

Receive a Full Reward

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy [Spirit]” (Titus 3:5).

Whenever the principle of spiritual rewards is mentioned, some Christians immediately think of a program of works. They think that if they work hard, volunteer enough of their time, and give enough of their money, there will be a payback.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Our reward, as with our salvation, is according to God’s grace, based upon God’s mercy. At the point of our salvation, He washed us, regenerated us, and renewed us. We are now equipped to function as His representatives in the neighborhoods, cities, and countries of this world.

This booklet will show that to receive a full spiritual reward is simply a matter of responding to the Word of God as it is preached in the

local church and participating as a “member in particular” in the Body of Christ.

Chapter One

HEEDING THE WORDS
OF WISDOM

“The words of a wise man’s mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.

“The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness.

“A fool also is full of words: a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell him?” (Ecclesiastes 10:12-14).

“And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.

“The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.

“The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies,

which are given from one shepherd" (Ecclesiastes 12:9-11).

The church is run as any well run organization. In our church organization, we have plurality of administration. This means that elders and associate pastors and staff members express their opinions and ideas; however, the overseeing pastor, like the CEO of a company, has veto rights. He is accountable to God and to the assembly God has given him. He preaches the Word in season and out of season, and he makes the final decisions that affect the organization. This is the practice of many churches that operate under many different denominational banners.

The Need for an Overseer

The important thing to understand here is that every local assembly must have an overseeing pastor, a chief executive. The pastor-teacher who God calls you to sit under is given by God (Ephesians 4:11). A pastor-teacher is never to invade your privacy. He instructs and guides according to categorical doctrine from the Word of God.

If a godly person is called by God to leave this church and attend another church, then I

wish him well and write a beautiful letter. Each of us stands or falls before God. It is not wrong to leave a church if God told you to leave it. It is very, very wrong, however, to malign and criticize and accuse whatever church that you might have left.

Spiritual Authority in Instruction

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” (1 John 2:18-19).

I can well imagine that people gossiped about the apostle John for making such statements because he was very old when he said these things. Still, he was an apostle and carried his authority from God.

What I want to focus on is the principle of a full reward. This is why it is important to be in the right local assembly. A biblical local church has a pastor who lives clean and who preaches the whole counsel of God. The people in his

church should be involved in soul-winning—seeking and saving the lost—beginning at home but with a vision for world missions.

We have that involvement within our local church, along with the Bible college and three Christian day schools. Our missionaries have made an impact in 185 countries. To mention these things is not arrogant; rather, it is boasting in what the Lord has done. It is not a disgrace to rejoice over things that God has given us.

Everyone who participates in a godly ministry that serves God and others with the Gospel will share in the rewards God will bestow upon that godly ministry in eternity.

Chapter Two

THE PRINCIPLE OF ACCUMULATION

“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward” (2 John 8).

People who are in heaven right now have yet to receive their full rewards. Jesus is going to bring those rewards with Him according to Revelation 22:12: “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” There is a good reason for this: Rewards cannot be given until all the books are closed.

My first wife, who died from leukemia, is awaiting her full reward. She led me to Christ. And even though she is experiencing the fullness of joy in heaven, she cannot receive her rewards because those rewards are tied to what God has done in my life and in the lives God has touched through me. She will receive rewards based upon the results of my life and the results

of the lives of the people who have served with me.

A very wealthy man gave a Bible college a large sum of money to clear its debts. That man's full reward for the gift will not be realized until the last student from the last graduating class of that school has completed his course.

He started the company and hired a couple of salesmen, and he earned a profit from what their sales brought in. Those salesmen brought in other salesmen, and they in turn earned a percentage from what the new salesmen sold, and so on. According to the Bible, this is how our rewards accumulate.

Matthew 10:41 explains this principle: "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward." Sadly, this doctrine is not emphasized enough.

The Rewards Test

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

"Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay,

stubble;

“Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.

“If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire” (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

Those who understand this truth recognize that leaving a fruitful church and not going on with God is a dangerous move. Can you imagine a person who knows this truth allowing some petty problem to drive him away from his church and away from God? At the Bema Seat judgment, his efforts as a Christian will be revealed as wood (human good, works of the flesh), hay (double-minded in the energy of the flesh), and stubble (knowledge of the truth that was never implemented). Though he is saved and will have a degree of happiness forever, he will receive no rewards to multiply his joy.

Relaying the Word

The two-mile relay is an Olympic team event. The first runner goes a half-mile, then hands the

baton to the second man. A half-mile later, he passes it to the third man who finishes his part and gives it to the anchorman who runs to the finish line. What do the first three runners do? Stop and go off for a soda? No, they stay and cheer on the next runner, because what he does will determine their reward of winning the race.

Roland Lord was my first pastor. He was a good man and I got my start under him. He will receive rewards for what God has done in my life, as will several others who encouraged me and preached the Word to me when I was young.

Degrees of Judgment

As much as the Bible speaks of degrees of happiness in heaven, it also speaks of degrees of punishment in hell. That is, those who perpetuated evil will be punished according to the number of people touched by their evil. For instance, the man who first sold drugs (assuming he didn't get saved at some point afterward) is awaiting the determination of his full judgment for all the lives ruined by his product.

The same thing goes for those in the world of entertainment who have promoted all the filthiness and suggestiveness sent out on TV air-

waves and in the movies. These people will show anything and everything to make money. Their judgment in hell will be determined only after it is revealed how many teenagers were infected by the seductive worldliness they distributed.

An unsaved father cannot have his punishment in hell determined while he still has children on the earth. That father's full punishment will have to wait until the books are opened before the Lord Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment for unbelievers. Of course, we know that everyone who has reached the age of accountability is responsible for his own decision to receive or reject Christ (Deuteronomy 24:16). Still, the degrees of punishment will vary according to whether or not he contributed to turning his children away from knowing God.

Matthew 25:30 refers to people being cast into "outer darkness, where there is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth." This reveals that there are degrees of darkness. The people who are in hell right now are suffering, but they have no idea as to the extent of their suffering. They will get a full judgment for what they have wrought on earth.

Chapter Three

YOUR PLACE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

The more faithful you are to church attendance, the more full will be your reward. Church attendance should be a priority, because Christ is the head of the Church and the local body is a revelation of the fullness of Christ on the earth (Ephesians 1:22-23). The more faithful you are to church, the more you will hear the Word of God and grow with God, and as a result, the more you will be able to respond with faith obedience. In Hebrews 10:25, about assembling together, God says, "Do it more." If you gather more often with other believers, then you will get more rewards. It is just that simple.

It is so important that every Christian attend a church that has the right pastor-teacher for him. That pastor must preach categorical doctrine that emphasizes the Finished Work of Jesus Christ. It must be a grace, mercy, and love min-

istry—one that practices God’s great commandment to love souls by seeking and saving the lost in its Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and in the uttermost parts of the earth.

Privacy Honored

The pastor must also be one who honors each person’s believer-priesthood. He must respect privacy and the individual’s right to walk before God. Once he has prayerfully studied and preached the Word on a given subject, the pastor must let each one live unto God.

Even in cases where immorality or other serious issues are brought before him in the table of organization, the pastor must confront the guilty party alone. If the pastor does not do it according to what the Word says (Matthew 18:15-17), he cannot confront anyone, though they may be living in sin. Again, each Christian stands or falls before God. But the church does have the right to exercise discipline.

Rebound and Recovery

It is also important to understand that failure never causes us to lose rewards. We only lose rewards when we refuse to rebound from failure. I could fail—God forbid—for an entire

year and not lose a reward, provided I rebounded. My rewards would remain if I were to recognize and rebound from my weakness and was not arrogant or proud about it.

Contributing to a Christian's reward are the messages he receives in faith obedience. Picture it: Two people can sit in the same church. One just appreciates the Word but is not transformed by it. He loses interest, allows his mind to wander, and becomes spiritually weary. The other person receives the Word, applies it, and becomes conformed to the image of Christ. He lives according to the value system of God's Word. He displays a willingness to surrender all, for the cause of Christ. As a result, he will experience the truth of Mark 10:29-30:

"And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

"But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."

CONCLUSION

I would that every church in America preached about the full reward. I would that every pastor understood it. It is such a thrill to know what awaits us because of being faithful to God and to a godly local assembly.

My precious mother is in heaven right now. She was such a sweetheart. Because she was saved late in her life, she never had time to be a soul-winner. Yet, by God's grace, everything that I have done through grace and mercy, and everything that people have done with me shall be credited to her. This little woman will receive quite a reward at the Bema Seat.

And, I can just imagine what she will say to me after Jesus rewards her: "Thank God you preached, son. Thank God, you preached."