

# Wings

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*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”  
Isaiah 40:31*



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## A Banquet of Consequences

This world operates on a very simple principle: behaviors have consequences. Our failure to appreciate this immutable law has serious implications for our future welfare.

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

“They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind” (Hos. 8:7).

From the very beginning, this good earth has operated on the principle that seed produces fruit after its own kind (Gen. 1:12). This immutable law is the foundation of agriculture, allowing farmers to plant their crops with a reasonable expectation of harvest.

This biological law also illustrates a similar principle in the moral realm, namely, behaviors have consequences. That is, our actions (and words, and even thoughts) produce outcomes that share the character of their origin. These consequences are predictable and rarely inescapable. There are exceptions to this rule—bad things can happen to good people, and bad people can dodge bullets for a while—but the exceptions do not overthrow the rule. Robert Louis Stevenson captured this truth with his observation that “sooner or later in life, we all sit down to a banquet of consequences.”

Throughout history, regardless of creed or culture, humanity has generally learned to value this principle of human conduct. The book of Proverbs, Aesop’s Fables, and other sources of moral instruction summarize the wisdom of this remarkably simple rule: if we want to enjoy good outcomes in life, we must train ourselves to think, speak, and act in such a way as to earn those outcomes.

But occasionally people get the idea that this rule doesn’t apply to them or they have somehow outgrown it. So they violate it with impunity, then wonder why their lives go horribly wrong.

In Hosea’s day, for example, the nation of Israel had rejected God in favor of idolatry and immorality. This freedom from divine service was exhilarating for a while, but the prophet could foresee the doom that awaited his countrymen. Within a few years, the party was over, and Israel disintegrated under the ruthless heel of an Assyrian army. They sowed the wind, and reaped the whirlwind.

Modern western civilization is making the same mistake. Our culture has

engaged in a wholesale repudiation of this ageless moral principle; ethical standards that were once considered the bedrock of society—industry, thrift, monogamy, honesty, courtesy, self-control—have been jettisoned by millions of people in favor of a philosophy of selfish indulgence. Rising rates of mental illness, poverty, corruption, and violence suggest that we are already starting to harvest the consequences of our newfound freedom from rationality.

At the national level, politicians — and the voters who keep returning them to office — believe that we can keep on spending trillions of dollars we do not have and never have to worry about the repercussions of such monstrous debt. But our elaborate house of cards inevitably will come crashing down, and we will have to live with the consequences of our profligate excess. It won’t be pretty.

Stevenson’s warning of “a banquet of consequences” is not a threat or an educated guess; it’s an unavoidable fact of life. The sooner we learn that lesson, the more palatable that banquet will be.

— David King