

THE FIVE CROWNS: UNDERSTANDING THE LOVE LANGUAGE OF GOD

5.12.19

1 Corinthians 3:14 NASB If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.

Ephesians 6:7-8 NLT Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. ⁸ Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free.

I. The Sacred Idea of Reward

A. It is based upon love.

1. "Do you love me, Peter? Then tend my sheep." **John 21:17 NASB**
2. "So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her." **Genesis 29:20 NIV**

B. It is based upon justice.

1. "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them." **Hebrews 6:10 NIV**
2. By this we mean that works ought to be rewarded.
3. The Kingdom of God offers a common access (the Cross provides grace and mercy), but works are the basis of reward. There is no "redistribution of wealth" in matters of The Kingdom.

C. It is based upon honor.

1. When God says "Well-done..."
2. Learn that reward should be accepted with honor and graciousness. If not, we may actually lessen the value of the work being rewarded and dishonor the one offering the reward.
3. We will not be allowed to cheapen the Lord's Reward with false humility on that day. We must learn that reward is not a matter of us **craving the praise of man**. It is a

matter of us **understanding the true cost of reward**. This is why Jesus allowed extravagant expression by Mary of Bethany and rejected the conventional wisdom of Judas.

4. The question of Barzillai

II. The Sacred Idea of Pursuing Reward

- A. **John 10:11-12 NASB** “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. ¹² He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

- B. We can pursue reward in a dishonorable way (this is the idea of a “hireling”).

- C. We can pursue reward in humility and a sense of identification (this is the idea of the “good shepherd”).

III. The Five Crowns

- A. Stephanos - “crown”

- B. Rewards for victorious living

- C. Think of these five crowns as “God’s Love Language.”

1. The Crown of Life (Reward for those who *overcome*; who persevere)

- a) Also known as The Victor’s Crown. Some think this may refer to eternal life, but that is a gift, not a reward. The context in Revelation and James’ epistle is that of enduring difficulty, trials, persecution, and suffering.

- b) **James 1:12 NIV** Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

- c) **Revelation 2:10 NASB** Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

2. The Imperishable Crown (Reward for self-denial and discipline)

- a) Also known as “The Incorruptible Crown.”
- b) **1 Corinthians 9:25-27 NKJV** ^{24b}Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.
- c) Contrasted with temporal rewards that decay

3. The Crown of Righteousness (Reward for those who prioritize intimacy with God and cherish the return of Christ)

- a) **2 Timothy 4:6-8 NASB** For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 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.
- b) Abraham - the friend of God

4. The Crown of Glory (Reward for Shepherds of the Flock)

- a) **1 Peter 5:2-4 NIV** Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

5. The Crown of Rejoicing (Reward for Soul Winners)

- a) **1 Thessalonians 2:19 KJV** 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?
- b) **Philippians 4:1 NASB** Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.
- c) A word about “The Network”

IV. Christian Life Lessons

- A. Set a goal for what you want to hear.
- B. Anticipate both the correction and encouragement of The Lord.
- C. Evaluate yourself periodically.
- D. Bring your desires to The Lord in Prayer.
- E. Act upon your Holy Ambition.