

Basic Discipleship

A Course On New Testament Discipleship

Topic #8

IV. We Will Be Rewarded in Heaven With Crowns

We have learned thus far that the Bible is _____ that someday at “**the judgment seat of Christ**” (2 Corinthians 5:10), that if we know the Lord, we will give an account of our lives in Heaven (Romans 14:12 cf. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15) where we will be rewarded. Rewards are something the believer should seek, for the simple reason we are commanded to do so (Matthew 6:19-21). And as with all the commands of Scripture, we are to obey because of God’s unconditional _____ for us (1 John 4:9-10; 5:4). Whenever we discuss eternal rewards, it is critical to emphasize that our salvation is never called a ‘**reward**’ in Scripture. Our salvation comes by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus alone as revealed in Scripture alone such that our salvation, can _____ be merited in _____ or in whole, by our any human deeds (Romans 6:23; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7). With that said, once God has saved us by His “**grace**” we are commanded to “**grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**” (2 Peter 3:18). In order to “**grow in grace**” we _____ make choices to renew our minds with Scripture (Romans 12:1-2) and to allow the Holy Spirit who indwells us to _____ us (Ephesians 5:18). As we do this, only then are we able to carry out the “**good works which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them**” (Eph. 2:10). The wonder of it all is that at the judgment of the saved _____ will reward us for those works _____ has done through us. This is why we have repeatedly emphasized that God is _____ looking for “**stewards**” with great ability — but with great availability (1 Corinthians 4:2).

We have _____ that “**the judgment seat of Christ**” is not some kind of ‘**Protestant Purgatory**’ because such thinking would be in _____ contradiction to our salvation being based on the finished work of Christ (John 19:30). When we are converted, we are given a _____ standing where there is “**now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus**” (Romans 8:1). For that matter, neither is this future judgment a time of discipline because all of God’s discipline takes place in this _____ (Hebrews 12:5-6)—not to mention that no such discipline will be of any value for those who are already made perfect in Heaven (Hebrews 12:23). Thus far, we have studied that the “**bad**” works that are mentioned in 2 Corinthians 5:10, are “**bad**” (NAS) or “**worthless**” (HCSB) because they were done with the _____ motivation (1 Corinthians 4:5), or in the wrong manner such that they discarded as unworthy of reward (1 Corinthians 3:15). By contrast, the “**good**” things we do for the glory of Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit are rewarded (1 Corinthians 3:14). The penalty is limited to the _____ of reward, of which we will all have some, because all of us have a measure of failure in this life. This future judgment will _____ be punitive, but it will be gracious. In this section, we will examine _____ these rewards are given and _____ some of the implications of these rewards might be in Christ’s kingdom and in eternity future.

A. God will reward us at the judgment seat of Christ with crowns.

The Bible talks about _____ different crowns that believers might receive in heaven. The Greek word translated “**crown**” with _____ of the crowns mentioned is “**stephanos**” — and it means “**a badge of royalty, a prize in the public games, or a symbol of honor**” (the very name Stephen the first martyr is called). Used during the ancient Greek games, it referred to a wreath or garland of leaves placed on a victor’s _____ as a reward for winning an athletic contest. The incredible truth about Heaven is that we will all be _____ satisfied with what we have—and there will be _____ envy for what others have. Let’s examine some reasons to pursue these five crowns.

#1. There is the imperishable crown given to believers who live a disciplined life.

1. The *imperishable crown* (NASV/NKJV/ESV) is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, where the Apostle Paul contrasts this future crown that is ‘**incorruptible**’ & lasting forever (KJV/ASV1901)—with that of a ‘**a perishable wreath**’ _____ to athletes.

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. 25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. So they do it to obtain a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in such a way as not to run aimlessly; I box in such a way, as to avoid hitting air; 27 but I strictly discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified (1 Corinthians 9:24–27).

2. When the Apostle Paul uses such terms as “**I run**” or “**I box**”—these athletic terms would have been very meaningful to the Corinthians — because their _____ was the center for the Isthmian Games—second in prestige—to the ancient Olympics.
3. Paul’s emphasis in this paragraph is that we should run our race in such a way that we will receive a reward from the Judge who is Jesus (John 5:22; 2 Cor. 5:10), who will reward His people — in one of many ways — including various _____.
4. There are two principal kinds of crowns found in the New Testament using _____ different words—one for the “**crown**” of a ruler or a sovereign (*Gr. diadem*) & so we find Christ wearing many “**crowns**” or “**diadems**” at His return (Rev. 19:12).
5. The other is the “**crown**” of a victor (*Gr. stephanos*) — such as was awarded in the Greek games when a person won a race or some contest—like that in verse ___ as a “**perishable crown**” (KJV/NET/ASV) or as a “**perishable wreath**” (NAS/ESV/RSV).
6. In the Christian ‘**race**’ we do not compete with one another for the prize, but rather we compete with ourselves, with the emphasis is on self-discipline, _____ competition.
7. In typical competition only one person is the winner, but in the Christian ‘**race**’ _____ who keep “**the rules**” & run hard will receive a reward (Matt. 6:19-21; 2 Tim. 2:5).

5 Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules (2 Timothy 2:5).

8. Paul explains to us that included in “**the rules**” — is to recognize that like a runner who is not aimless or halfhearted—and like a boxer who does not just throw _____ punches—even so our “**race**” is not just activity but purposeful, disciplined service.

**26 Therefore I run in such a way as not to run aimlessly;
I box in such a way, as to avoid hitting air;**

9. Obviously, Paul is taking his illustration _____ self-discipline in the physical realm alone into spiritual and moral discipline & even discipline in the non-moral areas of life like the voluntary curtailment of certain liberties in this context (cf. 1 Cor. 8).
10. In fact, in the context all of 1 Corinthians 9 is an explanation—of the last verse of the previous chapter — as he clarifies the importance of limiting our legitimate liberty — for higher goals — like the welfare of others & the glory of _____.
11. We cover these kinds of issues in depth in Basic Discipleship _____ of this series.

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize?

12. At “**the judgment seat of Christ**” when we will all give an account (Romans 14:12), his desire was to gain “**the prize**” and he knew this involved focusing on a target, namely, the building of the church and the defeat of Satan who seeks to _____.
13. As with each and every “**crown**” given—there will be rewards and there will be losses because how we serve Christ in this _____ impacts how we spend eternity.
14. And certainly, we cannot emphasize enough that we are not speaking about _____ we spend eternity, for salvation is a gift, but how we spend eternity for our service.
15. As Christ taught us not to “**store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy**” — even so the “**perishable wreath**” of the athlete is analogous to _____ treasure—as the leaves of a wreath soon turns brittle & self-destructs.
16. In light of this future reality—as Christians we must keep in _____ what is really important in life—and we must discipline ourselves to invest in eternal treasures.
17. The Apostle Paul had been a believer for nearly twenty-five _____ when he states:

27 but I strictly discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified (1 Corinthians 9:27).

18. Sadly, verse twenty-seven has been used through the centuries by certain priests and monastic sects — within Roman Catholicism where they literally whip, beat and torture themselves in a misguided attempt to fulfill this _____.
19. To think that one could help pay for their sins through such self-torture is a _____ of the sufficiency of what Jesus accomplished on the cross (Jn. 19:30; 1 Cor. 6:20).
20. Paul saw himself as both a “**herald**” who “**preached to others**” and as a “**runner**” who was “**in a race**” and so he was concerned lest he get so busy trying to _____ others in the race that he ignore himself and find himself “**disqualified**” (9:27).

21. With that said, it is important that we do ____ confuse the Apostle Paul's statement that he himself "**not be disqualified**" with the "**fear of damnation**" — which would discount all of the New Testament's teaching on our eternal security (Rom. 8:39).
22. Sometimes this word "**disqualified**" (NASV/ESV/NKJV) or "**rejected**" (ASV) or "**disapproved**" (YLT) or "**castaway**" (KJV) — might make the careless reader think that they have ____ their salvation & God has rejected them for heaven.
23. But contextually — the Apostle Paul is not speaking of our "**salvation**" but rather of receiving a "**reward**" — specifically "**an imperishable crown**" (9:25) — and so paraphrastically the NIV84 translates this "**disqualified for the _____**" (9:27).
24. At the Greek games, there was a herald who announced "**the rules**" of the contest, the names of the contestants — and the names and cities of the winners — and he would also announce — the _____ of any of the — "**disqualified**" contestants.
25. All of us at some time or another have driven past a farm & looked out in the _____ or out behind the barn and seen an old rusty plow or tractor—that the farmer does not use anymore, it is a "**castaway**" no longer useful—it has been "**rejected**" (ASV).
26. But that same farmer — has other implements and machinery — that he's _____.
27. There are people like this in every local assembly of believers who _____ were being used of God—but because of their failure to discipline themselves spiritually by not being alert to their real enemy (Eph. 6:12)—they became spiritually soft & rusty.
28. By choices one can make — he or she can relegate themselves to be "**a castaway**" or "**disqualified**" such that God can no longer use them _____ some changes are made.
29. However, the Apostle Paul tells us that he is running for "**the prize**"—as we should be so that we will _____ Jesus say, "**Well done, good and faithful slave**" (Mt. 25:21).
30. It is rather ironic to think that the Apostle Paul by his own lack of self-discipline, might possibly forfeit this "**imperishable crown**" by breaking the Judge's _____, since he had himself instructed others as to how to they might win this **crown**.
31. The Apostle Paul said, "**I strictly discipline my body and make it my slave**" (9:27) because our bodies do not tell us what to do, we _____ our bodies what to do.
32. My spirit gives directions to my soul, and my soul gives directions to my body and if I do not want to be shelved by God then there are daily decisions that I must _____.
33. Believers who consistently do this ____ receive '**the imperishable crown**' from Jesus.