

**SPIRIT OF LIFE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL  
BIBLE SCHOOL SECOND EDITION  
SESSION 31: REWARDS**

Rewards are called “Crowns” in the New Testament. We will be studying the Crown of Life, the Crown Incorruptible, the Crown of Rejoicing, the Crown of Righteousness, and the Crown of Glory.

There is a vast difference in the doctrine of salvation for the lost, and the doctrine of rewards for the saved.

Salvation is **“the gift of God: not of works”** (Ephesians 2:8-9). Salvation is received by faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:36). Rewards are according to the works of the believer (Matt. 16:27).

A most revealing scripture on rewards is found in I Cor. 3:8-15.

**First** every believer will be rewarded **“according to his own labor”** (I Cor. 3:8). We do not labor for salvation.

**Second**, **“we are labourers together with God”** (I Cor. 3:9) – not for salvation, but for rewards.

**Third**, the believer is to **build** on the Lord Jesus Christ, the only foundation (I Cor. 3:11).

**Fourth**, the believer has a choice of two kinds of building materials:

- A. **“gold, silver, precious stones”** – (I Cor. 3:12) this is building with eternal materials.
- B. or we can choose **“wood, hay, stubble”** – this is building with temporal materials (I Cor. 3:12, and II Cor. 4:18).

The believer who builds on Christ with eternal materials, “gold, silver, precious stones,” shall receive a reward. Those who build on Christ with temporal materials, “wood, hay, stubble,” will receive no reward. The “wood, hay, stubble” works will be destroyed at the “judgment seat of Christ,” and the believer will suffer loss – not the loss of salvation, but the loss of eternal reward.

Some believers will be ashamed at the **“judgment seat of Christ”** (I John 2:28) – ashamed of their works of **“wood, hay, stubble.”**

## THE CROWN OF LIFE



**James 1:12** *“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*”

This reward could be called **the lover’s crown**. Upon examination of the above verse, we discover the believer finds strength to overcome temptation and endure trials, through the love of God. Paul said in **Romans 5:3** *“we glory in tribulations also.”*

The question is: do we today glory in tribulations? We can, only if the *“love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit”* (Rom. 5:3-5). Without the love of God in the heart of the believer, trials can cause him to become bitter and critical and lose the “crown of life.”

All believers have **eternal life** (John 3:15, 16), but not all believers will be rewarded with the **“crown of life.”** This crown will be given to those who are *“faithful unto death”* (Rev. 2:10).

To receive the “crown of life,” the believer must love the Lord more than his own life. *“Whosoever shall save his life (live for self) shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s (live for Christ at all cost) the same shall save it”* (Mark 8:35). This reward will be given to those who live for Christ, and endure temptations, in the power of the love of God (I Cor. 10:13).

A man once sat at the bedside of a dying friend. As they talked of his home-going, tears filled the dying man’s eyes. Being young in the Lord the man thought his friend was afraid of dying, and he attempted to speak words of encouragement to him. He said, “I am not afraid to die; I am ashamed to die.” He went on to say that Christ was his Saviour, but he had lived for self, and now had to meet the Lord Jesus Christ empty-handed. His life loomed up before him, as “wood, hay, stubble.” He was “saved so as by fire”.

## THE CROWN INCORRUPTIBLE



**I COR. 9:24-25** *“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.”*

Paul makes the use of the Greek games to illustrate the spiritual race of the believer. They ran to win a “corruptible crown”; but we run to receive an “incorruptible” crown. No young man could contend in the games unless he was a Greek citizen, born of Greek parents. No unsaved person can participate in the services of the Lord for rewards; only the born of God are eligible (John 3:8).

Just as the athlete must deny himself many gratifications of the body, so the believer must **“keep under his body, and bring it unto subjection”** (I Cor. 9:27) or he will become a **“castaway.”** He will not lose his salvation but lose the “incorruptible crown.”

The Greek games had hard and fast rules for all participants. The New Testament contains the rules for believers who would enter the spiritual race to win the “incorruptible crown.”

1. The believer must deny self of anything that would weigh him down and hold him back (Heb. 12:1)
2. The believer must keep his eyes fixed on Christ, and not look to the right or the left (Heb. 12:2).
3. The believer must find his strength in the Lord (Eph. 6:10-18).
4. The believer must place his all upon the altar of the Lord (Rom. 12:1,2).
5. The believer must, by faith, refuse anything that would impede spiritual progress (Heb. 11:24-29).

Do not be a spiritual spectator. Enter the race and run to win the “incorruptible crown”.

### **THE CROWN OF REJOICING**



I Thess. 2:19: **“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?”**

The “crown of rejoicing” is the soul winner’s crown. The greatest work you are privileged to do for the Lord is to bring others to a saving knowledge of Christ as personal Savior. The degree of your joy in heaven will be determined by the souls you have had a part in bringing to Christ. Paul tells the Thessalonian believers that they are his **“hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing”** now and when Jesus comes.

1. It is wise to win souls to Christ (**Proverbs 11:30**)
2. It is a work against sin to win souls to Christ (**James 5:20**).
3. It is a cause for joy in heaven to win souls to Christ (**Luke 15:10**).
4. Every soul winner will shine as the stars forever (**Daniel 12:3**).

### How you can win souls to Christ:

**1. Witness with your life;** live that others may see Christ in you (**II Cor. 3:2 and Gal. 2:20**).

**2. Witness with your mouth,** trusting the Holy Spirit to give power to the spoken word (**Acts 1:8**).

**3. Witness by tithes and offerings** that others may preach Christ and you will have *“fruit (reward) that may abound to your account”* (**Phil. 4:15-17 and II Cor. 9:6**).

God has promised that your labor will not be in vain in the Lord (**I Cor. 15:58**). The soul winner will not rejoice alone – all of heaven will rejoice with him when he receives the “crown of rejoicing” (**John 4:36**).

### THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS



**II Timothy 4:8, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”**

The “crown of righteousness” is a reward, and it is not to be confused with the “righteousness of God” which the believer receives when he becomes a Christian; for at that time, the believer is “made the righteousness of God in Him.” (**II Cor. 5:21**). This saving righteousness is a gift to be accepted by the lost. The “Crown of Righteousness” is a reward to be earned by the saved. If the believer looks for and loves the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ, it will affect his whole life. Look at the dynamic impact this truth had on the life of the Apostle Paul; He could say:

1. ***“I have fought a good fight”*** (II Timothy 4:7 and I Cor. 15:32). He fought a spiritual battle throughout his Christian life and won. He never surrendered to the enemies of righteousness (Eph. 6:12).
2. ***“I have finished my course.”*** He had a course to travel, and he did not detour the hard places; neither did he look back (Luke 9:61-62). He finished his course with his eyes fixed on Christ (Phil 1:6).
3. ***“I have kept the faith.”*** He preached all the “counsel of God” – never betraying any of the great doctrines (Acts 20:24-31) the Apostle looked ahead to the “Judgment seat of Christ” where the “Crown of Righteousness” will be given to those who “love his appearing.” How important it is for the believer to look with a heart of love for the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that he may receive the “crown of righteousness”.

### **THE CROWN OF GLORY**



The crown of glory is a special reward for the faithful, obedient God-called pastor. They will receive this reward when the ***“chief Shepherd shall appear”*** (I Peter 5:4). It is eternal; ***“it fadeth not away.”*** Every believer may share in the pastor’s “crown of glory.” He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s “reward.” (Matt. 10:41). Support your faithful, God-called pastor by praying for them and encouraging them in the work of the Lord. Undergird their ministry with God’s tithes and your offerings (Malachi 3:10), giving freely of your time to the service of the Lord; and God will reward you for supporting their chosen servant by allowing you to share in your pastor’s reward. The pastor will earn this “crown of glory: by:

1. **Feeding the church.** They are to proclaim the Word of God without fear or favor, and when necessary, they will ***“reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.”*** (II Timothy 4:2-5).
2. **Taking the spiritual oversight of the church.** The pastor is responsible to God for the message preached to their people. No pastor should preach to please the people; they are to please their Lord (Gal. 1:10).
3. **Being an example to the church.** They are not to serve for the reward of money. Yet the church is responsible to care for their every material need (I Timothy 5:18). They are to be a spiritual leader, and not a dictator. They are to walk with God by faith. ***“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”***