

WORKS & REWARDS

Introduction

First of all, it is important for us to understand the limitations of human works. Eph. 2:8-9 explains that we are saved by grace through faith, not of ourselves, but as a gift of God, NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast. This is because, as unsaved sinners, any works we produce prior to being cleansed and born from above would be contaminated and unacceptable to God. But once we are saved, Eph. 2:10 says we are created in Christ Jesus UNTO GOOD WORKS, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

God's Nature

It is helpful to remember the nature of God when studying about the rewards He will give. God is just and perfectly fair. That means He will not reward anyone who does not deserve it, nor will He fail to reward anyone who does deserve it. Additionally, whatever reward He gives will be perfectly appropriate, so no one will walk away grumbling that He owed them something more.

Motives and Rewards

We can see from Mt. 6:1-5, that the motive driving the work helps dictate the reward. If we are doing something to be seen, to be recognized and praised, then the praises of men will be our only reward, for there will be none given by the Father. Only those works that are done out of a pure heart and unselfish motive will earn a person heavenly rewards.

Other Scriptures Related to Rewards

Gen. 15:1 - I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward

II Chr. 15:7 - your work shall be rewarded

Ps. 19:7-11 - by keeping the Lord's laws, statutes & judgments, there is great reward

Ps. 58:11 - verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth

Ps. 127:3 - the fruit of the womb is His reward

Prov. 11:18 - to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward

Prov. 13:13 - he that ferrets the commandment shall be rewarded

Prov. 25:21-22 - the Lord shall reward thee for giving your enemy bread and water

Mt. 5:11-12 and Lu. 6:23 - great is your reward in heaven when you are persecuted for my sake

Mt. 6: 6 & 18 - those who pray and fast in secret will be rewarded openly

Mt. 10:41-42 & Mk. 9:41 - receiving a prophet's reward for helping him

Mt. 16:27 - Jesus will come with his angels and then reward every man according to his works

Lu. 6:35 - our reward shall be great if we are good to our enemies

I Cor. 3:8 - every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour

I Cor. 3:14 - if our work endures the trial of fire, we shall receive a reward

I Cor. 9:17-18, - Paul will receive a reward for voluntarily preaching the Gospel, but he would not if he did it out of obligation or grudgingly. Paul feels like his reward is the privilege of preaching the Gospel

I Cor. 9:24-25 - running to receive the prize, an incorruptible crown

Col. 2:18 - Let no man beguile you of your reward through deceit or false claims

Col. 3:23-24 - things done from the heart for the Lord shall receive the reward of the inheritance, but he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, regardless of who he is

I Tim. 5:18 - the laborer is worthy of his reward

Heb. 10:34-35 - the reward in heaven of a better and enduring substance

Heb. 11:6 - God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him

Heb. 11:26 - looking to the reward, Moses considered the reproach of Christ to be greater a greater prize than the treasures of Egypt

II Jn. 1:8 - receiving a "full" reward

Rev. 11:18 - time of judgment is when He will give rewards to His servants, prophets, saints and those who fear His name, small and great

Rev. 22:12 - Jesus is coming quickly and His reward is with Him to give every man according as his work shall be (Is. 40:10)

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Discussion Questions

1. Must we wait until we get to heaven to receive whatever rewards we have earned, or does God permit us to receive and enjoy certain rewards while on earth?
2. What do you think the scripture means when it speaks of a “full” reward? (II Jn. 1:8)
3. Is it wrong to want to receive rewards from the Lord? Is this a selfish motive?
4. Do you think we will be regretful or jealous if our reward is smaller than someone else’s?
5. Read Dan. 12:2-3. Do you think soul winners will have a special reward?
6. Read Mt. 6:19-21 and 19:21. How does one “lay up treasure in heaven”?
7. Have you ever thought about what the actual rewards will be? Will it be a higher level of heavenly joy? Will it be a nicer dwelling place? Will it be the satisfaction of knowing we have pleased our Lord?
8. Read II Tim. 4:6-8. Notice the crown of righteousness is “laid up” for the writer and all them that love his appearing. What do you think this crown will be? Does thinking about it make you want to do more for the Lord and earn a better standing with Him on that great day?

An excerpt from:

Only One Life

by C.T. Studd

Give me Father, a purpose deep,
In joy or sorrow Thy Word to keep;
Faithful and true what e'er the strife,
Pleasing Thee in my daily life;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Oh let my love with fervor burn,
And from the world now let me turn;
Living for Thee, and Thee alone,
Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one,
Now let me say, “Thy will be done”;
And when at last I'll hear the call,
I know I'll say “ 'twas worth it all”;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.