

Session Teaching Number 6 Module C

Principles for Living to receive your full Inheritance/Blessings

Learning Objectives:

- God's criteria for reward or compensation in the kingdom of heaven.
- How does the Lord determine faithfulness?
- A portrait of an obedient life that God rewards.
- The nature of eternal rewards. The Crowns of the New Testament.
- What kind of rewards will be distributed at the Judgment Seat?
- Will believers experience shame, grief or remorse at the Judgment Seat?
- How should the reality of the Judgment Seat affect our actions?



At the bema our works will be the outward evidences of the reality of our walk with God.

Going for the Gold pg 37

From Genesis through Revelation, the concept of rewards is thematic in our relationship to God. Over [fifty](#) times in the New Testament this truth is discussed. We were created by God with a reward motivation as an integral part of our make-up. He created us to respond to reward – temporally and eternally! Jesus used numerous parables and teachings to emphasize the truth of rewards in Heaven.

Each believer is responsible for his own reward in Heaven; that is, how we live our lives (our “works”). Our choices will appreciably affect the quality of our eternity. 2John 8 “Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully”.

Typically we are paid by our employer based on three factors:

- The amount of time worked.
- Our ability, training or credentials.
- Our productivity.

It is interesting to note that those factors are the subjects of three parables taught by Jesus and were used by Him to teach His standard for reward and compensation which is quite different than the world's way. In each of the parables He reaches the same conclusion:



Reward in the kingdom of Heaven is based primarily upon faithfulness to [opportunity](#).

- **The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16) TIME:**



The landowner hired people to do work at various times of the day for an agreed level of pay. He paid them all the same wage. The ones who worked longer thought this unfair and were envious. Jesus response: (Mt 20:15) **“Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous? Thus the last shall be first, and the first last.”**

Observations: The rewards that we are storing up in heaven are not proportional to the total amount of time we practiced the Christian life. This is an issue of an all knowing God’s providence and grace and not for us to judge from our very limited perspective. Reward in the kingdom of heaven is not necessarily based on the amount of time spent in service to God but rather on how the time (opportunity given by God’s grace) is invested. For example: many Christians have been walking with the Lord Jesus for a long time. For many, Christian life has seemed to have lost its dynamic edge. Given the opportunity (more time) to be first they are misappropriating the resource of time and thus moving in the direction of being last.

- **The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) ABILITY:**



A man entrusts his own slaves, one with 5 talents, to another 2, and to another 1; to each according to their own ability. The first two doubled their talents; the last buried his in the ground. The master rewarded the first two the same: “Well done, good and faithful servant, I will put you in charge of many things.” To the one who produced nothing, the master took away his talent and gave it to the one with ten.

“For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have will be taken away and cast out that slave into the outer darkness.....” (Matthew 25:26-30)

Observations: Jesus shows that different people are gifted differently and they have different opportunities and responsibilities. Reward payment is not dependent upon abilities but upon what is faithfully done with those abilities. Faithfulness reflects an attitude that we will be held accountable before the Lord for our disobedience or obedience. Two men, unequally talented, were equally faithful and equally rewarded. God expects a return on what He has given us!



- **The Parable of the Minas (Luke 19:11-27) PRODUCTIVITY:**

This is similar to the Parable of the Talents; but here there is common opportunity created by equal distribution. Ten servants are given 1 mina each; the first one gained 10 more minas, the second 5 more and the third none. The firsts two where rewarded with charge over cities in proportion to the return they produced with what they were given. The third servant lost his reward.

Observations: In this parable we see common opportunity created by equal distribution. Rewards and future responsibilities are determined by how well we have used what God has given us and how large a percentage of return God receives on His investment. His evaluation for our just reward will be based on a whole array of standards as revealed in the remaining part of this module.



In Summary: We have found that God’s strategy is quite the opposite of the worlds in terms of rewarding an individual for what he accomplishes. In the first parable we noted time invested, in the second ability of the individual, and in the third the productivity of the person. In each parable, however, the conclusion is the same: *Reward in the Kingdom of Heaven is based to a large extent upon faithfulness to opportunity (i.e. obedience), not Time, Talent or Treasure; the greater the faithfulness, the greater the reward.* Note: Everyone regardless of circumstance or ability has an equal opportunity to please God thru obedience and receive His “Well done, good and faithful servant (Mt. 25:21) and receive the blessings that go with that statement. Yes, we will be held accountable for our choices.

➤ How Does the Lord Determine Faithfulness?

1. **Stewardship:** There are certain resources that God allocates each individual believer in this life. They differ for each person (time, money, possessions, health, opportunities, circumstances, relationships, and the area one lives). Because each person’s allotment is different, God says, **“I’m not going to judge you on the basis of what I’ve given you, but rather on the basis of what you do with what I have given you. It’s how you steward the resources that I have entrusted to your care that will form the basis upon which I will call you to account.”**
2. **Obedience to God’s Commands:** Are you walking in obedience to the light that God has shown you? Are you doing what you know God would have you do or do you treat the commandments as suggestions or those they are negotiable? How we handle God’s word with all of its commandments (how to love) will affect your reward.
3. **Circumstances:** Some will suffer great pain, others great poverty, some persecution for their faith, or spends years in prison, etc. **It is not the “hand” that God has dealt us that will be the determining factor on Judgment Day, but rather how we “play the hand”.**
4. **The Great Commission:** God is in the people business. As we invest in the lives of people in the two strategic areas of evangelism and discipleship (edification) with our God given gifts, opportunities and abilities, then we can look forward to our reward in the Kingdom of Heaven. **The choice is yours to make; the Great Commission or the Great Omission.** Remember the Great Commission is the means to fulfilling the Greatest Commandment which is to love.

Three tests that would determine if a work would be burned up or endure like gold (from 1 Cor. 3:13-15 as discussed in module B point #2 pages 4-5):

1. **The Test of Relationship:** John 15:5 **“apart from me you can do nothing.” (That is, that which is eternally rewardable).** The Key to everlasting treasure, which is earned based on faith, flows from our intimacy with God. In Revelation Jesus commended them for their many good works, but was grieved because they had not kept their love for Him alive. Rev 2:2-4 **“ I know your works, your labor, your patience never the less I have this against you, that you have left your first love”.** **GOOD – GOD = 0**

2. **The Test of Motive:** Jesus said, “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven (Matthew 6:1). What should be our motive? To serve God and bring Him glory. Our most “religious” action is worthless if our motive is to build up our own egos or reputation. (Isaiah 64:6)

3. **The Test of Love:** True good works are always focused on sincerely trying to improve the well-being of another. In Paul’s famous passage on love, he pointed out that without love good deeds will not benefit the doer: “though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing “ (1 Corinthians 13:3).



Jesus will bring no criterion to the judgment that He hasn’t clearly revealed in Scripture and empowered us to meet by His Spirit (2 Peter 1:2-4).
Remember the two pillars Jachin and Boaz ---By His Counsel and By His Strength.

➤ **A Portrait of an Obedient Life that God Rewards:** (taken from “A Life God Rewards”)

1. God will reward you for Seeking Him through spiritual acts such as fasting and praying (Matthew 6:6; Hebrews 11:6).
2. God will reward you for Submitting to your employer as a faithful steward (Mt. 24:45-47; Eph. 6:8; Col. 3:22-24).
3. God will reward you for Self-denial in His service (Matthew 16:24-27).
4. God will reward you for Serving those in need in His name (Mark 9:14).
5. God will reward you for Suffering for His name and reputation (Luke 6:22-23).
6. God will reward you for Sacrifices you make for Him (Luke 6:35). In fact, Jesus said that every person who sacrifices to follow Him will be rewarded a hundredfold (Matthew 19:29)!
7. God will reward you for Sharing of your time, talent, and treasure to further His kingdom (Matthew 6:3-4; 1 Timothy 6:18-19).

See also in the resource guide:

- “Divine Principles for Rewarding the Saints”
- “Ten Principles of Wise Spiritual Investment
- “Reward Principals” and “Treasure Principle Keys”



Note: Blessings/Rewards are promised to those who fear God; they do not come to us because we fear God. They come to us because of the merit of Christ. He is the one who fully delighted in the fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:3), and only He has ever perfectly feared God. Our fear of the Lord is always imperfect and inadequate. It could never, on its own merit, earn one iota of the blessings God has promised to those who fear Him. For as many as are the promises of God, they all find their Yes [answer] in Him [Christ]. (2 Corinthians 1:20).

So we do not fear God in order to earn His promised blessings. We fear Him because of who He is and what He has done for us. And then, out of the riches of His own grace in Christ, He fulfills His promises to those who fear Him. from the Joy of Fearing God



Note: The doctrine of rewards is especially motivating when the going gets tough or when we have a choice to make about putting our self in harm's way for the sake of the kingdom (i.e. we all face various trials, tribulations, persecutions, and the temptation to get angry with God when we experience hardship). Example: I do not want to share my faith to a fellow associates because down deep I'm afraid that they may reject me or even worse persecute me. **The book of Hebrews was written to Christian Jews who were under great persecution, who were wavering in their faith and considering falling away. Hebrews issues five warnings to not fall away but also offers much encouragement and hope to all of us to "hang in there".** The reward doctrine was given as an encouragement for us to lay down our lives in the face of trouble.

View video clip (Facing the Giants): Observe: God is our coach (counselor) and best motivator, He asks us to live by faith. Being a follower of Christ is hard work but has great reward (they won!).

➤ The Nature of the Rewards

What are they and how are they described in Scripture? They are described in terms of generalities. What we know about rewards is given in terms that are more general than specific. These are:

- (1) The Promise of Crowns.** This seems to be used as a symbol of victory, authority, and responsibility. (Jas. 1:12; 1 Pet. 5:4; 1 Cor. 9:25; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Thess. 2:19; Rev. 2:10; 3:11)
- (2) The Promise of Heavenly Treasure** (Matt. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:4). Stresses their eternal value and security.
- (3) The Promise of Accolades or Commendations.** This is seen in those passages where a reward is administered in the form of something like "well done good and faithful servant ..." (cf. Matt. 25:21; Lk. 19:17; 1 Cor. 4:5b).
- (4) The Promises to Overcomers.** These could refer to special blessing of rewards to those believers who overcame special trials and tests rather than a general promise to all believers. See Rev. 2:7; 2:11, 17, 26.

(5) The Promise of Special Responsibilities and Authority of the Lord's Possessions

(compare Matt. 19:28; 24:45-47; 25:21, 23; Lk. 19:17-19; 22:29-30; Rev. 2:26).

➤ The Crowns of the New Testament

The words used for crowns:

(1) **Stephanos.** This was the victor's crown, the wreath given to the victorious athlete before the judge at the *Bema*. It is the word used of the crowns promised to believers for faithfulness in the Christian life.

(2) **Diadem.** This was the royal crown, the crown of a king. It is used when speaking of the seven diadems of the Beast in Revelation 12:3 and 13:1. But also to stress that Christ is King of Kings, this word is also used of the many diadems the Lord will wear at His return (Rev. 19:12).



The Principle: The Lord Jesus is the victor; our victory is really His victory which is appropriated by faith. Crowns are given as rewards for faithfulness to opportunity as we appropriate God's grace and Christ's victory in the Christian life. They remind us of our responsibility to abide in the vine.

The Crowns and their significance:

(1) **The Crown of Thorns** (Matt. 27:29; Mk. 15:17; Jn. 19:2, 5). Speaks of Christ's work on the cross and stands for His victory over sin, satan, and death.



(2) **The Incorruptible Crown** (1 Cor. 9:25). Two things: (a) This describes all the crowns. It contrasts our crowns with the temporal and temporary treasure of this life. (b) It is also a special crown given for faithfulness in running the race and exercising self-control in order to serve the Lord and finish the race.



(3) **The Crown of Exultation or Rejoicing** (1 Thess. 2:19-20; Phil. 4:1). This crown is a reward given for witnessing, follow-up, and ministry to others. In one sense, the Thessalonians will be Paul's Crown. Because of their presence at the *Bema* in heaven there will be rejoicing or exultation for all eternity.

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy. NASB95

What did Paul mean by this? In view of his use of "crown" (*stephanos*, the victor's wreath) here and in other places Paul may have in mind a personal crown or reward given to Him because of his witness to the Thessalonians. Though, in this passage the Apostle does not say he would receive a crown, this is suggested, if not here certainly in other passages.



(4) The Crown of Life (Jam. 1:12; Rev. 2:10). This crown is given for enduring testings (trials) and temptation. The crown is not eternal life which is a gift through faith alone in Christ alone (Jn. 4:10; Rom. 3:24; 5:15-17; 6:23; Eph. 2:8), but a reward for enduring trials and overcoming temptation.



(5) The Crown of Righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8). This crown is a reward given for faithfulness to use our gifts and opportunities in the service of the Lord and for loving His appearing. Note: these two things go together. To love His appearing is to live in the light of it.



(6) The Crown of Glory (1 Pet. 5:4). This crown is a reward promised to church Elders for faithfulness in the discharge of their responsibilities in shepherding the people.

(7) The Casting of Crowns (Rev. 4:10, 11). Because Christ alone is worthy and because we can only be fruitful when we abide in Him allowing His life to fill ours, we will all continually cast our crowns before Him in recognition that all we have done is by His grace.

(8) The Many Crowns or Diadems (Rev. 19:12). The crowns of royalty which stand for Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords who alone has the right to rule and judge the world.

➤ **What kinds of rewards will be given at the Judgment Seat (Bema) of Christ?**



Power (Luke 19:15-19), possessions (Matthew 19:21), and pleasures (Psalm 16:11). Jesus promises that those who sacrifice on earth will receive “a hundred times as much” in heaven (Mt. 19:29). That’s 10,000% -- an impressive return indeed! In addition to:

- A. Crowns (Jas. 1:12; 1 Pet. 5:4; 1 Cor. 9:25; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Thess. 2:19; Rev. 2:10; 3:11)
- B. Reigning with Christ in the Kingdom (2 Tim. 2:12; Matt. 19:28-30; Luke 22:28-30; Rev. 20:4-6; Rev. 2:26-27; Rev. 3:21; Luke 19:11-27)
- C. Special positions of service and authority in the Kingdom (Luke 19:11-27)
- D. Praise from God (1 Cor. 4:5)
- E. White robes (Rev. 3:4)
- F. Special name (Rev. 3:12)
- G. Special stone with personal name known only to you (Rev. 2:17)
- H. Special food in the Kingdom: hidden manna (Rev. 2:17)
- I. Right to eat from the tree of life (Rev. 2:7)
- J. Prophet’s reward (Matt. 10:41)
- K. Righteous man’s reward (Matt. 10:41)
- L. Intimate level of love from God (John 14:21)
- M. Being confessed by Christ before God in heaven (Matt. 10:32)
- N. Unspecified inheritance in the Kingdom (Heb. 1:14; 6:11; 9:15; Col. 3:24; 1 Pet. 3:9; Rev. 21:7; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Eph. 5:3-5; Jas. 2:5)
- O. Special honor from God (John 12:26)

➤ Will believers experience shame, grief, and remorse at the Bema?

If so, how do you reconcile this with passages like Revelation 7:17, “God shall wipe away every tear from their eye? no more morning, crying, or pain..... (Rev 21:4)



1 John 2:28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. NASB95

1 Peter 4:16-17 but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? NASB95

This verse undoubtedly refers to the *Bema* and shows there will be both boldness as a result of abiding, and shame before the Lord as a result of failing to abide. “And not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming (presence).” Please note several things here. (a) The verb is what we call in Greek an aorist subjunctive, and with the basic meaning of this verb, the grammar points to a future act, but not a continuous state. This in no way suggests a permanent condition. (b) The voice of the verb is passive. The subject receives the action, that is, he is made to feel shame. But how?

The believer who fails to abide, experiences shame by the revelatory nature of Christ’s presence at the *Bema*. This is caused by the realization of what his own failure and sin has cost him in terms of the loss of rewards and loss of glory to the Lord. But this will only be momentary or short-lived at best in view of passages like Revelation 7:17; 21:4 and Isaiah 56:17.

Shame yes, punishment no. The loss of rewards is no more a punishment than when a student turns in a worthless assignment and receives an F or a D. His poor work results in a just grade or recompense. This is what his work deserves. There is a sign posted in a famous seminary that reads, “Salvation is by grace ... Graduation is by works.”

The judgment seat of Christ might be compared to a commencement ceremony. At graduation there is some measure of disappointment and remorse that one did not do better and work harder. However, at such an event the overwhelming emotion is joy, not remorse. The graduates do not leave the auditorium weeping because they did not earn better grades. Rather, they are thankful that they have been graduated, and they are grateful for what they did achieve. To overdo the sorrow aspect of the judgment seat of Christ is to make heaven hell. To under do the sorrow aspect is to make faithfulness to opportunity inconsequential.

➤ **So then, how should the reality of the Judgment Seat of Christ affect the believer's actions during their life on earth?**

A. The prospect of eternal rewards motivates believers to do the very things that will be rewarded. (Rev. 22:12; 2 John 8; Col. 3:23-24)

B. The prospect of eternal rewards encourages believers to have a heavenly perspective. (Matt. 6:19-21; Col. 3:1-4; Phil. 3:20-21) i.e. eternal vs. temporal.

C. The prospect of eternal rewards answers the God given natural desire within believers to earn a wage based on works. (1 Cor. 3:8; 2 John 8; Col. 3:23-24; Matt. 16:27)

D. The prospect of eternal rewards fills in the gap created by the simplistic "heaven/hell" view of theology, which is so common in evangelical circles.



Remember: "Because Jesus Himself is ultimately the source of all that is good in your life, He is glorified by every honor He bestows on you." We are His workmanship and as a proud father He will with exceeding joy bestow upon you imperishable symbols of His grace and your faithfulness. So don't forfeit another day; as the palmist said "teach them to number their days" (PS. 90:12). Go for Jesus ---- Go for the Gold!



"I thought God brought me here to learn more on eternal rewards. But I was wrong. He brought me here to change my soul – I'm leaving a changed person."

(This is the goal of this Session and the fruit of your diligent study and reflection)

Watch Video clip "I Can Only Imagine" by Mercy Me



In your quite time today and in the days to come please pray and ask the Lord about opportunities that you have missed also those that are before you now and those to come. Write down what you hear Him say. Then "Go"

REMEMBER: 1 Cor. 8:1 “Knowledge puffs up but love builds up”. Studying the Bible is important, but the goal is never knowledge for the sake of knowledge. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ means that we learn from Him, fellowship with Him, and obey everything He commands us. Love is the goal thru obedient holy living.

APPLICATION NEXT STEPS: As you review this session in your own personal quiet time, with your POD mates and others, ask yourself; What is God saying to me? and How am I going to respond? Begin now to look for opportunities to start sharing what you have learned with others. That is disciple making. Take advantage of the transformative power of prayer, journaling, writing out personal application/next steps, and memorizing key scriptures. Also, be sure to read the articles and one or more of the books mentioned in the resource guide at the end of each of the seven sessions.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS AND MY PERSONAL APPLICATION/NEXT STEPS:

Scripture I will commit to memorize from this session:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.