

# PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

*For this reason, I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)*

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## Christian Reward

### Introduction

Christian reward is not salvation, which is a free gift of the Lord. No one earns salvation; we are saved by grace. Let's be clear that this lesson is not talking about salvation at all, in any form. However, what we do in this life is intricately involved in our rewards in the next life. Some have assumed that we are all the same after the resurrection. They have fostered the picture of floating around on clouds playing harps and singing to God. This is simply not true. This picture has no biblical foundation.

### In the Resurrection

This is what Paul said about our appearance after the resurrection:

1 Corinthians 15:41-42 NASB

(41) There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

(42) So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body;

In the natural there are differing levels of brightness (glory) of the heavenly bodies. The brightness of the moon differs from the brightness of the sun. The stars all have different levels of brightness. Just as these differ in the natural so is the resurrection of the dead. There are different levels of glory (brightness) among those resurrected. Why would this be? The Scriptures tell us that God does not show partiality [Acts 10:34]. Then the difference must involve something that we do that results in greater rewards that allow us to shine brighter.

Paul used the example of an athlete running a race in order to win the prize.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NASB

(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. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

(26) Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;

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

Paul says that many run the race but only one wins the prize. There is only one winner in the race. (This is obviously not talking about salvation.) The athlete trains himself with discipline in order to win. He has a goal, a definite objective toward which he is aiming. Paul then says that he disciplines himself just like an athlete in order to run the race. He doesn't want to be disqualified. (Again, there is no way that Paul is referring to his salvation.) Paul doesn't want to lose his reward. A runner is disqualified in a race if he doesn't run by the rules or if he is so undisciplined that he can't endure.

Revelation makes it very clear that our reward has to do with what we have done.

Revelation 22:12 NASB

(12) "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."

Revelation also makes it clear the time of our reward. It is at the time when the dead are to be judged.

Revelation 11:18 NASB

(18) "And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."

## Reward Scriptures

2 John 1:8 NASB

(8) Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.

Colossians 3:23-24 NASB

(23) Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,

(24) knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

1 Corinthians 9:17 NASB

(17) For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 NASB

(12) Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood,

hay, straw,

(13) each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

(14) If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.

(15) If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

1 Corinthians 3:8 NASB

(8) Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

Luke 6:35 NASB

(35) "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.

Matthew 10:41 NASB

(41) "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

## End Result

Our salvation is completely by grace through the work of Jesus. Our reward is dependent upon our work—what we do. However, the work that we do is not by our choice but has been fore-ordained by God.

Ephesians 2:10 NASB

(10) For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

We were created to do the works that God prepared for us beforehand. It would seem to me then that how much of our prepared works we complete according to the plan and purpose of the Lord determines our level of reward.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 NASB

(7) I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;

(8) in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Paul did not say that he had won every battle but that he had **fought the fight**.

Paul did not say that he had won the race but that he had **finished the course**.

Paul did not say that he was the champion of the faith but that he **kept the faith**.

That is our example. In our walk with the Lord we must *fight*, *finish*, and *keep*. Our reward

depends upon it.

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