
Seed Time and Harvest Basics

You Can't Figure it Out

From the time you first learned about the principle of sowing and reaping, you have given offerings and sown seed into the kingdom of God. Although you've experienced a measure of blessing, you know you haven't reaped the "thirty, sixty, or hundred-fold" return Jesus said could be yours.

Often times you wonder, "Why is my harvest so small? I thought it would be bigger than this! What's wrong?"

There are reasons why people reap a small harvest. If your own harvests don't compare to the quality of increase you see in the Word of God, you can do something about it. The Bible gives us clear insights that, when followed, guarantee we will reap a plentiful harvest - every time.

Sow as Much as You Can

The first reason people only reap a small harvest can be found in 2 Corinthians 9:6: "He which sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Jesus said, "with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38).

That's such a basic principle, it seems obvious, but people overlook it. They'll put a dollar or two in the offering and when they don't receive much of a return they say, "I guess God just ordained me to have a small harvest."

What they fail to realize is that God didn't determine the size of their harvest. They determined the size of their harvest the moment they decided how much seed to sow! If you don't sow much seed, you won't have much of a harvest.

Plant it and it will increase. Then take that increase and plant it again. You'll be amazed how fast it will grow. One big temptation people face, however, is when their harvest comes in, they want to spend it on themselves to immediately elevate their standard of living.

They don't realize they're delaying their own prosperity by doing that. So don't eat your seed. Make giving a priority and then believe God to be able to give even more because "A man's harvest in life will depend entirely on what he sows" (Gal. 6:7).

Sow Into Good Ground

The second reason people have small harvests is they don't sow their seed into good ground. Some ground is average. Some ground is poor. Some is tremendous! The quantity of your harvest is directly affected by the quality of the ground where you have sown.

How do you determine what is good ground? First of all, Jesus said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:16). If a ministry is yielding solid, scriptural fruit - such as getting people born again, edifying believers, preaching the unadulterated Word of God, or helping the poor - then it's probably a good place to plant your seed.

Second, the Holy Spirit will not lead you to waste your seed by planting it in ground that's not strong and good enough to nourish it and produce a harvest. It's possible to waste seed by sowing money or things into certain people or works. That's why you need to be led by the Holy Spirit about where to and not to sow.

Don't waste anything by haphazardly making decisions just off the top of your head. Stay open to the Spirit of God to direct your giving. Then follow that inward witness, knowing that He's leading you to sow in good ground.

Tithing Creates a Climate of Blessing

Tithing is the key to your harvest being blessed. Although tithing does not qualify as sowing, it opens the windows of heaven and creates the right climate for your seed to flourish. Furthermore, if you're a tither, God says He will "rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground" (Mal. 3:11).

Discern Your Harvest

You probably have never thought about needing to discern your harvest. But that is why many of us have reaped only a little when we should have reaped a lot. We failed to discern our harvest!

Consider the importance of each of these elements, starting with the crucial element of timing. Scripturally, you know that you're not going to plant today and reap tomorrow. The Bible says we must wait until "due season" (Gal. 6:9). But the only way you can possibly tell when due season comes is by the witness of the Holy Spirit in your heart. First John 2:20 says, "Ye have an unction (or anointing) from the Holy One, and ye know all things." That unction will enable you to sense when you're getting close to your harvest.

One of the key indications that your harvest is due is that joy will rise up within you (see Is. 9:3). You'll have a sense of excitement in your heart. Your head may not be able to figure it out, but if you pay attention to what's inside you, you'll know that the time is near!

The Obedience of Faith

The next thing you need to know is where your harvest will be. Practically speaking, you have to locate where the cornfield is before you can reap the corn. The Lord knows that, and you can trust Him to help you find it.

But let me warn you, once He shows you where the field is, you'll have to take steps of faith to get to it. Romans 16:26 calls such steps the "obedience of faith." And if you don't take them, you won't receive the increase God has in store.

How many times have people tithed...and sowed...and waited? Then harvest time came and God said, "Take this step of expansion. Start this new business." They were excited because they could see huge potential. But for whatever reason, they became afraid, yielded to unbelief and decided to play it safe. They didn't want to take on the extra contracts or do the necessary work.

As a result of not taking that step of obedience, they missed the blessings of God because they failed to discern their harvest. Their own lack of faith caused them to miss the place, the timing and the increase of harvest God had prepared for them.

Think Big

When it comes to discerning your harvest, you also need to know the size of your harvest. When the Lord first spoke to me about this, He asked me a question. He said, "Do you know how much you sowed above your tithe last year? Have you thought about what even a fiftyfold return would be? Are you really expecting that much to come in?"

I whipped out the calculator, did the math and my eyes got big. It was a startlingly large figure! I had to say, "No, Lord. I'm not expecting that much."

Then stir up your faith! He said. I don't mind telling you, I obeyed Him. And if you want to enjoy your full harvest, you should too because you don't just reap according to what you've sown, you reap according to your faith.

We have a big God. Make a decision to spend enough time in His Word that He can expand your "expecter!" Learn to think BIG, to claim BIG, and to believe big things. Then stay with it until your increase reflects the greatness of our God!

Keep on reaping...and reaping...and reaping...until you realize you have more than you can possibly use. Then call your brothers and sisters in the Lord and say, "Hey, let me give you some of what God has given me, I have plenty to spare!"

They'll be blessed. Your Heavenly Father will be well pleased. And you'll have more fun giving it away than you ever dreamed possible. Now that's what I call a harvest!

by Keith Moore