

Rewards: An Original, Divine Idea

Even the most spiritual Christians have no qualms about providing pensions for their “retirement” on earth. They hope to enjoy these unreliable provisions for a few short years, knowing full well this world is not their home and they are here very temporarily. On the other hand, Christ did tell us to lay up for ourselves treasures in perpetual heaven. So, why are so many of us not obeying his instructions? Why we are so hesitant about planning the quality of our life in eternity – as the Lord instructs us to do?

Many sincere Christians distance themselves from the notion of receiving rewards for godly living and faithful service. Some of them actually believe that striving for rewards is carnal, if not sinful. Supposedly, spiritual saints should not be interested in reaping eternal dividends for the good they do on earth. In the first place, they feel eternally indebted to the Lord for what he has done for them, as though he’s expecting some sort of remuneration. (He isn’t.) And if they aren’t trying to repay him, they act out of gratitude, as though he asked them to show their appreciation by their good deeds. (He didn’t.)

Working for reward is thought by some to be shamelessly self-centered, as though it’s a worldly idea. *Nothing could be further from the truth.* Rewards are God’s idea. *Our faith provides us our place in heaven; our deeds provide us our position there.*

If Satan can’t stop you from going to heaven, he will try to get you to concentrate on *his* world, on earthly things. He will distract you from investing in your everlasting environment.

Some Christians want only to work on their *fellowship* with the Lord. They are not interested in good works and certainly not in future rewards. Well, the Lord, too, wants fellowship with you, but that’s not all he wants. Worship has its place, but so does work. He expects you to be busy about his business. He has a lot of work for you to do. Yes, Jesus talked to Peter about love: “*Do you love me?*” But, almost in the same breath, he talked to him about work: “*Feed my sheep*” (John 21:17).

I do not claim to fully comprehend God's concept of awards and rewards. But I want to be careful not to discredit, underestimate, neglect or ignore our Lord’s magnanimous offer.

I want to take his proposals seriously. I need to take appropriate action. *Whatever my response to heaven’s rewards – involvement or indifference, I must remember that everything I do or don’t do now is related to future rewards or punishment.*

The Bible makes it clear that God is a confirmed *reward giver*. He enjoys lavishly remunerating outstanding effort and work done well on his behalf. I get the distinct impression that God goes out of his way to think up ways to give out rewards – if not in this life, then certainly in the next. His bounteousness is limitless.

The *Kingdom of Heaven* will be like the parable of talents. You were faithful in a few things; you will be put in charge of many things. The lazy, indifferent servant should have put his absent lord's money on deposit with the bankers, so that when he returned he would have received it back with interest. But since the servant didn't do that, what little he had was taken from him *and* he was punished.

Good deeds on earth guarantee a good life in *heaven*.

The words you will want to hear are, “Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of the Lord!” But you will hear the words “well done,” only if you’ve done well. ◇◇