

“Compelled to Give” // Gal 6:7–9 // *Freedom in the In-Between* BONUS TRACK, *Multiply*

- Enemy is here to kill, steal, destroy. Does not have the last word.
- Isaiah: you have taken the spirit and heaviness and replaced it with a garment of praise.
- Greater is he that is in you; we overcome him through the word of our testimony; in him we are more than an overcomer, makes us walk always in victory, persecuted but not destroyed, the prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him. We resist the devil and he flees from us...

Multiply is a 2-year journey we've been on as we commit ourselves to what God is doing...

111 people to our interest meeting. 1 in 20.

Our vision is to Multiply.

300 people gave and Multiplied

- 11K; 448 people;
- How many overseas: 228

Introduction

Galatians 6... The older I get, the more I realize how many of my life-values were shaped by the Rocky movies, Karate Kid, and the Indiana Jones trilogy. In Rocky 3, Rocky had become the world champ by beating Apollo Creed, and he has started to enjoy a pretty lavish lifestyle. **Meanwhile, there's a new rising star**, Clubber Lang, played by Mr. T, who, right behind Nicolas Cage, was one of our generation's most underrated actors. But Clubber is mean and hungry... and so the movie toggles between Clubber's intense training and Rocky's lazy wine-and-cheese lifestyle. When they meet up for the fight, Clubber pulverizes Rocky, and Rocky's trainer Mick is killed, and no one can figure out why, but you, the movie-watcher know why—Balboa had sown a life of laziness, and that harvested in the ring. Of course, the rest of the movie is Rocky training hard, and doing his one-arm pushups, and winning again. But it illustrates an important principle—you will always reap what you sow—one that Paul talks about in Galatians 6.

(You say, “What? Back to Galatians?” Yes, this series on Galatians is like **Nicolas Cage's career**—just when you think it is finally over, it comes roaring back. This message is kind of in our series on Galatians, but also helps us get our minds around what I believe God is saying to us in our Multiply series. So, think of this like a Bonus track in our Galatians series. Extra material.)

⁷ Don't be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a person sows he will also reap, ⁸ because the one who sows to his flesh will reap destruction from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit. ⁹ Let us not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don't give up.

Now, at first is almost sounds like Paul is contradicting what he has taught us elsewhere in Galatians, doesn't it? Throughout Galatians **Paul has taught us** that the gospel is that God gives to us not what we deserve, but righteousness that Christ earned for us and gave to us as a gift.

And this almost sounds here like he is introducing the principle of karma at the end—the good you do will come back on you. So, sow good karma so you can reap good karma later.

But that is the wrong way to read this. Paul is simply reminding us of something we all know to be true, a principle God has built into the very fabric of the universe: **what you sow, you reap.**

I love how **Andy Stanley** explains this,

“Paul says what we really all know intuitively: life is connected. Where you are today is a result of decisions you made in the past, and where you will be tomorrow is connected to what you do today and what you did yesterday. There is a relationship between your current irresponsibility and what you can expect in the days and weeks and months to come.

We must realize what Paul doesn't say here. He doesn't say, "People reap what they sow—unless they ask for forgiveness." See, forgiveness doesn't erase what you've sown. I run into this all the time as a pastor. Someone comes to me and says, "Andy, I'm doing my best." And I have to say, "I'm glad you're doing your best now, but for five years you didn't do your best. That was sowing. Now you're reaping from those years, and doing your best now doesn't erase all the sowing you did then."

You see, there is a distinction between forgiveness of sins and the consequences of sin. You can get forgiveness for your sin, but you can't un-sin. Even when God forgives us, our actions have consequences.

What you sow, you always will reap. **Tim Keller goes so far as to call this an “absolute” principle in Scripture.** He says it is what **underlies** the entire book of Proverbs!¹ There are at least 66 places in the Bible where this principle is stated, and they read like:

- **“Whoever digs a pit will fall into it; if someone rolls a stone, it will roll back on them.”** Prov 26:27
- **“The wicked person earns an empty wage** (if you get rich off of injustice or exploitation, you won't ultimately be satisfied), **but the one who sows righteousness reaps a lasting reward.”** (Proverbs 11:18).
- **Solomon frequently applies it to money.** **“Whoever sows injustice** (injustice in Proverbs can be a synonym for selfishness) **reaps calamity... but a generous person will be blessed.”** **Prov 22:8–9** And **“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.”** **Prov. 3:10.**
- He even applies it to parenting. **“Raise up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”** **Prov 22:6** This is not of course a promise, but a principle: Sow righteousness into your child and that's what you will harvest.

Well here, Paul picks up on this principle and applies it to our life in the Spirit. What you sow to the Spirit you will reap from him. It is similar to the metaphor he used in chapter 5: where you drive your roots will determine the type and health of your fruits! Drive your roots deeper in the gospel and you'll reap a harvest of righteousness. In the same way, sow to the Spirit, you'll reap from the Spirit. This is true regarding:

- **What we put in our minds.** If you drive your roots deeper into God's word, you'll harvest those fruits.
 - Peter says if you want to grow, soak yourself in the word! **(1 Peter 2:2)**
- **What we do with our habits.** When you participate in a sin, the appetite for it grows. You harvest a greater craving for it.
 - Whenever you sin, the root of that sin gets a little deeper and harder to pull up. You can always get forgiveness for that sin, but those seeds germinate a harvest of unrighteousness in your heart.
 - IOW, bad sins grow our appetites for sin.
 - You know **how an appetite works. An appetite doesn't go away when you satisfy it.** At least for very long. Ever go to a restaurant and just gorge yourself? And you think, “I'm

¹ Keller: “The whole book of Proverbs is summed up by Galatians 6:7-8.” *Galatians For You.*

never doing that again.” I never want to eat anything fried; no more carbs; no more sugar. And then like 4 hours later what are you doing? Scrounging around in the pantry for some Ritz crackers to snack on.

- Sin works like that. Think pornography. You can get forgiveness, but the appetite grows when you act on it. It’s going to be true for lying. Pride. Materialism. Selfishness.
- Righteousness works this way also. The more you act on righteousness, the more it becomes a part of you.
- There are lots of motivations not to sin. But one of the most compelling for me is that every time I sin, that sin becomes a deeper part of me. Sometimes you think, “Yeah, if I sin I can just use my heavenly Visa card of Jesus’ blood and get forgiveness.” Well, obviously that is a wrong way to think about grace, but what you have to keep in mind is that even after you get forgiveness, the seeds of that sin are still germinating in you and become increasingly difficult to pull out.
- You can get forgiveness for sin, but you can’t un-sin. Even after forgiveness, the seeds remain.

Here, in context, Paul applies this whole concept to money². This is not the only time he does this. Verse we used at beginning of our Multiply journey. **“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously” (2 Corinthians 9:6).**

- If you invest it in his kingdom, it will multiply in kingdom fruit.

(Six Biblical Laws of the Harvest)

Let me give you **“Six Biblical Laws of the Harvest”** from this passage that we’ll apply to our finances, but you can also apply to everything else in our lives, too—and along the way I’ll show you how.³

(Keep in mind, there is a natural component to this law—that works just like planting a seed and harvesting it, and a supernatural component—where God adds his own divine intensification to the natural process. A lot of times in Scripture, God’s judgment is just an intensification of the natural consequences of sin, and his rewards are in intensification of the natural blessings of righteousness).

Law 1: The harvest is limited to the planting.

- You can only harvest what you plant.
- One of the **clearest pictures of multiplication occurs in John 6**, when Jesus is standing before a crowd of 15K hungry people. He takes a little boy’s lunch—5 loaves and 2 fish, a Hebrew Happy Meal, a Levitical Lunchable—and Jesus took it, blessed it, and distributed it to the disciples. As they gave it away, John explains, it multiplied to the point that it was enough to feed every person in the crowd until they were full and have enough leftover to fill 12 baskets to overflowing.
- Two things you should take away from that:
 - **It can only be multiplied if it is blessed, and that blessing occurs only when you place it in the hands of Jesus.**
 - Phrase I’ll come back to again and again today: **Generosity is an invitation for God to infuse blessing into your finances.**

² Verse 9 draws out the concept of sowing in the Spirit—doing good. The Greek conjunction *de* (“then”) connects verse 9 to verse 8 (“let us, then, not become weary in doing good...”). The doing good is “identical with the concepts of the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ (5:22–23) and of ‘following the Spirit’ (5:25) ... In particular, it has reference to those matters commanded in 6:1–6: restoring someone entrapped by sin, bearing oppressive burdens of others, and sharing materially with those who teach the gospel message (v. 6). (Longenecker, *Galatians*, 281).

³ This list is compiled with the help of James MacDonald, sermon on Gal 6:1–10, Robert Morris, [“The Principles of Multiplication,”](#) The Blessed Life 2015, Gateway Church, accessed October 31, 2017, Charles Stanley, Andy Stanley, and Tim Keller.

- **It can only be multiplied if you give it away.** One guy I was reading said, “Technically, the miracle did not happen in Jesus’s hand. This was not Jesus’s bread and fish. The miracle happened in the disciple’s hands. As they gave it to Jesus, it multiplied.”⁴

Law 2: The harvest comes *later* than the planting.

- The **hard part of harvesting** is that it takes time to see your efforts pay off.
 - I am not good at this. I am a “need to see immediate results” guy in everything. When I diet, I want to see results immediately. When I skip dessert—or least that 2nd piece of pie—I want to be able to go and look in the mirror and immediately see the difference. Same thing with working out. I want to do 30 push-ups one time and then look in the mirror and say, “Why, you Greek god.” But it takes time. It takes time to reap the harvest.
- This is even more true when you think about the agricultural metaphor. You sow in one season and don’t see the return for almost a year!
 - Midwest Farmers in the 1930’s faced an excruciating choice. Many had moved out there in the 1920’s because the ground was fertile and the harvests were plentiful, but in 1931, the rains stopped, and the Midwest endured one of the worst droughts in recorded history. By 1940, many were on the verge of bankruptcy. It looked like the drought was starting to end, but no one could be sure. And here was the dilemma with planting: Planting seed meant putting about a month’s salary into the ground. And if it didn’t rain, that was all lost. And many of those who remained had just enough grain to feed themselves and their families for another year—but probably not much longer than that. So, they faced the choice of whether to hold onto these final precious seeds and use them up for food, or plant them and hope for the harvest. Those that planted in faith were reward, because that fall rains were abundant.⁵
- LATER: best practical joke. Aerating. watermelon
- **BTW, this is why we so often give up on doing** the right thing. It takes time harvest—weeks, months, even years.
- “The law of later” is why we **envy people** who are doing it wrong and still seem to be enjoying so much success. Is there any use doing the right thing?
- Sowing, you see, is all about the future.
- That’s why Paul says, **vs. 7**, not to be deceived about this, because the fact that the harvest comes later makes it an easy principle to forget.
 - Interestingly, this word “**deceived**,” in Greek is the word *planao* (it means “led astray”)—and is where we get our English word *planets*. The ancient Greeks used the stars for navigation. But *some* stars were unreliable guides because they seemed to wander in the sky. The Greeks called these *wandering stars*. It’s from here that we got the English word *planet*.
 - Here, Paul says we can look at moving circumstances and forget that God has built a law into the universe that what you sow you will surely reap. It just takes time, but it is inevitable. Don’t forget the law of later.

Equally as important is **law #3, the law of greater...**

Law 3: The harvest is *greater* than the planting.

⁴ Morris, “The Principles of Multiplication.”

⁵ From my *Gaining by Losing: Why the Future Belongs to Churches that Send*, Introduction.

<http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/depression/dustbowl.htm>; <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/timeline/dustbowl/>
 Accessed May 13, 2014. I first saw this story connected to kingdom giving in Andy Stanley, *Fields of Gold: A Place Beyond Your Deepest Fears, a Prize Beyond Your Wildest Imagination* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2004), 9–13.

- **In the harvest, what comes back to you is always greater than what you sowed.** Plant a wheat seed and it turns into a wheat stalk that can produce hundreds of wheat seeds. Plant an acorn and it can produce an oak tree that will produce thousands of acorns.
- It also works with things that you don't want. Anybody who has ever tried to grow a nice lawn of fescue knows that if you get even the smallest amount of Bermuda grass in there it will take over. Where I used to live, one of my neighbors planted Bermuda and my dad said, "Well, unless you put down a barrier, that pretty much means your lawn is going to be Bermuda in a few years." So, I just moved.
- **The law of greater.** What starts small multiplies into something much bigger than you began with.
- **People sometimes feel like this is unfair.** They make a few bad decisions and life gets really bad and they think, "Well, I know I haven't always made the wisest decisions, but I don't deserve all this." You're exactly right.
- **But what you are experiencing is not punishment, it is harvest.** And the principle of sowing and reaping doesn't operate according to exact proportions. **What is reaped is always greater than what is sown.**
- **Multiplied greater.**
- That's true with sinful habits. It's true with what you fill your mind with. It's true with what you do with your kids.
 - **That old-school pro-baseball player turned evangelist Billy Sunday used to say:** For every 1 lap you take around the devil's track, your kid will take 7. **If you raise them around compromise**, it will likely magnify in the lives of your children.
 - **Many Christian parents** are surprised by kids going off to college, for example, and walking away from the faith. They say, "But we raised them in church." Yes, but church and your walk with God wasn't that important to you. You came sporadically. You didn't volunteer. You weren't in a community group. You didn't do missions together or read the Bible or pray together. You weren't involved in the student ministry. You frequently missed church for sports events or dance or trips to the beach. You raised them around God, but with God as a 2nd tier priority. And that multiplied in your kid's life, so when they went to college they left the faith behind and figured getting up and going to church, or living a pure and God-pleasing life in the face of such a hostile culture was just not worth the hassle. **It multiplied. It was greater.**
- When Scripture applies this to money, it teaches us that the harvest is greater than the planting in two ways.
 - First, the **magnitude** of what you reap is greater than what you sow:
 - Think about that verse we looked at first from Proverbs: "*Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.*" **Prov. 3:10**
 - **Malachi 3:10** "*Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. 11 I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts.*" Test me and see. Give it back to him!
 - **John 6.** 12 baskets left over. One commentator said that it was one for each of the disciples. There is no way that little boy did not take one home. Mom, look! So, the **magnitude** of what is sown is greater...
 - But the **kind** of fruits are also greater!
 - **Paul calls it a harvest of righteousness in you.** God uses generosity to give you gifts far greater than money. Which would rather have? A lot of money, or the ability to be truly happy and satisfied with what you do have? Only a fool would say "Give me the money." Because the reason you want more

money is to be happier and more satisfied, and you think more money will bring that to you. What if there was a better way to get to that end? Important principle.

- **In one of the most important passages in the Bible about money (Matt 6),** Jesus said, *Be generous with your money, because... "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* Matthew 6:21. I think in **reverse...**
- Giving is a way to change the loves of your heart. Jesus is saying, "One of the ways you can fight against money's power in your heart is to give it away."
- Tom Monaghan, founder of the Domino's Pizza franchise, shared that what had driven him to succeed in life was really the desire to have more than everyone else. After seeing how prideful his heart had become and how miserable it had made him, he decided to take a new tack. He adopted a very simple lifestyle, set a limit on what he'd live on, and committed to give away everything else to the Kingdom of God. He says the latter approach has filled him with more joy than all the stuff he used to buy with his money. [Tom Monaghan, founder of the Domino's Pizza takes "a millionaire's vow of poverty"](#)
- *Generosity is an invitation for God to infuse blessing into your finances.*
- *Very wealthy man who gives away a ton of money; "Bounce my last check."*

Law 4: The harvest is proportional to the planting.

- Scripture says the blessing God puts in us is proportional to the sacrifice.
- **"Whoever is kind to the poor is lending to the Lord— the benefit of his gift will return to him in abundance." Prov. 19:17** Incredible ROI!
- **And, "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine." Prov. 3:10**
- Earlier this year we considered God's offer to Solomon, "Ask me anything." **But what do we also know was true of Solomon?**
 - **Solomon was himself a man of generosity.** For example, It was a tradition for the king to sacrifice one bull during his inauguration. **1 Kings 8** tells us that Solomon sacrificed 1000 bulls. He wasn't asked to do that. He did it voluntarily. 1000x what was required. And so God said..
 - To the excessively generous, God is excessively generous. Like we often that You can't out-give God! It's not coincidental that the only time God said to someone, "I'll give you whatever you want!" he said it to an extravagant giver.
- **The miracle of the feeding of the 5000**—where 5 loaves and 2 fish fed so many, happened because the little boy put all that he had—100%—into the hand of Jesus!
- I'm not trying to create some kind of rule for you. I'm just saying, "How much do you want God to bless and multiply you? That will be **proportional** to what you offer." The amount is less important than the heart behind it. 2 mites.
- **I think here of D. L. Moody's words:** "The world has yet to see what God can do through one man..." when you really take your hands off of it.
- *Generosity is an invitation for God to infuse blessing into your finances.*
- *What's it look like for the whole church to be involved and see God multiply blessing?*

Law 5: We only harvest if we persevere.

- Because harvesting takes time, many give up. You will only reap, Paul says, if you don't give up. **Let us not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don't give up.**
- To get to the good harvest, you have to persist to the end!
- Here we are at the end of Multiply. Many started well. You have to finish well.
- Think of Peter walking on water. He started well. To get all the way to where you want to be, you have to walk with the same faith you started with. You must persevere!

Law 6: We can't do anything about this year's harvest, but we can change next year's.

- You reap today what you sowed yesterday. You can't change that, even if you pray about, or even if you ask forgiveness. Some of you are experiencing some of the bad harvest that came from an ungenerous life. Dissatisfaction in your heart. Financial difficulties with your spouse. Materialism in your kids. The feeling that you are wasting your life. Never feeling like you have enough. Maybe you're going through genuine financial hardship right now.
- **We can't do anything about this year's harvest, but we can change next year's.** It's time to start sowing different seeds so you can reap a different harvest.
- Listen, more than 1 out of 4 professing American Protestants give away \$0. The median annual giving for a Christian is just \$200—just over half a percent of after-tax income.”⁶ Christians give less on average now, than they did in the Great Depression. 3.5% compared to 2.4%.
- This is such an indictment on us, because **our money, Jesus said, infallibly reveals what we worship.** We can even deceive ourselves. But our wallets never lie. Our wallets give an infallible indicator of what we really worship. Do you trust God, the harvest bringer, enough to sow in obedience?
- And just as tragic, this brings a curse on us. If we sow to the flesh in materialism, that's what we'll reap, Paul says. More dissatisfaction. More problems. Materialistic kids. If we want gospel fruit to grow deep in our hearts, and wide in the world, we have to sow it into God's kingdom!

Multiply Instructions

- Finish strong
- New? Join. Just give. Summitrdu.com/Multiply
- Not just a 2-year journey, but a lifestyle. We will always do this!

What's it look like for the whole church to be involved and see God multiply blessing?

To the whole community... Household of faith. Acts 2 and 4. Evangelism tool.

⁶ Mark Driscoll, *Call to Resurgence*, 202