

A Cowboy In Court

You need to remember that stealing a horse in the Old West was a very grave and serious offence. A person could be hanged if found guilty of such a deed.

It so happened that the man whose horse had been stolen had always made it a point to get the best of any person with whom he had any dealings. He had never tried to do anything good for anyone other than himself. Consequently, the man whose horse had been stolen didn't have a single friend in the entire town. The case was tried and presented to the jury.

The evidence against the accused man was pretty strong. After about thirty minutes of deliberation, the jury returned to the court chambers.

"Gentlemen of the jury, have you reached a verdict?" The judge asked. The chairman of the jury stood up. "Yes we have, your honour," he replied.



"What is your verdict?" inquired the judge.

There were a few moments of silence and then the chairman spoke. "We find the defendant not guilty if he will return the horse."

After the judge had silenced the laughter in the courtroom, he admonished the jury. "I cannot accept that verdict. You will have to retire until you reach another verdict," said the judge. The jury went back into their room to deliberate toward another verdict. No member of the jury had any particular liking for the man whose horse had been stolen. At one time or another he had gotten the best of each of them. About an hour passed before the jury could reach another verdict. They re-entered the courtroom. They took their place in the jury box and the courtroom grew silent.

"Gentlemen of the jury," began the judge, "have you reached a verdict?" The chairman of the jury stood up.

"Yes we have, your honour," he

replied. "What is your verdict?" asked the judge.

The courtroom was totally silent. You could have heard a pin drop. Everyone eagerly awaited the verdict. The chairman read the decision reached by the twelve good men, tried and true.

"We find the defendant not guilty, and he can keep the horse!"

The courtroom burst into laughter!

Moral of the story: If you spend your life trying to take advantage of others, never caring about them in any way except what you can get from them or what they can do for you, you will end up

a loser, like the man who lost his horse.

If you desire a friend, then be a friend. If you desire for other people to help you, then help other people. If you desire justice at the hands of others, then practice justice toward them.

Regardless of what you may think, the old Biblical admonition is true. We do reap what we sow.



Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap [Gal. 6:7].

This is an immutable law that operates in every sphere of life. If you sow corn, you get corn; if you sow cotton, you reap cotton. In the moral sphere you also reap what you sow.

One day a visitor in a penitentiary passed by a cell where a man was patching his prison garb with needle and thread. The visitor, wanting to begin a conversation with the prisoner, said, "What are you doing? Sewing?" The prisoner looked up and replied, "No, reaping!"

That is the point of this verse. The principle stated here is immutable, invariable, unalterable, and cannot be revoked. When you sow wheat, you

will get wheat. What *you* sow you will reap and that will never change.

I remember well hearing Mel Trotter, the evangelist who was a drunkard before his conversion. I had invited him to Nashville, Tennessee, to hold evangelistic meetings. One night after a meeting we went to a place called Candyland and everybody ordered a great big sloppy banana split, or a milkshake, or a malt. All Mel Trotter ordered was a little bitty glass of carbonated water. Everyone began to rib him about it, and asked him the reason. I shall never forget his answer,

"When the Lord gave me a new heart at my conversion, He did not give me a new stomach. I am paying for the years I spent drinking."

I wish young people would realize the truth of this principle. Many of them are taking drugs. Many are trying to satisfy themselves by indulging in easy sex, free love. Some of them are already beginning to reap the results of what they have sown. God says that you will not get by with sin—regardless of how many pills you take. God says you will reap what you sow. God will not be mocked. When you sow corn, you reap corn. When you sow sin, that is what you will reap. Someone may say, "I got converted." That is wonderful, but you are still going to have a payday someday. You will still reap what you have sown.¹

¹J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible commentary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1981 by J. Vernon McGee. / some editing by Pastor Devers