

HEAVENLY REWARDS

Jim Elliot “He is no fool who gives what he can not keep to gain what he can not lose”

There are two keys that determine everything about our eternity:

- 1) **BELIEF** – determines where you spend eternity
- 2) **BEHAVIOR** – determines rewards and how you spend eternity

Bruce Wilkinson:

“Your choices on earth have direct consequences on your life in eternity”.

Law of Unbreakable Link:

“Our eternal destination is the consequence of what we believe on earth. Our eternal compensation is the consequence of how we behave on earth”.

Biblical teachings related to six important Questions:

1) **Who is eligible for heavenly rewards?**

All believers - every member of the Kingdom of God (II Cor 5:9-10)

2) **Why does God provide rewards?**

He wants us to know:

- Another world and life exists beyond this one
- Our lives on earth count towards the next life
- When we serve Him, our labor is not in vain (I Cor 15:58)
- We have heavenly incentives to motivate us, and to help us get through difficult times (e.g. Jesus – Heb 12:2; Moses – Heb 11:24-26; Paul – Phil 3:13-14; Rom 8:18; Believers – Heb 10:32-36)

Note: There will be no eternal regret (Rev 21:4), BUT we can lose out on potential rewards (I Cor 3:10-15; II Cor 5:10; I Jn 2:28; 2 John 8). There will also be no selfish pride, greed, envy, jealousy or inappropriate competition.

3) **What are the rewards available to us?**

- General inheritance (spiritual birthright – all get) vs. Rewards (different levels based on properly motivated works)
- We will earn and receive different levels of rewards (Mt 25:14-30; Lk 19:11-27; I Cor 3:10-15; Rev 22:12)

- We can earn PRAISE from God (Mt 25:21, 23; I Cor 4:5)
- We can earn TREASURES & REWARDS (Mt 5:11-12, 6:19-20, 19:28-30; Mk 10:21; Lk 18:22; I Cor 3:8, 10-15; Gal 6:7-10; Eph 6:6-8; Col 3:23-24; I Pet 1:3-4; Rev 22:12)
- We can earn various “CROWNS” (which may be used in worship and/or enlarge our capacity for worship – Rev 4:9-11):
 - 1) “Imperishable Crown” – for those who lead disciplined lives (I Cor 9:24-27)
 - 2) “Crown of Rejoicing” – for those who lead others to Christ (I Thes 2:19-20; Phil 4:1)
 - 3) “Crown of Righteousness” – for those who love His appearing (2 Tim 4:8)
 - 4) “Crown of Glory” – for those who faithfully shephard the flock (I Pet 5:2-4)
 - 5) “Crown of Life” – for those who overcome spiritual battles (James 1:12; Rev 2:10)
- We can earn higher LEVELS OF RESPONSIBILITY (Mt 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27; Rev 2:26-28)

4) **When do we receive them?**

It looks like the full extent of our rewards will be given at the Final Bema seat judgement a.k.a. “resurrection of the righteous” (Rom 14:10-12; I Cor 3:10-15, 4:5; II Cor 5:9-10; Heb 4:13; Lk 14:12-14; Jn 11:25)

God’s final exam will cover three areas:

- 1) **Words** (Mt 12:36, Lk 12:2-3)
- 2) **Motives** (I Cor 4:5). Key motives include:
 - Glory of God, not ourselves; wanting to please God (I Cor 10:31; Mt 6:1-6; 2 Cor 5:9)
 - Love (Mt 22:34-40; I Cor 13:1-3)
 - Gratitude/Appreciation (Heb 12:28)
 - Humility (Mt 18:4; Luke 14:11; Jm 4:10; I Pet 5:5-6)
 - In partnership/relationship with Jesus (Jn 15:5; Rev 2:2-4; Phil 4:13)
 - Obedience/duty
 - Fear/respect for God (Gen 2:17; Duet 28:58-67; Heb 10:30-31)
- 3) **Works** (Mt 10:41-42, 16:27; I Cor 3:10-15; 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 6:10)

5) **Where do we enjoy them?**

In our eternal life on the new Heaven and new Earth.

There will be “private/personal” ownership – specific inheritances and rewards for us to enjoy (and share with others) (Dan 12:13; Mt 6:20; Luke 16:9, 12; John 14:2; 2 Cor 5:10; Col 3:24)

6) **How do we earn them?**

Galatians 6:9 “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up”

- 1) Good stewardship - managing God’s resources (e.g. money) that He has loaned us wisely (Mt 25:14-30; Lk 16:10-13, 19:11-27)
- 2) Giving money for God’s work (Mt 6:3-4, 19-21; Mk 10:21; Lk 6:38)
- 3) Practicing and teaching God’s commands (Mt 5:17-20)
- 4) Being “poor in spirit” (humble and dependent on God, not self) (Mt 5:3)
- 5) Being persecuted because of righteousness (Mt 5:10)
- 6) Being persecuted, hated, excluded, rejected and treated unfairly for sake of Christ (Mt 5:11-12; Lk 6:20-23)
- 7) Leaving or being rejected by family for the sake of Christ (Mt 19: 28-30; Lk 18:29-30)
- 8) Enduring difficult circumstances while trusting in God (Heb 10:34-36)
- 9) Fasting & Prayer (Mt 6:5-6,16-18)
- 10) Helping/giving to the poor and disadvantaged (Pv 19:17; Mt 19:21; Mk 10:21; Lk 12:33, 14:13-14)
- 11) Visiting widows and orphans in their distress (Jm 1:27)
- 12) Helping others (Lk 6:35; Heb 6:10)
- 13) Having a servant’s attitude (Mk 10:42-45)
- 14) Humbling ourselves (Mt 18:4; Jm 4:10)
- 15) Loving those who don’t love in return; loving your enemies (Mt 5:43-48; Lk 6:32-35)
- 16) Doing “small” good works in Jesus name (doing little things for others) (Mt 10:42; Mk 9:41)

- 17) For good things done in “secret” (like prayer) (Mt 6:1-6)
- 18) Working/laboring for Christ (I Cor 3:8-15); serving the Lord faithfully in ministry (I Cor 15:58; Gal 6:7-10)
- 19) Living a life of godliness (2 Peter 3:11-14)
- 20) Doing good and obeying earthly masters/ working faithfully in earthly jobs (Eph 6:5-8; Col 3:22-24)
- 21) Treating others with honor (Mt 10:41)
- 22) Being a godly spouse (I Pet 3:3-7)
- 23) For good works/deeds (Mt 16:27; 2 Cor 5:9-10; Eph 6:7-8; I Tim 6:18-19; Heb 6:10; Rev 22:12)
- 24) Witnessing about Jesus (I Cor 9:16-17)
- 25) Leading someone to salvation (Prov 11:30; I Thes 2:19)
- 26) Being martyred for Christ (Heb 11:35-40)
- 27) Seeking God diligently (Heb 11:6)
- 28) Supporting the church and it’s leaders (Heb 10:25, 13:17)
- 29) Treating our enemies kindly (Luke 6:35)