

SOW A THOUGHT...

Introduction

Last week we were thinking about the principle of sowing and reaping. We realized that in Galatians 6:6-10, the Apostle Paul applied this universal principle to the living of our personal lives as well as to our relationships to others. Here's what he wrote:

Galatians 6:6-10

⁶One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches. ⁷**Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.** ⁸For 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. ⁹And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. ¹⁰So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

(English Standard Version)

We reap what we sow. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that we pay attention to what we sow.

We went on to think about this universal spiritual principle in the form of this saying:

*Sow a thought, reap an action;
sow an action, reap a habit;
sow a habit, reap a character;
sow a character, reap a destiny.*

We see how tremendously important our thought life is to the re-formation of our character in Christ. Spiritual transformation cannot take place without the renewing of our minds by the Word of God. And the renewing of our minds cannot take place except by saturation with the Word of God. God's truth must be *sown* in us. God's truth must be repeated over and over in our minds so that it becomes our worldview, our paradigm, our picture of reality.

I shared with you my conviction that **the most fundamental thought that must be sown in our minds is this: *God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them.*** Every aspect of reality depends on this fact. Every dimension of our existence and every facet of our relationship to God and Jesus Christ is grounded in this fact. I shared with you several ways to sow this thought in your mind – I hope you practiced these means during the week.

Flowing directly from this fact that God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them is this next thought: *the two most important duties in my life are to love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength; and to love my neighbor as myself.*

Please turn with me to Matthew 22:34-40.

Matthew 22:34-40

³⁴But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶“Teacher,

which is the great commandment in the Law?”³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.³⁸ This is the great and first commandment.³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”
(English Standard Version)

Mark recorded a similar incident in Mark 12:28-34:

Mark 12:28-34

²⁸And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?”²⁹ Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’³¹ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”³² And the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him.³³ And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”³⁴ And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.

(English Standard Version)

In both cases Jesus was quoting from the Law of Moses. The first and greatest commandment is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

⁴“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

(English Standard Version)

The second greatest commandment is found in Leviticus 19:17-18:

Leviticus 19:17-18

¹⁷“You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him.¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

(English Standard Version)

Though the Law of Moses is no longer operative¹; it has been replaced by the New Covenant, yet in affirming these two commandments, I believe Jesus is teaching that these two commandments remain in force. Therefore, I believe that *the two most*

¹ This is the point argued in Hebrews 7-10.

important duties in my life are to love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength; and to love my neighbor as myself.

The urgency to obey the two greatest commandments is the fact that every human being will give an account to God for their life. This is a very important thought that needs to be sown deeply in my mind: *I will give an account to God for my life.*

This is true for those who are followers of Jesus Christ and for those who are not followers of Jesus Christ. Jesus revealed:

John 5:25-29

²⁵Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. ²⁸Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

(English Standard Version)

We who are followers of Jesus Christ will be resurrected to life, but we will stand before the judgment seat of Christ as the Apostle Paul revealed in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15:

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

¹⁰According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. ¹¹For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

(English Standard Version)

The Apostle Paul gives us further insight into this fact that each of us will give an account to God for our lives. Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 5:1-10:

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

¹For we know that if the tent, which is our earthly home, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, ³if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. ⁴For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

⁶So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰For we must all

appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

(English Standard Version)

The Apostle John warns us not to live now in such a way that we will be ashamed at Jesus' coming:

1 John 2:28-29

²⁸And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. ²⁹If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

(English Standard Version)

If we sow this truth; *I will give an account to God for my life*, deeply in our minds we will live and serve in a manner that will enable us to anticipate the Judgment Seat of Christ with the same kind of humble confidence as we see in the Apostle Paul:

2 Timothy 4:6-8

⁶For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

(English Standard Version)

Every person will give an account to God for their life. Those who are followers of Jesus Christ will do so at the Judgment Seat of Christ. All others will give an accounting of their lives at the Great White Throne Judgment as revealed in Revelation 20:11-15:

Revelation 20:11-15

¹¹Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. ¹⁴Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

(English Standard Version)

So let me summarize at this point. I believe these are some of the most important and critical truths that must be sown deeply in our minds if we are going to become all that God intends for us to become.

God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them.

The two most important duties in my life are to love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength; and to love my neighbor as myself.

I will give an account to God for my life.

These truths are critical to the re-formation of our character to become like Jesus Christ. And, I think this is a template for helping another person become a follower of Jesus Christ. As you have the privilege of discipling another person, you can help them to sow these truths deeply in their minds which will reap new actions which will reap new habits which will reap new character. And you can help them understand the principle of sowing and reaping as it applies to spiritual transformation by teaching them Galatians 6:6-10 and the saying we have memorized:

*Sow a thought, reap an action;
sow an action, reap a habit;
sow a habit, reap a character;
sow a character, reap a destiny.*

Now as we look again at these three truths we must sow in our thoughts...

God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them.

The two most important duties in my life are to love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength; and to love my neighbor as myself.

I will give an account to God for my life.

...I want to add a fourth truth that brings the balance to what might appear to be a rather harsh and severe reality and that is this, *God loves me more than I can know*. This puts the first three truths in their proper balance:

God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them.

The two most important duties in my life are to love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength; and to love my neighbor as myself.

I will give an account to God for my life.

God loves me more than I can know.

So how do we sow these thoughts? Through repetition and constant exposure.

Sowing these thoughts:

1. Memorize Mark 12:28-34. Repeat it every day for 30 days.
2. Memorize 2 Corinthians 5:6-10. Repeat it every day for 30 days.
3. Memorize the four key thoughts of our study.
4. Meditate on what it looks like for you to love God with all your heart (choices), soul (life goals), mind (thoughts and feelings) and strength (use of your physical body).