

Sowing Seeds of Hope

✖ Did you know that you have what it takes for someone else to receive a miracle? I was amazed to discover that although I didn't have a lot of finances and was a new single mom, I had what it took for people to receive their miracles—the miracle of salvation, the miracle of healing, and even the miraculous provision of a bag of groceries.

The principle of reaping and sowing is summed up in Galatians 6:7: "A man reaps what he sows." Tomato seeds produce tomatoes. Apple seeds produce apples.

When we sow encouragement into others' lives, we reap encouragement in our own lives. When we sow hope into others' lives, we reap hope in our own. When we sow finances, we reap a financial harvest in our own lives. There's always someone who has been through more than you have.

I began to actively look for women who were in great need and I would "sow" into their lives, simultaneously "seeding my own need." There were single moms living only two or three miles away from me who didn't know how they were going to feed their children dinner that night. There's nothing like firsthand experience to give us compassion—I didn't know how I was going to feed my daughter, Destiny, either, but I did know who my Provider was—my Husband, the Lord God Almighty.

I began taking groceries to the single moms who lived in a subsidized housing development. I told them about the love of Jesus and how He died on the cross for the forgiveness of their sins. I took almost everything in my pantry to the moms in that neighborhood, and every time I did, the Lord would prompt someone to leave a bag of groceries on my front porch! I was seeding my own need, and reaping an awesome harvest for Destiny and myself, and for the kingdom of God.

Hope is an amazing thing! The Word of God says, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life" (Proverbs 13:12). Hope deferred-disappointment-makes our hearts sick but we must focus on the second part of that verse-"A longing fulfilled is a tree of life." There are many longings that have been fulfilled in our lives, sprouting many trees of life.

I can remember my first few citywide crusades. I rented a big convention center and when attendance was less than I expected, I felt like a failure. The Lord asked me, "Did you do what I told you to do?" I said, "Yes, Lord." "Then, you were successful. Success is doing what I told you to do."

The Lord said that if I took the responsibility on myself for having a small crowd, I would later take the glory for having a large crowd. The size of the crowd wasn't important; it was my obedience that meant everything to the Lord.

Years later, when I got a divorce, I felt like a failure again. I had done everything I could possibly do, yet my marriage ended in a divorce. I had stood in faith for the restoration of my marriage; I had fasted and prayed for my husband's deliverance-yet my hopes were deferred, and my heart was sick! I had to press past the feelings of failure.

I focused instead on the longing that had been fulfilled by the birth of my daughter. I had always wanted a little girl with long, blonde hair and big, blue eyes, and that's just what the Lord gave me. Though hope deferred makes the heart sick, all the longings fulfilled in our lives are trees of life.

Simply use what you have, then trust the Lord. Jesus taught us this principle in Matthew 14:19-21.

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, Jesus gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave

them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children. (Matthew 14:19-21)

First, Jesus took what He had-but that's where most people quit. They look at their resources and get depressed and discouraged, feel sorry for themselves, or try to manipulate others to give them resources. Just take what you have.

Second, Jesus looked up to heaven. Don't look down; look up and hold your head up. This is where faith and trust come in.

Third, Jesus gave thanks. Thank God for what you have. Stop complaining about what you don't have and start praising God for what you do have. A grateful, thankful heart is always a forerunner for increased blessing. If you aren't thankful for what you have, why would God give you more?

Fourth, Jesus took a step of faith. Although He had only five loaves of bread and two fish, He started giving out what He had. When we take a step of faith and just start doing what we know we should do, provision will always be there.

Yet, often, people don't do great things for God because they keep looking at what they don't have. "We don't have the money." Well, God owns it all. "We don't have the workers we need." Well, you and God are the majority, so don't let a lack of workers stop you. "We don't have the time." Well, what are your priorities? Are you a good steward of your time?

Father wants you just to take what you have, look to Him, give thanks, and then take a step of faith as you walk in obedience. Don't despise small beginnings (see Zechariah 4:10). Don't become overwhelmed by the immensity of the task. Don't let the small size of your resources, the large size of your storm, the depth of your pit, or the gravity of your perceived mistakes hold you back. Father has an assignment

with your name on it for His glory!

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