

Galatians 6:8

Authorized King James Version (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.

Analysis

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. Paul specifies the two sowings and reappings. "For he that soweth to his flesh" (hoti ho speirōn eis tēn sarka heautou, ὅτι ὁ σπείρων εἰς τὴν σάρκα ἔσυντοῦ)—the one sowing into his own flesh, investing in fleshly pursuits, gratifying fleshly desires. "Shall of the flesh reap corruption" (ek tēs sarkos therisei phthoran, ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς θερίσει φθοράν)—will from the flesh harvest decay, ruin, destruction. Phthora (φθορά) is corruption, decay, destruction—both present consequences and eternal judgment.

"But he that soweth to the Spirit" (ho de speirōn eis to pneuma, ὁ δὲ σπείρων εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα)—the one sowing into the Spirit, investing in spiritual realities, walking in the Spirit. "Shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (ek tou pneumatos therisei zōēn aiōnion, ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος θερίσει ζωὴν αἰώνιον)—will from the Spirit harvest eternal life. This isn't earning salvation (that's by grace through faith alone) but describes the harvest faithful believers reap: increasing life now and eternal life ultimately. Sowing to Spirit produces Spirit-fruit (5:22-23) and eschatological reward.

Historical Context

Paul consistently contrasts flesh and Spirit as opposing life-principles (Romans 8:1-13). Sowing to flesh means living for earthly, temporal, selfish pursuits—immediate gratification, worldly success, fleshly pleasures. Sowing to Spirit means investing in eternal realities—holiness, service, spiritual disciplines, kingdom advancement. The harvests differ: flesh produces decay (relationships ruined, character corrupted, life wasted); Spirit produces eternal life (Christ-likeness, kingdom fruit, eschatological reward). This motivates present choices by eternal consequences. What we do now matters forever.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What specific daily choices constitute sowing to the flesh versus sowing to the Spirit in your life?
2. How does meditation on the ultimate harvest (corruption versus eternal life) affect your present sowing decisions?
3. In what practical ways can you shift resources (time, money, energy) from flesh-sowing to Spirit-sowing?

Interlinear Text

ὅτι ὁ σπείρων εἰς τὴν σαρκὸς ἐαυτοῦ ἐκ τῆς
For G3588 he that soweth to G3588 flesh his of G3588
G3754 G4687 G1519 G4561 G1438 G1537

σαρκὸς θερίσει φθοράν ὁ δὲ σπείρων εἰς τὸ^{τὸ}
flesh reap corruption G3588 but he that soweth to G3588
G4561 G2325 G5356 G1161 G4687 G1519

πνεύματος ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος θερίσει ζωὴν αἰώνιον
the Spirit of G3588 the Spirit reap life everlasting
G4151 G1537 G4151 G2325 G2222 G166

Additional Cross-References

Romans 8:13 (Spirit): For 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.

James 3:18 (Parallel theme): And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

2 Peter 2:19 (Parallel theme): While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

Job 4:8 (Parallel theme): Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

Hosea 10:13 (Parallel theme): Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men.

Romans 13:14 (Parallel theme): But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Galatians 6:7 (Parallel theme): Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Proverbs 22:8 (Parallel theme): He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.

John 4:36 (Eternal Life): And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

Revelation 22:11 (Parallel theme): He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

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