let us live for the highest, purest, and most spiritual ends, seeking to honor our most holy LORD by obeying His most gracious Spirit. What a harvest will that be when we reap life everlasting! What sheaves of endless bliss will be reaped! What a festival will that harvest be! LORD, make us such reapers, for thy Son's sake. (See also Torrey's Topic "[The Reward of the Saints](#)")

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**Righteousness exalts a nation,
but sin is a reproach to any people. Pr 14:34**

Harry Ironside had this devotional thought: When nations or communities of lesser size turn from the paths of integrity and self-restraint to those of wickedness and careless self-indulgence, they are in the way of inevitable ruin. It was not the barbarians that destroyed the Roman Empire in the fourth century of our era. It was the immorality and drunkenness of its citizens. Israel could never be vanquished by foes from the outside. It was always the enemies within that caused defeat and brought ruin and desolation. The nation or community that trains its youth to walk in righteousness and shun licentiousness, drunkenness, and other vicious types of behavior will become and remain strong and powerful. Where it is otherwise, its weakness will soon become evident. It is as true of whole groups as of individuals, that whatsoever they **sow** will surely be **reaped** (Galatians 6:7). (Ironside, H. A.. The Continual Burnt Offering: Daily meditations on the Word of God)

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Now—Or Later- The principle that we reap what we sow is taught and illustrated throughout the Bible. The effects of our choices may be in the here and now, or they may be experienced in the hereafter, when we stand before God.

From the perspective of eternity, it is far better to reap the consequences of sin now in this lifetime. That's because there is still time for repentance and restoration.

In Judges 1, we learn that the Canaanite king Adoni-Bezek was among the more fortunate in this respect. In keeping with the cruelty of his day, he had cut off the thumbs and big toes of 70 captured kings. But then the tables were turned. The Israelites captured Adoni-Bezek and cut off his big toes and thumbs. The wicked scoundrel, though, had enough sense to admit that God was causing him to reap what he had sown (v.7). We are not told whether he truly repented, but we can consider him fortunate to have had the opportunity to do so.

If you see yourself reaping the consequences of your sins, stop the self-destructive cycle. Make the most of the rest of your life by running back to the open arms of the Lord. He longs to forgive you and lead you to a way of life that reaps His blessing and reward. - Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

THINKING IT OVER

What is society reaping today?

What am I personally reaping?

What do I need to stop sowing? Start sowing?

Present choices determine future rewards.

Which Way Am I Growing? - Some folks grow old gracefully, while others become grouchy and ill-tempered. It's important to know which way we're growing, because we're all growing older.

People don't get irritable and short-tempered merely because they're getting older. Aging doesn't have to make us hypercritical and cranky. No, it's more likely that we've become what we've been becoming all along.

Paul wrote: "He who sows to his flesh will ... reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will ... reap everlasting life" (Gal. 6:8). Those who pander to self-interest and think only of themselves are sowing seeds that will produce a harvest of misery in themselves and in others. On the other hand, those who love God and care for others are sowing seeds that, in time, will yield a harvest of joy.

C. S. Lewis put it this way:

Every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before.

We can choose to submit our wills to God each day, asking Him to give us strength to live for Him and for others. As He works in us, we will grow in grace and in kindness.

So the question we need to ask ourselves is: Which way am I growing? -- Dave Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Surer than autumn's harvests
Are harvests of thought and deed;
Like those that our hands have planted,
The yield will be like the seed. —Harris

**The seeds we sow today
determine the kind of fruit we'll reap tomorrow.**

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We Reap What We Sow - Many of us are deeply troubled by the injustices we see in life. Unscrupulous, dishonest, God-denying people are often the ones who prosper the most. But you can be sure of this: "God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7). This principle is illustrated in The Gray and Adams Commentary.

"The Emperor Charlemagne wanted to have a magnificent bell cast for the church he had built. An artist named Tancho was employed by the church to make it. He was furnished, at his own request, with a great quantity of copper, and a hundred pounds of silver for the purpose. He kept the silver for his own personal use, however, and substituted in its place a quantity of highly purified tin. When the work was completed, he presented the bell to the Emperor, who had it suspended in the church tower. The people, however, were unable to ring it. So Tancho himself was called in to help. But he pulled so hard that its tongue fell down and killed him."

That bell maker's death reminds me of the words of Psalm 7:16, "His trouble shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down on his own crown."

Sooner or later we will reap what we sow. We'll have nothing to fear if we sow what is good. -- Richard De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We're always sowing seeds in life
In everything we do and say,
And we will surely reap the fruit
Of what we're planting every day. —Hess

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The Pathetic Pelican - Pelicans, with their huge beaks, are strange-looking birds. But I saw one that was especially weird. Its beak was crisscrossed, as if someone had pulled the upper and lower parts in opposite directions. He was a pathetic sight!

Remembering that pelicans zoom headfirst from a considerable height into schools of fish to obtain their meals, I wondered if this particular bird had seen such a tempting catch that he dove into water that was too shallow for him and hit bottom. I don't know if this is what happened, but it made me think about the consequences and sometimes permanent effects of bad choices.

Many people today carry with them the scars of sin. Although it is true that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9), physical and emotional problems often remain.

Those who live a reckless and unrestrained life may bear the marks of their destructive lifestyle to their dying day, even though in later years they are marvelously saved.

When you're tempted to sin, remember the pelican with the mangled beak. God will forgive you when you confess, but the consequences may last a lifetime. --Richard De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The bounty of God's matchless grace
Is greater than our vilest deeds,
Yet from the evil that we sow
There may remain a crop of weeds. —DJD

One reason for doing the right thing today is tomorrow.

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Connected Actions— by My son Steve was running the best cross-country races of his life. Just a high-school freshman, he earned a spot on the varsity team.

That's when Steve decided he wanted to go even faster—but not on foot. So he spent a Saturday racing a dirt-track motorcycle. All went well until he misjudged a jump and ended up with his leg under a Yamaha.

Nothing was broken, but having a banged-up calf muscle took a toll on his cross-country season. His times got worse, and he missed making the varsity team for the state finals.

Steve learned an important lesson: All of our actions are connected. Each action affects other areas of our lives.

Sometimes we try to keep parts of our lives separate from our faith in Christ. One example is thinking that watching immorality on TV does not affect our walk with God. But the Bible says, "He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow" (Proverbs 22:8), and "He who sows to his flesh will ... reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will ... reap everlasting life" (Galatians 6:8).

All elements in life are inter-related. We must make sure that each thought, each action, and each word flows from a heart of Godliness—so that everything we do is for God's glory, honor, and praise. --Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Surer than autumn's harvests
Are harvests of thought and deed;
Like those that our hearts have planted,
The yield will be like the seed. —Harris

The best reason for doing what's right today is tomorrow.

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Poor Trade-Offs— Life is full of trade-offs. Today's poor choices are a down payment on tomorrow's problems. It's all a part of living with the law of God that says we reap what we sow (Gal 6:7).

That was true of a 30-year-old Mississippi resident. A conviction for felony drunk driving resulted in his getting a 15-year prison sentence. The judge then suspended 14 years of the sentence if the man would honor the terms of a 1-year house arrest.

The trade-off was simple: Stay home and out of trouble for 1 year instead of going to prison for 15. But the man didn't like being cooped up, so he went fishing—driving with a suspended license to get there. He was arrested and the judge threw him in prison. The fishing trip cost him many years of freedom.

What bad trade-offs do we make? Do we reject God's mercy so we can enjoy sin's season of pleasure? In the Bible, we see some examples. Moses traded the Promised Land for an outburst of anger (Num. 20:7-13). David traded his reputation for a night of passion (2Sa 11:1, 2, 3,4, 5, 6ff). Ananias and Sapphira traded life for some extra money (Acts 5:1-11).

Are you facing temptation today? Don't give in. Cling to Jesus. Obey His commands. Never exchange fellowship with Him for anything. It's always a poor trade-off. --Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

It's wise to flee when tempted—
A fool is one who'd stay;
For those who toy with evil
Soon learn it doesn't pay. —DJD

In the heat of temptation, don't lose your cool

The Devil's Boomerangs (Hot Cakes Off the Griddle)

Billy Sunday's famous sermon...

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment" (Ecclesiastes 11:9)

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7)

You can always get the truth out of the Bible. Of course you can always find truth elsewhere, but never from so clear a source. Nothing was ever printed more true than

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap."

God will not coerce and attempt to force any man to be a Christian. When he dies, however, he will be judged for his sins. He must face the day of judgment. Do as you please. Lie, steal, booze-fight, prostitute. God won't stop you. Do as you please until the undertaker comes and puts you in a coffin and then the Lord will have his say. Lives of pleasure shall have an end, the wicked shall not live half their days.

If I sat in the pew and you were up here preaching there are four questions I would ask that you answer satisfactorily before you could win me.

First: Are you kindly disposed to me?

Second: Do you want to help me?

Third: Do you know what you are talking about?

Fourth: Do you practice what you preach?

No man can say I am not kindly disposed to him. I do want to help every man and woman. I have read and studied and everything I preach comes from the Bible. What I say this afternoon is based on indisputable facts. I have no ambition except to alleviate the misery and suffering that comes through sin. I'll not pump you full of hot air, and what I preach I'll practice. If I didn't practice what I preach I'd leave this platform and never try to speak to an audience again. If sin wasn't so deceitful it would not be so attractive. The devil doesn't let a man stop to think what he is doing, that in every added indulgence in a drink he grows weaker.

Some people think that to be a Christian means to be a weakling sort of a sissified individual. When I played baseball and was

serving the devil, I circled the bases in fourteen seconds from a standing point, and I believe I can do it now. No man has ever beaten that. Han Lobert and some of the rest may have equaled it, but none has ever beaten it. I used to be handy with my dukes, too, before I became a Christian, and I can go so fast now for five rounds you can't see me for dust.

When I was with the Chicago Y.M.C.A. I did the saloon route for a time handing out invitations to men's meetings in Farwell Hall. One day I met a young man I had known in Iowa. He was half drunk and a broken-down, drunken bum came along. I told my friend that if he persisted in drinking he would become as the bum. He laughed and said he would never be a drunkard. One year later he was down and out, his job gone and his home wrecked.

No man ever started out with the intention of becoming a drunkard. Line up all the drunkards on earth and ask them and they will all tell you they never intended to be drunkards. They all started as moderate drinkers.

Christianity is capital and capital is character. Your character is what you do business with and there's a big difference between character and reputation. Reputation is what people think about you, and character is what God, your wife and the angels know about you.

For a man to preach and practice the gospel of Jesus Christ makes him trustworthy. There was a time when people wouldn't trust me to hold a yellow dog fifteen minutes.

Many men live only for money. They care for nothing else, but I believe they are in the minority. You cannot measure a man's success by the rattle of the cash register. All some men have is money. Subtract \$50,000, booze and women from some men and you will have nothing left. I haven't a word to say against the rich man who got his wealth honestly and is trying to do good with it. The Bible doesn't have a thing in it against a man because he's rich. Look at Solomon. He was worth about \$6,000,000,000, according to our standard of gold and silver. Yet he was a godly man.

But there's a lot of good-for-nothing lobsters who think they are called by God to go up and down the country harping for a limitation of wealth and cussing and damning the rich man for every dollar he has, while they sit around and cuss and damn and never work.

If you want to use your genius and ability to get all you can and use the surplus over your own needs for the good of humanity, I hope you all will be millionaires. If you want to get all you can, and can all you get, I hope you'll all go to the poorhouse.

When Commodore Vanderbilt, who was worth \$200,000,000, died, he called in a minister and asked him to sing for him that old song Vanderbilt's mother used to sing in Moravia, "Come ye sinners, poor and needy!" Worth \$200,000,000 and yet poor and needy when he came to his death. The next day one man told another Vanderbilt was dead.

"How much did he leave?" asked the second man. He left it all. He could not take one cent with him.

But don't stop for anything I say. Go on piling up money until you have a pile as big as the tabernacle. When you die you can't take it with you, and if you could it would melt or burn up. Just remember, however, that it will not be long before you and I go to the beyond.

Another thing I want to talk about this afternoon is the immorality of the country. Sixty thousand girls were ruined last year by the white slave traffic. But I don't believe any woman was ever ruined but that some brute of a man didn't take the initiative. If what I hear about you young bucks is true, when you come back home from trips, no decent girl ought to speak to you, allow you in their homes or even to look at you. And I understand some of you old married rakes are at it, too. I think the lowest, vilest, most damnable buffoon and triple extract of infamy and degeneracy in the world is the one who will plight his troth and marry, and leave his wife at home to go out with a prostitute.

I wouldn't wipe my feet, I wouldn't spit or blow my nose on society that makes a distinction between the man who sidesteps and the woman who goes wrong. The crying need of the age is a single standard for the sexes. It makes no difference to God whether one wears a plug hat or a hairpin. When a man wants to marry, does he select a girl from the red light district? No. He goes to some decent, virtuous girl and asks her to accept his whisky-soaked, sin-blackened, diseased carcass. A man visited a house of prostitution and found his sister there. He murdered her, although she had as good a right there as he had. Talk about your buccaneers of the Spanish main, or the heartless men who sat at the feet of Jesus Christ as he hanged on the cross, and gambled for the coat on his back; I'd rather trust my daughter with them than some of the smooth rascals in society. They go around with their trousers rolled up, and their only aim is to lead the next girl they can astray. Then they go back to a lot of young bucks like themselves and laugh at her. I say they are interlopers in decent society. There must be a hell. If there isn't where would these low-down scoundrels who force motherhood upon a woman and then haven't the manhood to accept fatherhood go? There couldn't be a better argument for hell. And a lot of you young bucks walk around with a pistol in your hip pockets, and if it would explode it would blow your brains out. I believe that any man low-down enough to deliberately ruin a young girl and sell her into a life of shame should be shot on the spot. Shooting is too good for him. What is wrong for the woman is wrong for the man and any other code is rotten. If

a man has the right to sit around telling smutty stories a woman has the same right. The man adulterer is no better than the woman adulteress. There are many young men so vile that the only good use that could be made of them is to dip their heads in buckets of soapsuds and use them for mops. Perhaps you have no idea of the extent to which the black plague has grown in this country. Much more than half the young men of this country are or have been afflicted with venereal disease. Eighty per cent of the abdominal operations performed on women are caused by disease contracted from their husbands. Most cases of blindness in infants is caused by disease in their fathers. I know this is plain talking, but what is needed in this country are men not afraid to talk plainly to men.

There are men hobbling diseased around Omaha who say, "Oh, I don't go to hear Billy. He is too vulgar for me." Rot. Plain speaking is always vulgar to the rascal and old fool who is afraid to hear the truth. There are 500,000 prostitutes in this country. Besides them, there are 1,500,000 who are not classed as prostitutes, being kept on the side. Every year 100,000 prostitutes die, directly or indirectly, from the diseases peculiar to their trade. Think of it! Eighty per cent of the cases of total blindness in the world are a result of venereal diseases. Perhaps the person himself or his parents were not afflicted, but their ancestors were some time or other. The cause of the downfall of Greece and Rome was the degradation of woman's honor and no attempt by men to curb their beastly desires. And the virtue of womanhood is the rampart wall of American civilization.

Some men say they drink because it makes them cool in summer and warm in winter. Then why is it the booze-fighter dies from sunstroke or freezes to death quicker than the man who doesn't drink? That's easy. The alcohol drives the blood to the surface, where it warms or freezes quicker. You drink because there is alcohol in it, and if the alcohol was taken out you might as well drink water. Some of you let 1,000 gallons of beer slop drain through you to get the value of one and three-quarter pounds of beefsteak. If you want to make swill barrels out of your stomachs, go ahead. One of the first indications of a crushed strawberry stomach is a crushed strawberry nose. Some of the diseases from drinking are locomotor ataxia, stammering, jaundice, Bright's disease. I defy any man this side of hell to show me any scintilla of benefit that ever come from hitting the booze. It is strange the drinking man thinks I am his enemy when I am only trying to protect him from the things he is rushing into. By my voice, my vote and by all my power I am trying to add twenty years to his life, pull the pillow out of the window and put in a pane of glass, and to feed and clothe his wife and babies the way they should, and put carpet on his floor. I can pass the saloon in my strength and not have a desire to take a drink, but there are many who cannot, and I don't see how men can do anything but drown the dirty rotten business in hell. Drive it back into hell, where it ought to be, men.

I have seen more drunken men since I came to Omaha, more drunken men in the tabernacle than I have seen in any other city in seven years. Whisky is rarely pure. Less than 15 per cent of the whisky sold in this country is unadulterated. That's the chief reason it makes men commit crime. If you want to know what whisky does to you, drop the white of an egg into a glass when you go home, cover it with whisky and let it stand for a time. The white of the egg will harden. That is what whisky does to your nerves. It affects them the same way and you reel and mutter, because your nerves are whisky-soaked. If I could show you men today the inside of a drunkard's stomach, hold his liver or kidneys up to your view, that would be all you would want to make you quit hitting the booze.

Alcohol poisons the system, prevents the liver and kidneys doing their work and eventually sends a man tottering and reeling to a drunkard's grave or to an insane asylum. Men may look healthy but if they drink they are not. Something is wrong with their heart, liver or kidneys. If you don't believe me ask your physician.

I have been drinking your Omaha water for three weeks and I do not believe that anywhere in the country have I drank better, clearer, more refreshing water. I asked where your water came from and they told me from the old muddy Missouri. I could hardly believe that water could be made so pure by filtering. But just in that way do the liver and kidneys filter your blood and when you fill your system with alcohol you stop the filtering process. For 1,900 years alcohol has ruined its millions, sent men to drunkard's graves, impoverished families, wrecked homes and filled our institutions. How much longer are we going to stand it? Because of my fight against this rotten business, I have suffered attacks from newspapers and from the dirty gang that howls at every man who dares interfere with their illicit profits. I have been lied about, vilified, insulted, defamed in Omaha since coming, but let me tell you, men of Omaha, any little, rotten, stinking two-by-four sneaking editor of a vile, unspeakable sheet can revile me and talk about me until he is black in the face and I will not give up my fight against that dirty, godforsaken, rotten business as long as I live.

I'll reach further down and higher up than any man you ever heard of to save you, your wife and babies from the fangs of that beast and I am not going to be turned back or dismayed by the opposition of a pack of curs. The spawn of hell barks at my heels from one end of the land to the other. The open saloon is the hotbed of political corruption and the breeding place of criminals, and nest of anarchy, and the incubator of poverty, misery, squalor, want, dishonesty and all that is vile.

I've been through blood and fire for Jesus Christ, and when some of the preachers stop preaching about the New Jerusalem and start preaching against the whisky crowd and the red-light district in these cities something is going to happen. You Methodists can talk about infant baptism, and the Presbyterians can howl about perseverance and half waters close over me you'll say and the Baptists can howl about water and half of your members go where you can't get a drop. When I leave old Omaha you can take me

down to the Missouri River, tie a millstone around my neck and drop me off the bridge. And when the waters close over me you'll say "There goes a man who wasn't afraid to preach the truth."

You say you can't prohibit men drinking. If Jesus Christ lived in Omaha men would booze-fight, men would sidestep. But when you say you can't enforce the laws you lie. You can enforce the laws against booze as much as against anything else if you have honest, decent officials to do it. There is not a law in the United States which prohibits. There is a law against murder, but does it prohibit? No. Would you advocate a repeal of all the laws because they do not prohibit? No. You wouldn't let a man murder any one he wanted to by paying a license of \$1,000; or for \$500 ruin any girl over 16 years of age; or for \$250 seduce young girls; or for \$200 license him to crack any safe; or for \$50 license him to burn buildings. That's what you do with the whisky gang.

As many of you know I was a member of the old White Sox ball club, the best club that ever stepped on a diamond. We could beat any other nine men that ever donned a uniform. I was converted in Chicago and forsook the old crowd. The other boys saw me go to Jesus one night in Chicago, but none followed. Listen! Mike Kelley was sold to Boston for \$10,000. Mike got half of the purchase price. He came up to me and showed me a check for \$5,000. John L. Sullivan, the champion fighter, went around with a subscription paper and the boys raised more than \$12,000 to buy Mike a house. They gave Mike a deed to the house and they had \$1,500 left and gave him a certificate of deposit for that. His salary for playing with Boston was \$5,000 a year. At the end of that season Mike had spent the \$5,000 purchase price and the \$5,000 he received as a salary and the \$1,500 they gave him and had a mortgage on his house. And when he died down in Allentown, Pa., they went around with a subscription paper to get money enough to put him in the ground. Mike sat there on the corner with me twenty-nine years ago when I said, "I bid you good-by."

Williamson was the shortstop, a fellow weighing 215 pounds, and a more active man you never saw. When Spaulding took the two clubs around the world, I was the second man asked to sign a contract. I was sliding to second base one day — I always slid head first — and I hit a stone and cut a ligament loose in my knee. I got a doctor and had my leg fixed up, and he said to me:

"William, if you don't go on that trip I will give you a good leg." obeyed, and I have as good a leg today as I ever had. They offered to wait for me at Honolulu and at Australia. Spaulding said: "Meet us in England, and play with us through England, Scotland and Wales."

I didn't go.

Ed Williamson went with them, and while they were on the ship crossing the English channel a storm arose, and the captain thought the ship would go down. Ed dropped to his knees and prayed and said:

"God, bring this ship safe into harbor and I promise to quit drinking and be a Christian."

God abated the storm and the ship went into the harbor safely. They came back to the United States and Ed came back to Chicago and started a saloon in Dearborn Street. I would go through there giving tickets for the Y. M. C. A. meetings and would talk with him, and he would cry like a baby. I would go down and pray for him, and would talk with him. When he died and they put him on the table and cut him open and took out his liver, it was as big as a candy bucket.

Ed Williamson sat there on the street corner with me twenty-nine years ago, when I said, "I bid you good-by."

Frank Flint, our old catcher, who caught for nineteen years, drew \$3,500 a year on an average. He caught before they had chest protectors and masks and gloves. He caught barehanded. Every bone in the ball of his hand was broken; you never saw a hand like Frank had. Every bone in his face was broken and his nose and cheek bones, and the shoulder and ribs, had all been broken. Frank was discharged from the Chicago club because he would drink, and nobody else wanted him. He used to hang around the saloon all the time. Many a time I have found poor old Frank asleep on a beer table. I turned my pockets wrongside out and dumped every cent I had on the table and said:

"Frank, you can always look to me for half of what I have. I haven't as much now as I had when I was playing ball."

Then I was drawing \$5,000 and \$7,000 a year, and was offered \$1,000 a month if I would play ball. But I stuck to my job at \$85 a month.

His wife left him, and one day he staggered out of a saloon and was seized with a paroxysm of coughing. His wife happened to meet him and the old love for him returned. She called a carriage and summoned two policemen, and they carried Frank to her boarding house. She summoned five physicians, the best that money could get. They felt his pulse, counted, and then told her he couldn't last very long. She leaned over and whispered: "Frank, the doctors say it won't be very long now." Frank looked up and said: "Send for Bill." I hurried over to the house, and as I stood beside his bed he reached up his left hand and put it around my neck and drew me down to him. He said:

"Bill, there is nothing that gives me so much comfort as to have you come down on an occasion like this. I can see the crowd hissing

when I strike out and they need a run, and I can hear them cheer when I catch a foul tip, or throw a fellow out on the base. But it don't do any good, now, when I come to a time like this."

Frank coughed and his life went out. The umpire had leaned over him and said: "You're out."

Frank Flint sat on the street corner with me twenty-nine years ago, when I said, "Boys, I am through."

Men of Omaha, did they win the game of life or did I?