

Don't Lose It

Galatians 6:8-10

I. What You Put In

a. Sow to Your Flesh

- i. Sow- of appropriating the fruits of another's labor The harvest corresponds to what is sown
- ii. Flesh- which is dominated by sin to such a degree that wherever flesh is, all forms of sin are present, and no good thing can live in the σάρξ Ro 7:18

1. What Paul seems to have in mind here in speaking about sowing to the flesh are the libertine tendencies of his Galatian converts that he has alluded to earlier in this section: quarrelsomeness (5:15, 26), conceit (5:26), envy (5:26), living aloof from the needs of others (6:1–2; perhaps also 6:6), and pride (6:3–4). Such things not only reflect a misuse of Christian freedom (cf. 5:13) but also have disastrous results both personally and corporately, for “destruction” is their final end.
2. is the unregenerate, ‘uncrucified’ self- Sowing ‘for the flesh’ is the practicing of such things as are included among ‘the works of the flesh’ in 5:19–21; ‘works of the flesh’ as quarrelsomeness and envy, to which the Galatian Christians appear to have been especially prone (cf. 5:15, 26); indulgence in such things would have disastrous results in their personal and corporate lives alike.

b. Reap Corruption

i. Reap

1. The thought of reaping, *i. e.*, of obtaining result from one's efforts,

ii. Corruption

1. connotes the transience of the present world order. In Rom. 8:21 it is used of the liability of the material universe to change and decay; contrast the ‘imperishable
2. The word “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, 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.
3. 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. See Rom. 6:19–23; 8:8–17,

c. Sow to the Spirit

- i. To sow- is to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit
- ii. Christians have been justified by faith and cleansed from guilt, they have received the Spirit, but they must persevere in holy living and not rest on their oars. Paul knew the necessity of this in his own life

d. Reap Eternal Life

- i. Reap Eternal Life- Paul had in mind here the final consummation of salvation that will be ushered in by the return of Christ and the resurrection of the dead.

II. Don't Stop Good

a. Don't Lose Heart in Good

- i. Lose Heart Lose - to lose one's motivation in continuing a desirable pattern of conduct or activity, *lose enthusiasm, be discouraged*
 1. Paul will not allow any failure to terminate his ministry or to cause him to grow tired in it.
 2. This precept is especially necessary because we are naturally lazy in the duties of love, and many little stumbling-blocks hinder and put off even the well-disposed. We meet with many unworthy, many ungrateful people. The vast number of the needy overwhelms us; we are drained by paying out on every side. Our warmth is damped by the coldness of others. Finally, the whole world is full of hindrances which turn us aside from the right path.
 3. Faced with the temptation of legalism on the one hand and libertinism on the other, many of Paul's converts in Galatia were beginning to lose heart. Having begun well in the life of the Spirit, they were in danger of losing their first love, being diverted from witness and service into petty bickering and greedy self-concern.
- ii. Doing Good moral quality, *good, noble, praiseworthy, contributing to salvation*.
 1. looks to the manifestation of God's goodness (*chrēstotēs*) among us, mediated through Jesus Christ, in the age to come. In contrast, the very creation of God is good (1 Tim 4:4), and Titus (3:4) views the earthly presence of Jesus as a manifestation of divine goodness
 2. The word *good* is preceded by the article. It is not merely what may be good in character as judged by anybody's standards, but the good spoken of in the context, good which is the product of the work of the Holy Spirit through the saint.
 3. To persevere in doing what is good is to 'sow to the Spirit'; those who do so without growing faint
 4. "includes everything the Christian is responsible for doing," and so "is identical with the concepts of the 'fruit of the Spirit' (5:22-23) and of 'following the Spirit'

b. In Due Time

- i. In Due Time- where the proper time for the fulfilment of God's promises is indicated, either at Christ's first advent or at the parousia. Here the eschatological harvest may be in view
 1. Not so in the spiritual life. One of the greatest frustrations in the Christian ministry, and a principal cause for "weariness in well doing," is the inability to calculate the spiritual outcome of faithful labors in the work of the Lord. For this reason we must be cautious

in putting too much stock in what we often call “visible results.” We serve a Sovereign God who has promised that his Word will not return void. The ultimate harvest is assured, but it will only come “at the proper time,” that is, in God’s own good time.

2. Its appearance here in the future tense (θερίσομεν) is a promise for the future, but again without any specification as to whether that time is to be a this-worldly existential future or an other-worldly eschatological future, or both. Interpreters have easily latched on to one or the other of these understandings depending on their own theological proclivities.
- ii. Reap - to gain results or benefits, *reap*
 1. is the culmination of the agricultural cycle followed immediately by the processing of crops and fruit
- c. Don’t Grow Weary
 - i. Grow Weary - be exhausted in strength, become weary, give out
 1. words “be weary,” are from egkakeo (ἐγκακεο) which was used of husbandmen who are tempted to slacken their exertions by reason of the weariness caused by prolonged effort. The word faint is from ekluo (ἐκλυο) which was used of reapers overcome by heat and toil. The word means “to relax effort, to become exhausted physically.” The incentive to keep on working was, that at the right time they would gather the harvest
 2. What Paul fears, it seems, is that his converts of Galatia, having begun well (cf. 3:2–5; 5:7a), were losing their enthusiasm about life lived “in step with the Spirit” (cf. 5:25), and so were not only being enticed by a nomistic lifestyle but also were allowing libertine attitudes to take control. In particular, they were beginning to revert from an outgoing type of Christian faith that seeks the welfare of others to a selfish, self-contained religious stance that has little concern for others. So Paul’s appeal: “Let us, then, not become weary in doing good.”

III. Take the Opportunity

- a. Opportunity - a moment or period as especially appropriate the right, proper, favorable time at the right time
 - i. Here it means opportunity in the sense of a seasonable time, an appropriate time to do something. The word have is from echo (ἔχο), a present subjunctive, the apparatus giving a present indicative as a rejected reading. It is hortatory in its usage, namely, “let us be having” a seasonable time. The exhortation is not merely to do good to others when the opportunity presents itself, but to look for opportunities to do good to others. The word do is from ergazomai (ἐργαζομαι), which word emphasizes the process of an action, carrying with this the ideas of continuity and repetition. It means “to labor, to be active, to perform,” with the idea of continued exertion being included.

- ii. Just as the time of reaping will come “at the proper time,” so now we must make good use of the present “opportunity” to sow to the Spirit rather than to the flesh. Paul’s words should certainly not be understood as an endorsement for a lackadaisical approach to ethical living
- iii. Paul is certainly not relegating ethics to some incidental or optional category of Christian living, as some seem to read his words here. Rather, he is highlighting through his use of the noun *καιρός* the divinely given and strategic nature of opportunities set before the Christian for doing good.

b. Do Good

- i. To all people - Paul’s universalistic appeal was based on the fact that all persons everywhere are created in the image of God and are thus infinitely precious in his sight.
 - 1. The exhortation itself is all-embracing: “Let us do good to all people.”
 - 2. The universal character of God’s redemption corresponds to the universality of Christian ethical and social responsibility. If God’s redemption in Christ is universal, the Christian community is obliged to disregard all ethnic, national, cultural, social, sexual, and even religious distinctions within the human community. Since before God there is no partiality, there cannot be partiality in the Christian’s attitude towards his fellow man
- ii. Household of Faith with focus on association in common cause or belief
 - 1. which speaks metaphorically of the corporate unity of Christians, and the members of such a household are to be cared for in particular.
 - 2. None of us lives to himself as an isolated unit among his fellowmen. We are bound together in a racial group in which we have certain obligations to them