



FRESH START MINI SERIES PART 3: "Don't Give Up"

ICEBREAKER |

Would you consider yourself to have a “green thumb?”

INTRODUCTION |

Whether you're great at gardening or struggle to keep a house plant alive, we all understand the basics of reaping and sowing. You plant a seed, water it and watch it grow, and then eventually benefit from the rewards. The same goes for getting a fresh start and seeing your goals come to fruition. In this lesson, we will learn some valuable facts and reaping and sowing that will keep us all on target.

READ I

Do you ever wonder why you are not successful at something? Here's the principle: **Successful people do consistently what others do occasionally.** In other words, if you quit too soon or don't stick with it, you'll never see the end result.

"Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you."

Matthew 7:7 (NLT)

Jesus taught us that asking once in a while, seeking now and then, or knocking once and giving up will get us nowhere. But if we stick with it, we can accomplish anything to the glory of God.

Here's another principle: **Intentions don't determine direction. Actions do.** Jesus said, *"If you hear what I say and put it into action, you are wise. But if you just hear it and walk away, you are being foolish"* (Matthew 7:24-26). You don't have to do big things to get big results, though. It's the small things no one sees that lead to big results everyone wants.

Have you ever done something consistently and seen a big result? (Example, learning piano or growing a garden) How did it make you feel when you finally saw the results of your hard work?

READ I

Those small things done consistently are like seeds that are planted. You put them in the ground, you water them, and while you can't see their growth they will grow into a plant one day. Here's how the Bible puts that into words for us:

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 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. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.
Galatians 6:7-9 (NIV)

There are three truths about reaping and sowing that will help us stay motivated to reach our goals and have a fresh start this year. The first is, **You Reap What You Sow.**

If you want to reap corn, you need to sow corn. If you want sunflowers, then you better plant sunflower seeds. If it's watermelon you're hoping for, then planting pumpkin seeds won't cut it. Whatever you want in life, you need to be putting that in your life.

The spiritual principle works the same. If you want to be recognized at your job and get a raise, then you need to put in the effort instead of a half-hearted approach. If you want a richly rewarding marriage, you need to have the right attitude going in. If you want an effective prayer life, then you need to be spending time in prayer daily. What you put in is what you will get out.

Share about a time when consistency paid off. Were you aware that you were reaping what you sow at the time?

READ |

The next principle is, **You Reap More Than You Sow**. Take a look at how Jesus explained this idea:

"The seeds that fell on good ground are the people who hear and welcome the message. They produce 30 or 60 or even 100 times as much as was planted."

Mark 4:20 (CEV)

Jesus was explaining our response to the Word of God in our lives, and it's the same for almost anything though. When you plant good seed, you get more than you put in. We all want that kind of investment. But it only comes when we put it in good soil, willing to obey and keep it watered.

What are some ways that we can make our lives the good soil that Jesus talked about? (Example, coming to church, serving others, being a part of community, making time daily to read God's word, making time to pray, etc.)

READ |

Finally, there is one more principle about reaping and sowing: **You Will Reap After You Sow**. This means that you don't get what you want right away. Instead, you must wait and be patient.

There are planting seasons and harvesting seasons. You can never put seed in the ground and then find a full plant the next day. It will take time. And that is usually one of the biggest hurdles to success in life. We work out one day and expect to see results. We have one conversation with an estranged friend and expect it to all be worked out. But it doesn't work that way. It only happens over time. Are we willing to be patient?

It's easy to get discouraged when we don't see progress fast enough. What's one way you could encourage yourself to keep going when you don't see progress immediately?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This is the perfect time to be planting good habits in your life. Will you take some time to work on your goals? Find out what you really want to change in your life and then decide what you need to start planting now. Just remember, You Reap What You Sow, You Reap More Than You Sow, You Reap After You Sow.

- If you didn't participate in the 3 day fast last week, do so this week.
- If you didn't complete the 7 Ways To Pray, do so this week.
- What will you sow this week (Ex. Kindness and forgiveness in a relationship, etc.)

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):

- Do at least one (1) SOAP Devotions this week
- Share with your group one of your SOAP Devotions from this past week
- Invite a friend to your small group

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Father, thank You for challenging us every day. Thank You for never leaving us stagnant. You encourage us and develop us and make us more and more like Your Son. Help us to embrace the work You're doing in our lives and, by Your grace, never give up. In Jesus' mighty name we pray, amen.

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1: *Those who plant in tears will harvest with shouts of joy. They weep as they go to plant their seed, but they sing as they return with the harvest.*

Psalm 126:5-6 (NLT)

Day 2: *There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to be silent and a time to speak.*

Ecclesiastes 3:1-3, 6-7 (NIV)

Day 3: *And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.*

Philippians 1:6 (NLT)

Day 4: *Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.*

Romans 12:12 (NLT)

Day 5: *So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.*

Galatians 6:9 (NLT)

DURING THE WEEK

Find Time To Read God's Word



The Power of Feeding on God's Word Daily

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

As we read God's word, we begin to see how God responds to things. Doing daily devotions re-patterns the way we think and transforms the spirit of the mind. Then, when we face similar situations as Jesus did, we begin to respond in the same way.

Doing devotions is an excellent way to record, process, and share what God is speaking to you. It's also a useful tool to use at a later time to reflect on and review some of the "gems" that you have received. Without writing these down, you may forget God's promises and some very important life lessons! While doing devotions is a very personal time with the Lord, you may want to share some of your daily devotions with your family, friends, co-workers, or small group. Through discussion, you may be able to look deeper into what God is speaking to you, gain new insights, and even encourage others.

Sample Devotion

SCRIPTURE

"If you do not carry your own cross and follow Me, you cannot be My disciple."
(Luke 14:27)

OBSERVATION

Self-sacrifice is a prerequisite for discipleship. Self-centeredness has no place in the life of a Jesus follower.

APPPLICATION

It can be hard to focus less on self and more on Jesus, but when we do we are living out the very commands of Jesus.

PRAYER

God, help me to live a selfless life by always focusing on what You want instead of what makes me happy, comfortable, and content. In Jesus' name, Amen.



NEW
HOPE
WINDWARD

INFO@NHWW.ORG • PH# 808-261-5975 • WWW.NHWW.ORG