

Greg Laurie: What Many Christians Don't Realize About the Deadly Consequences of Sin

Abu Zarin Hussin from Malaysia was known as the snake whisperer. The 33-year-old firefighter had great skills in handling venomous snakes, specifically cobras. He was featured on the TV program *Asia's Got Talent*. But one day, a snake he was working with bit him. He died three days later.

Just as it's a bad idea to mess around with poisonous snakes, it's also a bad idea to mess around with sin. Yet some people think: "I can handle this. I know this has been the downfall of many, but it will never be my downfall. I can control this vice. I can keep a handle on this issue."

Then one day it gets control of their lives.

We will reap what we sow. Just as surely as there are laws of thermodynamics and the law of gravity, there is the law of sowing and reaping.

Here's what the Bible says: "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that will he also reap. For 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" (Gal. 6:7-8).

We see this law played out in the story of Haman from the Old Testament book of Esther. Haman had hatched a plot to exterminate Mordecai and the Jews. This was a blood feud that went back a long way, because Haman was an Agagite. That means he was a descendant of King Agag, an avowed enemy of Israel.

God had directed King Saul to destroy King Agag, but Saul disobeyed. So here in the book of Esther, we find one of King Agag's descendants devising a plan to destroy the Jewish people.

The problem was that Haman had been elevated to the second-most powerful position in the kingdom. So he went to King Xerxes and convinced him to sign a decree that all the Jewish people throughout the kingdom of Persia would be put to death in one year.

Mordecai found out about it, and there was only one person who could help: his cousin Esther, who happened to be the queen. Her husband didn't know she was Jewish, because Mordecai instructed her to keep it a secret.

In a message to Esther, Mordecai said: "Do not think that in the king's palace you will be more likely to escape than all the other Jews. For if you remain silent at this time, protection and deliverance for the Jews will be ordained from some other place, but you and your father's house shall be destroyed. And who knows if you may have attained royal position for such a time as this?" (Esth. 4:13-14).

Although the name of God is never mentioned specifically in the book of Esther, the hand of God is evident on every single page. He was working through events, and there was a lot of reaping of what had been sowed. God is always present and at work in our lives as Christians, whether we feel Him or not. He was at work in the life of Esther, He was at work in the life of Mordecai and He was at work in the lives of the Jewish people. And He worked through ordinary human events. God takes impossible situations and turns them around for His glory.

In the end, Haman reaped what he sowed. In fact, he hung on the very gallows he had set up for Mordecai.

We tend to think of the law of sowing and reaping in a negative sense. But the law of sowing and reaping is both

negative and positive. While Haman reaped the repercussions of his own treachery, deceitfulness, envy and hatred, Mordecai reaped the rewards of his faithfulness, honesty and integrity.

As life goes by, you realize that it's a good decision to obey God. Here's my advice: Do what God tells you to do. In life, follow the Word of God, the Bible.

There will be times when that isn't difficult to do. And there will be times when it is. There will be times when it's very difficult to make a stand for Christ and very hard to hold your ground. But do what is right before God.

I know there are people who seem to get ahead in life when they're dishonest and cut corners. They still get the promotion and the attention. Meanwhile, you labor away faithfully and quietly, and no one seems to notice. It all will come out in the end, because everyone will reap what they sow.

As you look back on your life, you'll find some who pursued fun while you pursued faith. Some pursued sexual pleasure while you pursued sexual purity. Some pursued this world while you pursued the next one. And while they reap corruption, or death, you're reaping life. While others feel used, you feel new. So, sow to the Spirit. Put God first in all things. Don't play around with sin, or sin will play around with you. There are no exceptions.

Every day, from the moment you get up to the time you go to bed, you're either sowing to the Spirit or sowing to the flesh. And you'll find that you reap what you sow.

It starts with your thoughts and what you let into your mind—what you contemplate. Fill your mind with the things of God. Sow to the Spirit, and you won't regret it.

Essentially it comes down to this: Sow a thought, reap an act; sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a

character, reap a destiny. {eoa}

Greg Laurie is the senior pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship with campuses in California and Hawaii. He began his pastoral ministry at the age of 19 by leading a Bible study of 30 people. Since then, God has transformed that small group into a church of some 15,000 people. Today, Harvest is one of the largest churches in America, and consistently ranks among the most influential churches in the country. As of 2017, Harvest has joined in affiliation with the Southern Baptist Convention.

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