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Right Back At You!

Boomerangs are making a comeback.

Developed 10,000 years ago in southern Australia, the aboriginal icons are no longer used for war or hunting but for sport. First, some background.



According to historians, the earliest boomerangs were probably simple throwing sticks used to knock down small game, or thrown into grass and bushes to scare birds into waiting nets. Similar sticks were also used in ancient Egypt, southern India and among natives in Arizona and California. The famous Pharaoh, King Tutankhamen, had a boomerang collection three thousand years ago.


Nobody knows for sure how the returning boomerang was invented but it was probably an accident. An ancient hunter likely made a throwing stick that was shorter and lighter than usual, with a curve in it. As to why such a stick comes back, it's simple aerodynamics.

With its V-shape, a boomerang is basically two wings joined together and, like an airplane wing, the top is rounded and the bottom is flat. As it moves, air pressure builds up on the flat side and creates lift.

Except a boomerang is thrown overhand, not like a Frisbee, so the lift pushes the boomerang to the side, not up. Since the boomerang has uneven wings, the spinning is lopsided and keeps curving so, if you know how to throw it properly, the boomerang flies right back. On three space missions, German, French and Japanese astronauts showed that boomerangs even function in zero gravity.

Today, the sport boomerang, called a *boom* or *rang*, is usually made of Finnish birch or carbon-reinforced plastic. In international competition, which is dominated by the Germans and Americans, points are awarded for distance, maximum time in the air, accuracy of the return, and the catch.

In 1993, John Gorski of Avon, Ohio threw a boomerang that caught



*Church is like a washing machine.
What you put in
is what you get out.*

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when just one colour is low a thermal draft. It sent the stick 600 feet high and kept it aloft for 17 minutes before Gorski caught it again. No wonder those new to the sport are given a traditional warning: "Remember, you are the target!"

That's also sound advice for us, too. Though there's no strict Christian equivalent to karma — the Hindu and Buddhist teaching that if you do good, good things will happen to you — the Bible does teach that what goes around comes around. *"Don't be misled — you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death... But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life... So let's not get tired of doing what's good... [and] whenever we can, we should do good to everyone, especially to those in the family of faith."* (Gal. 6:6-10)

Each of our choices and actions has a consequence. Someone wise once said, *"Sow a thought, you reap an act. Sow an act, you reap a habit. Sow a habit, you reap a character. Sow a character, you reap a consequence."* It all begins with what's inside, at the core of our being. What we think and value will determine how we live. And even if we do evil and don't get caught, God's justice will prevail in the end.

Reaping what we sow lies at the heart of the Golden Rule: *"Do to others whatever you'd like them to do to you."* (Matt. 7:12) So *"Don't judge others, and you won't be judged. Don't condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you'll be forgiven. Give, and you'll receive. Your gift will return to you in full... running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back."* (Luke 6:37, 38)

Jesus doesn't say not to judge others, only that how we judge others will determine how they judge us. *"Those who live by the sword die by the sword."* (Matt. 26:52) Similarly, there's no sense sowing your wild oats and praying for crop failure.

Thankfully, God's mercy means we're not doomed to get what we deserve. He forgives those who respond to his free gift of salvation, but we must forgive others for God to forgive us. Remember the Lord's prayer? *"Forgive us as we forgive those who sin against us."* But with the proper heart we can count on the grace of Jesus, celebrate our new birth — and look forward to many happy returns.