

# Redemptive Gifts Lexicon: What is a Principle



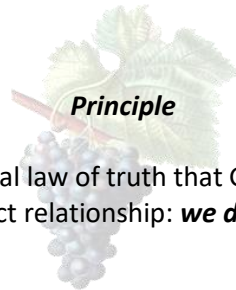
Several articles will become part of the Redemptive Gifts Lexicon, the purpose of which is to provide understanding of some terms and concepts essential to the study of the redemptive gifts. It is my prayer that each definition and explanation will, as you study along, serve to grow and develop your natural *and* spiritual knowledge, wisdom, and understanding of why and how to [apply these to your life for redemptive living](#).

Considering that the study of the Redemptive Gifts is *a study about God, what He is like, and how we and all creation reflect His nature*, suffice it to say we embark upon an inexhaustible exploration of our Father's love. Even the most basic understanding of the redemptive gifts and their design throughout everything helps give deeper meaning to Paul's declaration in Romans 8:38-39:

*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities,  
nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,  
nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing,  
will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

In order to move from simply being overwhelmed by the love of God and into growing up in Christ – God designed us to learn how to do so by seeking out the principles of His Word that bring healing, life, and love.

Let's begin with *What is a Principle*.



A principle is a universal, non-optional, general law of truth that God set into motion at the beginning of Creation. We recognize it as a cause and effect relationship: ***we do something and there is a predictable result according to God's purposeful design***. It is -

- **Universal** – because it applies in every culture - in the natural world, the spiritual world and in relationships
- **Non-optional** – because it applies to every redemptive gift ([which everyone has had imparted to them](#)) and applies to the saved and unsaved alike
- **General law of truth** – because it is in operation; God does not have to intervene to make it happen

A familiar example of a principle is ***gravity***. A natural law set in place by God, it still operates today as it always has, without His intervention. It makes no difference if you are a believer or non-believer; if you decide to jump off a 15-story building, you will go down and there will be consequences. The resulting damage or death is not an indication that you are not loved by God. You overwhelmingly are, while His principles still hold fast.

## ***Natural and Spiritual***

Scripture relates another familiar principle that works both naturally and spiritually, that of ***sowing and reaping***. In **Luke 6:38** (in the context of judging others and our treatment of them) **Jesus says**:

*"Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—  
pressed down, shaken together, and running over.  
For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."*

Later, Paul admonished the **Galatian believers in chapter 6, verses 7-10**:

*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.  
For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption,  
but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.  
Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.  
So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people,  
and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*

For every principle God has set in motion – and there are many – the principle works because it is part of God’s design. Its working is not dependent on where you are in your relationship with God. He set up cause and effect; fundamental, universal, non-optional, general laws of truth that function today as He first decreed.

Let’s consider two married couples for a general example of the principle of sowing and reaping in operation -

### **Example #1**

One couple are believers in Christ unto salvation and have been re-birthed by His Spirit. The principles in the Word of God are there for their growth from spiritual newborns into mature sons of God. When applied to the issues and development of their lives both with God and each other, they can anticipate that healing, life, and love will follow. If, however, God’s principles are frequently violated due to lack of knowledge of and/or submission to His Word, or with little regard for His redeeming love and godly purposes in their relationship, they will still go to heaven while having lived in a miserable marriage. Their *salvation* does not depend on how they performed. This is a matter of their heart and will before God and with each other that brings cause and effect to bear upon not only their lives, but of their generations. For the lack of employing God’s principles, many a family unit has suffered. By His grace it is not too late to learn and walk out redemptive relating.

### **Example #2**

The other couple are atheists and want nothing to do with God, the Bible, or His people. However, they believe in living a moral life. They govern their lives by their love for each other and, whether they admit its source or not, by the Golden Rule – *do unto others as you would have them do unto you* (something many professing Christians do not hold themselves to). Intentionally or by accident, when the unbelieving couple, together or individually, does what is right because it is the right thing to do, they will come to reap God’s blessing where they sowed. Why? Because the principles in His Word are true and in operation according to His design. The couple may live a wonderful life of love, relationship and blessing here on earth, and still remain separated from God because of [unbelief and refusal of His provision of His own Son](#) for their eternal life.

### **Fair or Just?**

One couple receives the benefit of God’s love, forgiveness and eternal life through salvation, without the benefit of godly reaping in areas left unsowed into their lives and marriage. The other couple enjoys the benefit of reaping return where they invest (sow) His principles into their life and marriage, though they do not acknowledge or perhaps even believe there is a God. God’s **principles** do not discriminate (*Matthew 5:45*).

Doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do (employing God's principles, aware or not) applies to all.

We can also look at friends, family, parenting, government, church, school, or any other social construct and see God's principles at work. As Arthur Burk has pointed out, people never *break* God's laws; we either violate them (and prove them true in a negative way) or we uphold them (proving them true and redemptive).

Our flesh nature is cognizant of and attached to what is *fair*. The examples above are enough to cause our soul to cry out, "but that's not fair!" even as we speak of and desire *justice*. Embracing redemptive living includes re-examining our beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors before God and toward those with whom we relate. God's principles are foundational. As 'repairers of the breaches',<sup>1</sup> we are called to the work of repairing our own too.

### ***Faith and Prayer***

Believers are also called to prayer for those who struggle with their faith or have not yet believed. Scripture tells us that the prayer (*supplication*) of a righteous (*equitable in character or act*) person accomplishes much.<sup>2</sup>

We do not know how, when, or who will come to believing faith in Christ, but God does. His principles are in operation and [Holy Spirit is still at work](#), toward them and for each of us on this journey of faith in Christ Jesus.

### ***Next Time***

Join me for *What is a Principle, Part Two* before we move on to another term in our Redemptive Gifts Lexicon.

~ Nancy



<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 61

<sup>2</sup> James 5:16