

Following Jesus to a Rewarding Life – part 3

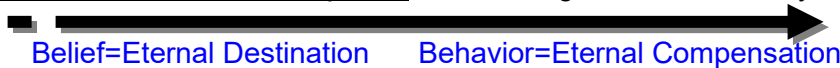
Two men owned farms side by side. One was a bitter atheist, the other a devout Christian. Constantly annoyed at the Christian for his trust in God, the atheist said to him one winter, “Let’s plant our crops as usual this spring, each the same number of acres. You pray to your God & I’ll curse him. Then come October, let’s just see who has the bigger crop.”

When October came, the atheist was delighted because his crop was larger. “See, you fool,” he taunted. “What do you have to say for your God now?”

The Christian replied, “**My God doesn’t settle all His accounts in October.**”

Matthew 10:40-42 – What are these rewards? the Bible speaks prolifically about a topic that many know very little about.

--We have seen in our study of rewards a diagram of our eternity:



--The Bible teaches plainly that even the smallest choice in the dash can result in a corresponding consequence on the line of astounding proportions.

--For this reason, teaching on rewards is important for us who are living here in the dash.

2. So what other things does God promise to reward in eternity?

--First of all, there is no exhaustive list of things God rewards.

--A quick observation of Scripture reveals that in general something that you do for someone that meets a need or something that otherwise honors God—these are things God will reward.

--What you do as a follower and representative of Christ—as God’s ambassador to a dark world—these are things that God rewards.

There are at least 7 categories of things that we can glean from the teachings of Jesus and the New Testament writers that God will reward.

1. God will reward you for seeking Him through spiritual acts such as fasting and prayer.

Mt. 6:6

--Prayer is a rewarding thing, but not just in this life!

2. God will reward you for self-denial in His service. **Mt. 16:27**

3. God will reward you for hard work at your job or occupation and submitting to your employer.

Eph. 6:7-8

4. God will reward you for ministering to the needs of the Saints. **Mk. 9:41**

5. God will reward you for suffering for His name and reputation. **Lk. 6:22-23**

6. God will reward you for sacrifices you make for Him. **Lk. 6:35**

--According to **Mt. 19:29**, those who sacrifice to follow Him will be rewarded 100-fold!

7. God will reward you for sharing your time, talent, and treasure to further His kingdom.

Mt. 6:3-4; I Tim. 6:18-19.

3. Does this teaching startle you or overwhelm you in any way? It was for me, because I was never clearly taught this.

You may be like me, a little reluctant to believe what you’re hearing.

--After all, I don’t feel like I deserve any reward-- He died for me; the least I can do is to serve Him.

--I’ll spend eternity with Him. How could I ask for or expect more than that?

Isn’t it our duty and privilege to serve Him not expecting anything in return since He has already done so much? **Lk. 17:10**

--All true, but don’t begrudge God for His generosity!

God's plan to reward, like His provision to save, is a display of His amazing grace.

God will pay you wages for the things you do for Him here.

God will reimburse you for the things you pay out for Him here.

What will that day of reimbursement be like? What will happen when we are rewarded or lose our reward?

--Paul describes it like a runner in ancient Greek competition who would stand before the judgment seat at the end of a race where he either gets a prize or doesn't based on how he ran.

--So will it be when we stand individually and give a report for all the things we've done in this life. What have we done with our salvation, forgiveness, peace with God, indwelling Spirit?

II Cor. 5:10

3. Paul speaks of that event the most thoroughly in I Cor. 3:10-15, here he likens the work we have done in this life to a building.

--**V. 10-11**

--**V. 12-13** First purpose of the bema is to **show** →key words: "become clear, declare, revealed"

--**V. 13b-15** -- The Second purpose is to **test**

--Another thing: **you** aren't being tested, neither is **your destination, only your works.**

Only two options for our works

--Our works will endure like gold, silver, and precious stones

--Or our works will be burned up like straw and none will remain—no matter how sensible, enjoyable, or religious those works may have seemed to us while we were alive.

4. Let's take a moment to really get a grasp of what that day will be like by comparing two believers' experiences.

--One is a high-ranking church official (pastor, someone over many churches or a large ministry)

--Second is a blue collar worker with a high school education.

--All their works are piled up and put to the fire test -- **Which one will receive the most reward?**

--**The answer:** there is no way to completely know before that day! **I Cor. 4:5**

--Only after the fire test will we really know how a person's life has added up for eternity.

--**Be careful not to judge someone for good or bad in this life!**

5. So what will cause a work, our work to either endure or be burned at the bema seat?

--We must understand that Jesus will not only judge what we do, but how and why we did it.

--Don't be fooled into thinking that if we fix the "what" we will be O.K. "Why" is far more important than "what."

Luke 12:16-21

"Rich towards God" should be the goal of every one of us.