

## Consequences, “Gift in Disguise”

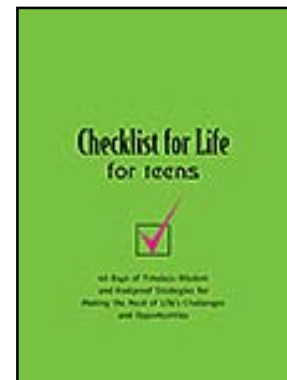
This devotion begins with a scripture from Galatians, chapter 6; from *The Message*:

*Don't be misled: No one makes a fool of God. What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others—ignoring God!—harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life.*

Well, maybe the scripture stands on its own; what we reap...is what we sow.

Sometimes what is planned is not what happens; sometimes our decisions or choices result in unintended consequences or outcomes. How this applies to sowing and reaping is summed up in the intention or desire in the first place.

Even with the best of intentions however, the outcome can still be less than desired, discouraging – even devastating. In the example of Galatians, the outcome is worse (than all these); those who are self-centered – and ignore God – are bound for more than a field of weeds...



Well, what do you do...or what can you do? Good intentions are important as mean a great deal, but risk is the common name given to the uncertainty that can deride any decision and choice. Hey, sometimes the risk shows-up – even when we haven't made a decision...

As long as we live in this work, risk will exist. Some may say, “That's why we have insurance companies...” Nope, insurance companies cannot (and will not) cover all of our risks...

What is true of the believer is that risks or unintended consequences – with or without good intentions or decisions – offer a lesson; yes, these outcomes offer an opportunity for growth, for maturing and wisdom.

**Don't fear bad outcomes or risks;** but instead, see them as a part of life – of growing-up and developing in your character. You can take pause in making good decisions, choices, etc.; but don't *beat yourself up* when the outcome does not *turn out right* or you made a mistake. All of us make mistakes – sometimes repeatedly and – believe it or not – sometimes intentionally. Sometimes we relish in the bad outcomes or consequences of others – but that's another story...

## Homework:

### Please try to do these:

- Ask yourself, “What would Jesus do?” in a decision or choice...or in dealing with the outcome...
- Realize that everything you do has implications
- Accept responsibility for your actions
- Learn to think before acting
- Avoid deliberate opportunities for sin
- Understand the risks or unintended consequences of choices

### Things to Do:

- ✓ Ask God for wisdom in decisions
- ✓ Consider and read about obedience (e.g. book of Daniel)
- ✓ Pray for someone whose poor choices have had negative consequences

A few quotes from legendary writers...

From Robert Louis Stevenson (who wrote *Treasure Island* among others),  
“Sooner or later everyone sits down to a banquet of consequences.”

G. K Chesterson was an English writer of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; a quote he offers on the matter,  
“Every act is an act of self-sacrifice. When you choose anything you reject everything else.”