

(I Timothy 5:8) The full-time worker has given up thought of a secular occupation in order to devote himself to the study and teaching of the Word of God. He is not to teach for money, (I Pet. 5:2) but is nevertheless to be adequately re-embursed for his work. (I Corinthians 9:14) The fact that the members of the body share their "good things" with the pastor does not mean that he is in any way less responsible than they.

4. A Guiding Principle for Christian Responsibility (verses 7-10)

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

- a. Philips' paraphrase is quite to the point on this verse. "Don't be under any illusion - you cannot make a fool of God! A man's harvest in life will depend entirely on what he sows."
- b. In II Corinthians 9:6 Paul uses this same figure in regard to monetary sowing. It seems to have a wider application here, including the investment of time, energy and talents, as well as money.

"Shall of the flesh reap corruption."

- a. "Corruption" - that which perishes; moral decay.
- b. This could refer to the fact that those material thingsⁱⁿ which we may invest time and money may become the goals of our work. As such, these works will perish. (cf. Matthew 6:19,20)
- c. This could also refer to those who sow the seeds of bad thoughts and habits and who finally reap the sorrowful results.

"Reap life everlasting."

- a. Eternal life is a gift and is not earned. This is contrasted with "corruption" in the sense that sowing to the Spirit results in a harvest of eternal value. That harvest is one which is "incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away." (I Peter 1:4)

"Let us not be weary ..."

- a. The verb means to "faint" or "lose heart." Doing good does not come naturally, it must be worked at. Sowing good seed means plowing, cultivating, fertilizing, weeding, and constant care. Sowing bad seed is easy. No farmer has to expend much effort to grow a field full of weeds. Since the good sowing takes effort, Paul encourages those who are following this course to take heart and not give up. The day of harvest is not far off.

Conclusion (verse 10)

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

- a. "opportunity" - can be translated "season." In other words, while it is the season for sowing, let us sow lavishly, that we might have an abundant harvest. The sowing season, then, refers to our life in this present world. Remember the words of Jesus in John 9:4: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."
- b. "the household of faith" - As we have already seen in this passage, a Christian has a special responsibility to his brother in the Lord. Of course, our responsibility goes beyond the brethren to all those who are yet without the blessings of salvation. Our responsibility towards them is to seek in every way to bring them into the "household of faith."

We have seen that a Christian has a responsibility to his brother, to himself, to his teacher in the faith, and to all men. The responsible Christian is guided by the principle that whatever he sows he will reap.