

Sowing Seeds, Reaping Consequences

2 Samuel 11-12; Numbers 29:7-12; Numbers 13-14; Galatians 6:8

Does it really matter how we live our lives?

Each morning, we rise to meet a new day—each one filled with its own challenges, decisions, and divine opportunities. Like many of you, I begin my day with a warm cup of coffee in hand, quietly mapping out what I hope to accomplish. My goals may guide my schedule, but they rarely control every moment. Life moves fast, often blurring the lines between what is urgent and what is truly important. As followers of Christ, we are called to live lives worthy of the gospel—not as a one-time accomplishment, but as a daily pursuit of surrender and transformation. Apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 12:1–2 that we are to offer ourselves as living sacrifices—holy and pleasing to God. That requires more than religious routine; it means rejecting conformity to the world and welcoming the Spirit's renewing work in our minds.

Let me ask you:

Are you inviting God to transform you?

Can you honestly say you are becoming more like Jesus, day by day?

Living a holy life is not just a noble aim—it is a sacred calling. But the struggle is not usually in wanting to be like Jesus; it's in sowing the right seeds and taking consistent steps of obedience. Paul writes, “I have the right to do anything”—but not everything is beneficial (1 Corinthians 6:12). In other words, freedom does not mean fruitfulness. And yet—how often do we simply let life happen without intentionally examining our words, our thoughts, and our actions? We know that eating junk food daily leads to health problems. We know that neglecting a relationship causes it to wither. We know that if we don't study, we usually fail the test.

So why do we think our spiritual lives will thrive without daily investment?

How can we expect to reap the fruit of the Spirit when we sow the seeds of the flesh?

Where We're Headed Today

In today's message, we'll discover how vital it is to live purposefully, planting seeds of righteousness that align with God's will. We'll look at familiar names—David, Moses, and Israel—and see how even the greats of the faith stumbled when they sowed carelessly. But this isn't just about biblical history. This is about you and me—about the brevity of life, the urgency of obedience, and the power of repentance. As we explore their stories, ask God to examine your heart. Reflect honestly on these questions:

What seeds am I planting in my life right now?

What am I sowing into my family, my faith, my thought life?

Are the seeds I allow into my heart drawing me closer to God—or deeper into the world?

You only get one life. And it absolutely matters to God how you choose to live it.

The Destructive Harvest of Lust

If we believe that every seed we sow leads to a harvest—then we must also come to grips with the reality that sin has a harvest too. Not every field bear fruit that blesses. Some bear thorns that wound not only us but those around us. The danger with sin is that it often starts small—an unchecked glance, a lingering thought, a private indulgence—and yet, it can lead to a devastating harvest. No one illustrates this more clearly than King David, a man after God’s own heart, whose single moment of lustful indulgence led to a harvest of pain, loss, and regret. David didn’t start his day planning to commit adultery. But a moment of temptation—unattended, unrepented, and unchecked—planted seeds that grew into a web of deception, a broken home, a lost child, and a strained relationship with God. Let’s turn now to 2 Samuel 11 and take a sobering look at what happens when we sow to the flesh... and reap the whirlwind.

In the springtime, when kings typically led their armies into battle, King David stayed behind in Jerusalem—a subtle but significant detail that foreshadows trouble ahead (2 Samuel 11:1). While his men were fighting for the kingdom, David was idle and unengaged in his calling. One evening, as he walked upon the palace rooftop, his eyes fell upon a woman bathing. She was very beautiful, and David didn’t look away. Despite knowing she was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of his own loyal soldiers, David sent messengers to bring her to him—and he slept with her (v.4). What began with a look soon became adultery.

Not long after, Bathsheba sent word:

“I am pregnant.”

Desperate to cover his sin, David tried to manipulate Uriah into thinking the child was his—but Uriah’s integrity stood firm. “How could I eat, drink, and lie with my wife while the ark and my men are in tents?” (vv.10–11). So David moved to Plan B—he got Uriah drunk, thinking perhaps his resolve would weaken. But even intoxicated, Uriah slept at the palace entrance with the servants. He remained loyal to his duty.

Realizing he couldn’t manipulate Uriah’s integrity, David turned to Plan C—murder. He wrote a letter to Joab, instructing him to place Uriah at the front lines and then withdraw the troops, ensuring Uriah would be struck down and killed (vv.14–15). The plan succeeded. Uriah was killed. And David took Bathsheba to be his wife, believing the matter was settled.

But God had seen it all. The Lord sent the prophet Nathan, who confronted David with a parable—and then with truth: God saw what you did! Though David repented, the harvest of his sin was severe:

The sword would never depart from his house (12:10).

His own son would sleep with David's wives in broad daylight as public humiliation (12:11–12).

The child conceived with Bathsheba would die (12:14).

David's sin didn't just affect him—it impacted his family, his nation, and his legacy. He sowed lust and deception—and reaped death, division, and deep sorrow.

From King David's tragic experience, we learn critical lessons about how to guard our hearts and avoid sowing the sin of lust.

First, it is far easier to avoid situations where temptation thrives than to resist sin once it has taken root.¹ David was never meant to be on that rooftop—he was meant to be on the battlefield. His idleness opened the door for compromise. Had he gone with his army—or even turned away when he first saw Bathsheba—his story may have been very different.

Second, lust carries consequences that can last a lifetime. David repented and was forgiven, but the pain of losing his child and the ripple effects of broken trust and bloodshed haunted his household for years. Forgiveness removes guilt, but it doesn't always remove the scars.

Third, sin often entices us because we believe God's boundaries are too restrictive. Lust flourishes when we view God's commands as burdens rather than gifts.² But David didn't fall simply because Bathsheba was beautiful—he fell because he hadn't trained his heart to hate sin and treasure holiness. If he had learned to see lust as poison, her image would not have held such power. Every time we sin, we must pause and see afresh the hammer in our own hands, driving the nails into the hands and feet of our Savior. Lust doesn't just damage our integrity—it offends the One who died to redeem us.

Finally, when we are disciplined by God, we must not minimize or conceal our sin. Instead, like David in Psalm 51, we are to fall on our knees and plead for mercy—not based on our merits, but on God's hesed—His steadfast love. Only then can we be washed clean, whiter than snow, and restored to the joy of our salvation.

¹ J. D. Greear and Heath A. Thomas, [*Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 214–215.

² J. D. Greear and Heath A. Thomas, [*Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 220.

The Wasted Harvest of Doubt and Fear

If David's story warns us of the consequences of sowing lust, then Israel's journey to the edge of the Promised Land reveals the tragic results of sowing fear and doubt in the place where faith should have been. While David's failure came from indulgence, Israel's came from unbelief—and both remind us that what we plant in our hearts will shape the destiny of our lives.

At the edge of promise and breakthrough, Israel faced a defining test—not of strength, but of faith. The Lord said to Moses,

“Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites”

Numbers 13:1

From the wilderness of Zin, twelve men—one from each tribe—were chosen to spy out the land. Their mission was clear: assess the land's fruitfulness, examine the strength of its cities, and report back on the people who lived there (13:17–20). For forty days, the spies journeyed through the land of promise. When they returned, they carried stunning proof: a cluster of grapes so large it had to be carried on a pole between two men.

“It truly is a land flowing with milk and honey,” they said (13:27).

But the good report was quickly drowned out by fear. Ten of the twelve spies sowed doubt into the hearts of the people:

“The cities are large and fortified. The people are powerful. We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes—and we looked the same to them” (13:28, 33). Their words ignited a wildfire of panic, anger, and unbelief among the Israelites. The people turned on Moses and Aaron, crying out,

“If only we had died in Egypt!” (14:2).

They rejected God's promise, and instead of moving forward in faith, they planned to appoint a new leader and return to slavery in Egypt (14:4). Only Joshua and Caleb stood firm. They pleaded with the people, reminding them:

“If the Lord is pleased with us, He will give us this land” (14:8).

But their voices were drowned out by a mob ready to stone them.

God's anger burned. He declared that He would strike the people with a plague and start over with Moses, forming a new nation even stronger than Israel (14:12). But Moses interceded, appealing not to Israel's merit, but to God's reputation and His covenant mercy. “What will the Egyptians say if You destroy them?” (14:13–16). Because the Lord is “slow to anger, abounding in love, and forgiving sin and rebellion” (14:18), He forgave them. But forgiveness did not erase the consequences. Every Israelite 20-year-old and older who had grumbled and refused to trust God would wander in the wilderness for 40 years, one year for each day they had explored the land, until that generation had died out (14:29–35). Only Joshua and Caleb, the men of faith, would enter the Promised Land.

From the story of the twelve spies, we learn a vital truth: bearing fruit in God's kingdom requires unwavering trust in Him. Obedience is not rooted in what we see—it's anchored in who God is. Apostle Paul reminded Timothy,

“For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7).

When fear tempts us to shrink back, faith calls us to move forward—not because we are strong, but because God is with us. Proverbs 3:5–6 echoes this call:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

King David, no stranger to fear, wrote,

“When I am afraid, I put my trust in You... in God I trust and am not afraid” (Psalm 56:3–4).

And yet, let's be honest—it's hard to place the unknown future into the hands of a sovereign God. We prefer control. We want guarantees. But faith surrenders the map and trusts the Guide.

If we want to reap a spiritual harvest, we cannot sow with seeds of doubt—drifting like a rudderless boat on stormy seas. Instead, we must walk in full confidence that

“The Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).

Faith doesn't mean the absence of fear—it means trusting God even when fear is present. Only then will our lives bear the fruit He designed us to produce.

The Costly Harvest of Pride and Anger

While fear and doubt can prevent us from entering God's promises, pride and unchecked anger can just as easily disqualify us from finishing well. Even the most faithful leaders are not immune to the consequences of sowing the wrong seed. Just ask Moses—the humble shepherd of Israel—whose moment of pride and frustration cost him the Promised Land.

Fast forward nearly 40 years from Israel's initial rebellion at Kadesh Barnea. A new generation stands at the edge of Canaan, but the problems feel painfully familiar.³ In Numbers 20, we're told that the people once again arrive at the Desert of Zin (v.1), and once again, there is no water. History seems to be repeating itself. As before, the people gather in opposition to Moses and Aaron, grumbling and complaining about their conditions.

³ Ronald B. Allen, [“Numbers,”](#) in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 867.

“Why did you bring us here to die? There’s no water, no grain, no figs, no grapes, no pomegranates! We were better off dead!” (vv.2–5)

Moses and Aaron fall facedown at the entrance to the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord appears. God instructs Moses to take the staff—the same one used to strike the Nile—and speak to the rock. In doing so, water would flow and provide for the people and their livestock (vv.6–8).

But Moses had reached his breaking point. After decades of listening to Israel’s rebellion, ingratitude, and doubt, something inside him snapped. Perhaps disappointed that God did not immediately punish the people—or simply overwhelmed with exhaustion—Moses took matters into his own hands.⁴ In a flash of anger and pride, he struck the rock twice with his staff, shouting,

“Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?” (v.10)

Water did come—but so did judgment. God said to Moses and Aaron:

“Because you did not trust in Me enough to honor Me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them” (v.12).

Moses had misrepresented God before the people. Instead of displaying God’s mercy and holiness, he allowed his frustration to take center stage. His anger turned a sacred moment of provision into a personal outburst—and it cost him his calling’s final reward. Even great leaders can lose heart. Even spiritual giants can disobey. Moses didn’t lose his salvation, but he forfeited part of his legacy because he failed to trust and obey fully.

From Moses’ story, we learn that sowing to the Spirit means cultivating humility, meekness, and obedience—even when our emotions feel justified. God doesn’t merely look at our actions—He weighs the posture of our hearts. James gives this wise and timely counsel to every believer:

“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires” (James 1:19–20).

When we allow pride and anger to take root, we drift from the Spirit’s leading. James also reminds us that:

“God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble” (James 4:6).

Why? Because pride convinces us that we are in control, that we are the source of our own success, and that we know better than God. The book of Proverbs echoes this danger:

“Pride brings a person low” (Proverbs 29:23),

“With pride comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom” (Proverbs 11:2).

⁴ Ronald B. Allen, [“Numbers,”](#) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 867.

In contrast, humility invites God's grace, wisdom, and strength into our lives. Like Moses, we will all face trials, frustrations, and seasons of testing. The key is not to respond with self-reliance or rage, but to remain steadfast in faith, trusting that God is still sovereign—even when the pressure rises. As Paul writes:

“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

So instead of raging against circumstances beyond our control, let us sow seeds of trust and surrender. The Lord of both the living and the dead holds us under His wing—and in His time, the harvest will come.

Eternal Harvest of the Spirit

Whether it's lust, fear, or pride, every choice we make plants a seed—either in the flesh or in the Spirit. And make no mistake:

“Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life” (Galatians 6:8).

The seeds we sow are not just in our actions, but in the voices we listen to, the media we consume, the thoughts we entertain, and the desires we indulge.

What you read—plants a seed.

What you watch—plants a seed.

What you fantasize about—plants a seed.

And soon, your heart becomes a garden—either of flesh, or of Spirit.⁵ The old adage still rings true:

“Sow a thought, reap an action; sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.”⁶

If we indulge in the ways of the world, we are sowing to the flesh—and while that fruit may seem sweet for a season, it ultimately leads to decay and destruction. But when we walk by the Spirit, we sow seeds that produce eternal fruit—righteousness, peace, joy, and the likeness of Christ. So what does it look like to sow to the Spirit?

- By reading and meditating on the Word of God daily

⁵ David Platt and Tony Merida, [*Exalting Jesus in Galatians*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 132–133.

⁶ David Platt and Tony Merida, [*Exalting Jesus in Galatians*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 132.

- By walking in obedience, even when no one is watching
- By trusting God when obedience costs us something
- By inviting the Father to examine our hearts and prune away sin
- By offering our bodies as living sacrifices, being transformed by the renewing of our minds
- By seeking and surrendering to God’s will, not our own

These are just a few ways we cultivate a life led by the Spirit. When we walk in step with Him, we are chasing after the One who is always present, always faithful, and able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). Maybe today, you realize you’ve been sowing to the flesh, chasing your own way, and it’s left you empty. The good news is—Jesus doesn’t wait for perfect soil. He plants His grace in the hearts of those who simply surrender.

Conclusion

So... does it really matter how we live our lives?

According to Scripture, it matters eternally.

Every thought you entertain, every word you speak, every decision you make—is a seed. Your life is the harvest of what you’ve been planting—whether you realize it or not. David sowed a seed of lust—and reaped heartbreak, loss, and family dysfunction. Israel sowed seeds of fear and doubt—and wandered for decades, forfeiting their promise. Moses sowed a moment of pride and anger—and lost the joy of completing his calling.

But the story doesn’t end with failure. God in His mercy has given us more than a better way—He gave us His Son. Jesus reaped the punishment our sin deserved, so we could reap the eternal life He earned. He wore the crown of thorns so we could receive a crown of righteousness. Now, through Christ, we are free to sow to the Spirit—because the cross broke the curse of the flesh. We are invited to walk in His freedom, sowing seeds that grow into a harvest of eternal life—marked by humility, surrender, and obedience. To walk by the Spirit is to cultivate a life that bears love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—the very character of Christ in us.

Galatians 6:8 reminds us:

“Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.”

This is not just about avoiding sin. It’s about living with purpose. It’s about choosing—today and every day—to live for the One who gave His life to redeem yours.

So I ask you again:

What seeds are you sowing right now—in your mind, in your family, in your daily walk?

Are they leading you closer to Christ—or slowly pulling you away?

Are you sowing for a harvest of this world—or a harvest that will last forever?

You only get one life to live.

Let it be a life sown for the glory of God, watered by grace, and bearing fruit that lasts into eternity.

“Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

—Galatians 6:9

So keep planting.

Keep trusting.

And keep walking in step with the Spirit—because a harvest is coming.