

Sowing and Reaping

A fable tells of a farmhand who was given instructions to plant a field of barley. He acted immediately, but he sowed oats instead of barley.

After several weeks, the owner of the farm went out to inspect the crop and was astonished to see oats growing instead of barley. The workman was told to report to the owner's office at once. "I told you to plant barley," he said. "Why did you sow oats?"

"Oh," the man responded. "I didn't think it would make any difference. I figured that even if I planted oats, I could expect barley to come up."

Enraged, the owner shouted: "Are you crazy, man? Whatever made you think that?"

The farmhand replied, "I got the idea from you, sir. I've been watching the way you live. And I've noticed that even though you're constantly sowing 'seeds of evil,' you expect to be reaping 'fruits of virtue.'"

Two lessons derive from this fable:

1. No one can avoid the natural laws of sowing and reaping. Whatever we sow, we will reap.
2. The people for whom we are responsible are watching us. Not only do they hear our words, but they measure them against our behavior.

--Beecher Hunter