

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS SPIRITUAL CROP FAILURE – 4/1/99

In 1995 the national media carried a report of one sixteen-year-old who paid off his gambling debts by turning his girlfriend into a prostitute. 1996 brought three separate cases of rape to our attention in Indianapolis with all three offenders being at or below age 12. In 1997 two college students conspired and committed murder by the birthing of their child in a motel room and subsequent abandonment of the child to die in a dumpster. And in '98 we were witness to several cases across the country of young men cutting down fellow students and at least one teacher with gunfire, apparently with as little motivation as breaking up with a girlfriend. Should we mention three Carmel teens slain by fellow teenagers, the two young men presently on trial for the death of an elderly preacher and his wife by use of an axe, or the elderly Brownsburg couple (one killed, one wounded critically) attacked in their home by a local teen? How about the Indiana mother who strapped her two children into their car seats and sent the car to the bottom of a lake because her boyfriend didn't want children or the million women a year who show the same love for their children by aborting them, most of whom are under the age of 25. You may well ask why the gruesome recounting of just a small portion of the heartache that surrounds us. Certainly not to point out the wrongs of such. Believers don't need to be told not to covet, hate, murder, or lust. No, the point in the above is ask, "What now?" Most of the above were committed by young people, some juveniles, who will not spend their life behind bars, at least not for these crimes. And even if they do, "what then?" What will they think? How will they feel? How many heartaches and tears will be shed by parents and grandparents? What voices will speak to them in the silence of a dark sleepless night? What scars are these people going to have on mind and heart that will NEVER GO AWAY?

And really, the point is not even these scars. The point really is that these people are not that much different from you and me. Some of us have coveted, some lusted. Have you ever been angry? Jesus likens anger to hatred, and hatred to murder. Not much difference there. And here's another similarity. Galatians 6:7 is where the Spirit tells us, "Do not be deceived...whatever a man sows, this will he also reap." The aforementioned people played with sinful fire and got burnt. Now they are scarred for the rest of their life. But the truth is that sin always does this. If unrepented of, it sears the conscience. You don't have to murder or rape to hurt yourself with sin. "Don't be deceived," i.e. don't kid yourself, we will each reap what we sow.

If you play with coveting by gambling there will be a price to pay in your heart. If we play with lust we will reap as we're sowing. Solomon said not to even "look at" the wine, it is deceitful and there's a price to be paid at the last. If you let hatred or malice take a place in your heart, you are the one who will reap the reward of that decision. Every sin that we allow to put roots down into our heart will cost us dearly because God said we reap what we sow. Do you believe Him?

Some wounds are more obvious than others. That doesn't mean that the smaller ones are not there, nor that they won't kill us spiritually. Paul said the wages of sin is death, separation from God. Don't reap that eternal reward by ignoring His word about

sowing and reaping. Keep yourself from sin, in attitude and action. You'll be happier for the effort now and in the world to come.

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