

# Galatians 6:7-10

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/gal/gal-6/galatians-57-10/>

*Living a life of sin will earn loss of reward. Living a life in the Spirit will earn God's reward. In this short life, we should do good to other believers and all people.*

Paul is close to finishing his epistle, or letter. He offers a few more important words of wisdom for the Galatian believers who are his spiritual children. He has warned his Galatian children against listening to the competing Jewish “authorities” who are teaching them to seek to be justified in the sight of God by keeping religious rules. Paul has taught them that seeking to obtain something Jesus gave them freely disconnects them from trusting Jesus, and makes Jesus’ gift of no practical benefit.

Paul has reminded them of the freedom in living by faith in Christ, rather than in bondage to the law, which produces disobedience. Here, he warns the Galatians not to *be deceived*, because *God is not mocked*. God cannot be tricked or made a fool. It does not matter what the competing Jewish “authorities” say. Or anyone else. God made the cause-effect relationships in the world, and no one will unravel them. He is the ultimate judge who oversees ultimate justice, *for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap*. The way people live their lives has consequences, including believers. For a person *who sows to his own flesh*, they *will reap corruption*. Paul wants the Galatians to understand that living by the flesh, living devoted to sin, will result in corruption.

Jesus set us free from sin and death (Romans 8:2). Jesus gave us the power to overcome the flesh, to say no to it, as Paul described in chapter 5. What Jesus did not do is take away our freedom to choose. By giving us the power of the Spirit, Jesus gave us unlimited willpower, when we rely on the Spirit. We have power over the sin nature, the flesh. But we still have to use that power. And if we don’t, and we walk in the flesh, we get the results, the consequences, the fruits of the flesh. And those fruits lead to *corruption*.

The word for *corruption*, “phthoran,” also means “destruction” or “ruin.” Believers can live a ruined life, destroying wonderful things we could have experienced through a walk of faith, by instead devoting ourselves to sinfulness. This does not mean a loss of being justified in the sight of God—that is a gift. Nothing can take it away. What it means is a loss of living a productive life and a loss of inheritance. In our experience in this world, sinful living is destructive. It ruins lives. Sinful living also destroys the rewards we could have been given by Jesus in His kingdom if we lived obediently.

In Galatians 5:15, Paul notes that the opposite of living by the Spirit in love is to “bite and devour one another.” And in that devouring sinfulness, Paul warns the Galatians to “take care that you are not consumed by one another.” Sowing to the flesh leads to corruption, destruction, ruin. It leads to relationships being destroyed. It leads to a failure to live the life God has called us to, and a loss of reward. And ironically, this destructive life can stem from seeking to be justified in the sight of God by keeping religious rules.

But, for the believer *who sows to the Spirit*, they will *from the Spirit reap eternal life*. If the Galatians live a life devoted to following the Spirit (which is what Paul has urged them to do this entire letter), they will reap *eternal life*. The Greek words translated *eternal life* are ‘aionios’ and ‘zoe.’ ‘Aionios’ means “as far as you can see.” Where and how far depends on the context. For example, in Romans 16:25, ‘aionios’ is translated “long ages past,” because the context makes it clear we are looking backward. ‘Zoe’ is used by Biblical writers to refer to our spiritual life, which is where our quality of life comes from. For example, if you’re not generous with your money, it ends up owning you. You have a poor zoe.

Since chapters 5 and 6 mainly refer to our physical lives on earth, it is likely that Paul intends to include the quality of life we will have while living here on earth. If we sow to the flesh, our quality of life will be poor. It will be filled with biting and devouring among those who ought to be loving. It will be filled with addictions and enslavement to appetites. And of course this means we will also lose rewards when we are judged by Christ for “deeds in the body” (2 Cor 5:10). This is consistent with Paul saying that ‘aionios zoe’ is something that can be grabbed. He tells us in 1 Timothy 6:12 to “take hold” of ‘aionios zoe’ by “fighting the good fight.” The rewards for sowing to the Spirit are a much higher quality of life while “in the body” as well as rewards in the next life.

Paul clearly is not referring to ‘aionios zoe’ in the sense of how we get to Heaven. If that were true, it would contradict Paul’s entire point that justification in the sight of God comes from faith in Jesus alone. Paul is adamant that nothing can be added to the free gift Jesus paid for on the cross. Paul is saying is that if we live in the Spirit, we will harvest or experience a completely fulfilled life. We can experience the full, joyful life God wants us to live here and now. And we can further experience it in the next life through Christ’s rewards to obedient believers.

These verses most likely have a more specific application. Paul is probably talking about what believers do with our money. Back in verse 6, he urges the Galatians to help support teachers of the Word, "The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him." In verse 10, he also writes, "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith." The verses in between, regarding sowing and reaping, apply broadly to how we live our lives, where we invest time and energy—but in the immediate context, Paul seems to be saying that where we invest our money matters, and that it should be shared with believers and teachers. Philanthropists and generous people enjoy a quality of life that stingy people will never experience.

Sowing and reaping are metaphors taken from farming. *Sowing* means investing by planting seeds. *Reaping* means collecting the harvest from what was planted. Whatever we devote ourselves to, we will reap from that devotion. God is not mocked; He deals justly. No one can make the world work in a way that differs from how the Creator made cause-and-effect. Knowing this encourages believers to live a life in the Spirit rather than the flesh. There is no scenario where we can live in the flesh without the results of the flesh. It is worth noting that Paul’s warning to his spiritual children is in the context of behavior the competing Jewish “authorities” consider to be religious devotion.

Paul tells the Galatians to *not lose heart in doing good*, even if it does not feel like doing good is worth the effort, *for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary*. If we persist in doing good, in obeying God, in living by faith in the Spirit, the reward will come. God is a just Father. The warning here is not to grow tired of doing good, not to give up. Often the rewards of walking in the Spirit come with a long delay. Our circumstances can get more difficult when we walk by faith. The reward in this life could mainly be in our own spirit. Paul knows firsthand about living in difficult circumstances. Taking responsibility leads to difficulty. But living as a slave to our flesh is much worse. And in the next life, the rewards will be enormous for faithfulness.

*So then, Paul concludes, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.* We're here now, on this earth, to do good to everyone we meet. The people *of the household of faith* are given a priority status here, meaning believers in Jesus. This priority is for the health and stability of the church in Galatia. As a result of church harmony, doing good should spread to the community around, *to all people*.

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. <sup>10</sup> So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.**