

You Reap What You Sow

Walt Henrichsen – The Law of the Harvest

Part 1

Solomon wisely notes in Ecclesiastes 11:9-10: **“Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. Therefore remove vexation from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh; for childhood and youth are vanity.”**

Youth is a time of learning, when the mind is expanded and new truths alter the perception of reality. What we do with this new truth is another matter. Solomon calls upon youth to remember that God will judge based on what a person does with what he learns. Risk-taking is characteristic of youth; old age is a time when people become anxious, cautious, and conservative. It is tragic when you see the young act like the old; it is exciting when you see the old act like the young, as illustrated by Caleb (Joshua 14:11-14).

The generosity of God comes with a price; a man has to show a return pleasing to God for what God has given. Each man is to live his life to the full, remembering that God will bring him to Judgment for how he invested his life. Solomon is not suggesting that youth sow its wild oats, but rather that he should plan on paying the price for what God has given. He should follow the “way of his heart; the sight of his eyes.” Understanding that he must give an account to God for how he lived, he must work his dreams into reality. Such a man does not pretend to be what he is not.

In both the Old and New Testaments the Bible views death and Judgment as a time of confirming what a person is. This is why Solomon urges people to act on what they know. Revelation 22:10-12 also warns, “And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. 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. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” A person takes into eternity the essence of what he is.

You sow a thought and reap an act.

You sow an act and reap a habit.

You sow a habit and reap a life.

You sow a life and reap an eternity.

In Scripture we find a wisdom in anticipation of the end. To paraphrase Robert Service, “Remember, for so soon it grows later than you think.” “Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season” (Job 5:26). “My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass” (Psalm 102:11).

“Remember” is a key word throughout Scripture. Solomon encourages the young to keep God’s Word in mind before it is too late to do anything about life. Assuming you reach old age, it is filled with uncertainties, anxieties, inabilities, and insecurities. The best security for old age is a properly invested life without regret. Solomon taught how to enjoy life; but he also reminds his readers of the brevity of life – the time when there is an abatement of the ability to enjoy the world God created. The clouds darken and the sun, moon, and stars are no longer bright. Remembering that these days are coming is an act of the will, a mark of wisdom.

It is unnatural for the young to ponder the certainty of death. Solomon encourages him to follow his heart. But the young need to remember that God will judge each man for the way he invests his life. The young too often have no idea of the dangers involved in temptation. They see no need to be tutored, fully convinced that they can learn through personal experience, the worst way to learn according to God’s Word. Youth is vanity simply because youth often trifles in serious things, while considering trifles as serious.

Before closing, let me remind you of Solomon’s words in Song of Solomon 2:7: “I adjure you, O maidens of Jerusalem, By gazelles or by hinds of the field: Do not wake or rouse Love until it please!” Appetites once awakened are virtually impossible to put back to sleep. Experimentation and investigation may be the route to intellectual excellence, but when applied to the moral realm it produces ruin and eternal damnation.

Praying for a heart of wisdom,

Part 2

Continuing from the last Dear Co-Laborer letter, Solomon notes in Ecclesiastes 12:11: “The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails well fastened are those that are composed in collections; they are given from one shepherd.” His purpose is to “goad” people into investing their lives wisely. The “nails” drive home to the conscience the truth of his Word in such a way that they endure to the end of life.

Solomon gave wise counsel on how to live as well as the importance of remembering the brevity of life. “Remember” is a key word throughout Scripture. He encourages the young to remember before it is too late to do anything about life. Old age is filled with uncertainties, anxieties, and insecurities. In this country we call the remedy “social security.” However, the best security for old age is a properly invested life so that we do not look back with regret.

Biblical assertions are reasonable, but not rational. They require turning the world’s perspective upside down; as Jesus said, “That which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.” ¹ Paul said the same thing: “...the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God.” ² Therefore, these assertions run counter to how the world (and most Christians) think. Because God insists that His people walk by faith, these biblical assertions have to do with risk-taking – which entails investing in people rather than things. And the Bible asserts that life can only have significance by embracing them.

Why do youth squander their days and rarely catch this perspective? Most think they have forever; they do not think about mortality. They feel there is nothing they cannot do or accomplish. “I may not be the most gifted person in the world, but I can compensate with my will.” Thus, they have not experienced the disappointments of life that tend to destroy optimism.

The time to get to know God is early in life. The young are more teachable and ready to learn. The longer one delays submitting to the authority of God, the more difficult submission becomes. Appetites are awakened, and habits are established that make change more difficult in later life. God heaps rich bounties on the young, but “when the evil days come,” the wealth of God’s resources diminish – that is, there is a waning of human capacity.

Two short commands sum up the book of Ecclesiastes: “fear God” and “keep His commandments.” They are in the correct order and go together – if you do not fear God you will not keep His commandments, and you will keep His commandments only if you fear Him. Note that Solomon does not tell his readers to fear death, man, circumstances, fate, government, calamities, etc. “Every work” ³ – the most minute and the most important, from the first conscious moment to the last breath of life, all the hidden thoughts known only to God – these all will be scrutinized by God in the day of Judgment. Because people fear in the direction of their hope, they will either fear the temporal or the eternal.

Ecclesiastes begins and ends with the words, “Vanity of vanities...all is vanity.” The whole book is the working out of this thesis with a variety of illustrations and proofs. Solomon took an inventory of the world and all the best that is in it; he summarized it all and concluded it was “vanity.” It was not an academic exercise. As both the Old and New Testaments suggest, far too much of the world lives in us rather than we living in the world.

His exhortation asks the question, “What obligation do we have to the One who created us? How can youth guard against those passions and pleasures to which this slippery age is most addicted?” If we are of Him, should we not be for Him? God rejects those who do not like to retain Him in their knowledge. “Remember” is an act of the will and the mark of wisdom. The old adage argues: “Youth for pleasure, age for business, and old age for religion.” In other words, “Let the devil have the prime of life, and give God the dregs.” The antidote is to “remember your Creator in the days of your youth.” If you wish the help of God in the “evil days,” you must serve Him in the good days. The evil days will come, and when they do, without God they are full of pain and weariness. Old age is the worst time we can choose to mend either our lives or our fortunes.

Pondering the inevitabilities of life,

Your Co-laborer in Christ,
Walt Henrichsen

¹ Luke 16:15

² 1 Corinthians 3:19

³ Ecclesiastes 12:14

<https://leadershipfoundation.org/you-reap-what-you-sow/>