

Turn Hurt Into Harvest

WWT Board of Directors Devotion

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July 23, 2020

On June 4, I posted an article on LinkedIn titled [Turn Hurt Into Harvest](#). In it, I shared a summary of my relationship with Dave, and the incredible example of God's love that Dave has modeled for me and my family. The article's title came from his mother's wise teaching to her children. Dr. Dorothy Steward often encouraged Dave and his siblings, to "turn hurt into harvest" whenever they faced adversity, including racism.

Dr. Steward's encouragement was inspired by Psalm 126:6, "Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them." Dave recalls in *Leadership By The Good Book*:

This is probably the way her parents and grandparents who toiled in the soil said it. I never forgot those words and they have helped get me through many difficult times. They provide a reminder that faith in God combined with hard work can overcome what appears to be sure defeat. We can choose self-pity and passivity, or we can choose to act in faith and trust God with the results.

Agricultural analogies and parables were common in Jesus' teachings. His audiences experienced first-hand the planting, cultivating, and harvesting processes, as did Dr. Steward's parents and grandparents. Even Dave and his siblings could relate to these agrarian concepts from tending their vegetable garden, which provided important sustenance for their family of ten, as well as others including hungry drifters from the nearby railroad.

However, in America today most of us struggle to understand the hard work and time required for sowing and harvesting. In our instant message, instant gratification, and "insta-everything" world, we may expect a posting or tweet to have a lasting effect. But this is akin to thinking that we have an understanding of the hard work done by the farmers over many months to grow our produce when we have to wait a *whole* 30 minutes for our groceries to be delivered!

My point is simply this. We must do the hard labor of daily reconciliation and restoration in order to reap a harvest of healing from the hurt of racism. This will take, as Dave said above, "faith in God combined with hard work." In this process, Dave reminds us that we will be tempted to "choose self-pity and passivity, or we can choose to act in faith and trust God with the results."

I offered these three suggestions, in my LinkedIn article, for people who look like me:

- We must listen to, and learn from, those who have experienced this horrible pain and injustice. This is where most of us need to start.
- We must acknowledge racism, systemic and implicit, is real, and we must work diligently to stop it.
- We must teach our children to turn this hurt into harvest, just as Dave's precious mother taught him.

These are not "insta-result" suggestions. These represent the hard, daily work that is required. "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 6:9)

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us your Scripture, which illuminates our path. Thank you for giving us the teaching of wise, humble leaders like Dr. Dorothy Steward who teach us to apply your Scripture. Forgive us as we fall short of loving each other the way that you love us. Help us to listen to and learn from those who have been hurt by racism. Show us your path to reconciliation of the past and restoration of the present. Enable our resolve to teach our children how to turn this hurt into harvest. Help us not to become weary in doing good, so that in your time and in your will, we will reap a harvest of joy for all people. I pray this in Jesus' name. AMEN