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# Winning the Gold for the Glory of God



By Steven J. Hogan

*~ A Saturday Morning Post #223 ~*

Could you have ever competed in the Olympic games and won a gold medal, or a silver or bronze for that matter? I could have never done that – I have never been even close to being that athletic, that physically talented. But God wants each Christian to know that they are to run the race He has set before them, and be winners, and then He will give them a *"gold medal"*, a crown, a prize, a reward. To every Christian, God gives unique gifts and talents that they are to use for Him – and it's not what or how many gifts or talents God has given you, but are you wisely and wholeheartedly using what He has given you to serve Him? If you do, you will be a winner, and in the coming ages, you will be infinitely blessed and God will be supremely glorified.

Today we will look at how God describes these future, eternal, and glorious blessings.

**1. CROWNS.** *"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 to all who have loved His appearing"* (2 Tim. 4:8). In the first century, crowns were the wreaths awarded to winning athletes at the Olympic games. For the Christian, receiving a crown from the Lord means you ran the race God gave you to run, you competed according to the rules, you persevered, and you were victorious (Heb. 12:1, 2 Tim. 2:5, Rev. 2:17). Can you imagine the exhilarating joy you will experience when you receive a crown from the Lord, and when you hear, *"Well done, good and faithful servant"*? Being blessed in this way shows that God is very pleased with you, for you gave it your all. The Bible also speaks of the crown incorruptible (1 Cor. 9:25), the crown of life (James 1:12), the crown of glory (1 Pet. 5:4), and the crown of rejoicing (1 Thess. 2:19), crowns which show God's hearty approval, but also relate to blessings that He will lavish upon you in the future.

**2. PRIZE.** *"I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 3:14). This is referring to the crown, the wreath an athlete receives for winning an event at an athletic game. This word emphasizes the fact that God Himself is the righteous Judge, the One who rules, who perfectly decides the prize you will receive for your labor of love (2 Tim. 4:8). 1 Cor. 9:24-27 instructs you to *"run in such a way that you may win"* the prize. It's good to learn from successful athletes, especially the need to discipline your body, to exercise self-control in all things. Indeed, the Christian life is a long race, a life-time race, a marathon. But remember, God is always with you, watching you all the way, and helping you win the prize He wants you to give you. Psalm 73:23-24

**3. REWARDS.** *"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what He has done"* (Rev 22:12). The word *"reward"* in also translated as wage. John 4:36 says, *"Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal."* Rom 4:4 tells us, *"Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but what is due."* In Matt. 6:4 we read, *"Your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you."* God's promise is that He

will reward you when you work for Him, for that is what is due you, it is what you earned. Now as Christians, we are all in the church, all on the same team, all working for Christ, but each of us *"will receive his own reward according to his own labor"* (1 Cor. 3:8). Whereas all Christians will be in heaven with Jesus and in a new glorified body, each of us will be rewarded differently, in accordance with how we, by God's grace, worked for Him. And those who live full out for the Lord will be richly rewarded for their faithful service to Him. *"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you… rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great."* Matt. 5:11-12, Heb. 6:10

**4. RECOMPENSE.** *"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward* (recompense) *of in inheritance."* (Col. 3:23-24). This word reward or recompense literally means *"a giving back in return"* (Vines Exp. Dict.). It's amazing, and encouraging, that whatever you do, whether working at a job, serving someone, praying for someone, sharing the gospel, raising your child, cooking a meal, cleaning your house, mowing your lawn, etc., God will graciously and generously reward your efforts. It is truly astounding that *"whatever you do"* for the Lord will be justly compensated, eternally rewarded. As to when, Luke 14:14 says *"you will be repaid* (recompensed) *at the resurrection of the righteous."*

**5. TREASURES.** *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth… store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither most nor rust destroys, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Matt 6:19-21). All of you know people who have lots of earthly things, who through the years, have been collecting lots of stuff. *"Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."* (Luke 12:15). God wants you to invest your life and money wisely, not for this world, but for your eternal future. Now I believe it is a good practice to regularly set aside money for your earthly *"retirement,"* for that time when you are not fully employed. But you should never love your money and trust in it. You don't want to be the person who *"lays up*

*treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God"* (Luke 12:21). Love God and trust Him (*"In God We Trust")* and use your money for His purposes, knowing that He will bless you now and for all eternity.

**6. INHERITANCE.** *"Blessed are the gentle for they shall inherit the earth"* (Matt. 5:5). *"Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"* (Matt 25:34). Can you imagine that? You will inherit the kingdom, and inherit the earth! That's unbelievable! An earthly heir receives money, property, and goods from his parents, that which may have some worldly value. But Christians are children of God and heirs of God, and will receive an inheritance that has infinite value, which is *"imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you"* (1 Pet. 1:3-4). Then you learn that you are a fellow heir with Jesus Christ and will share in His possessions. Wow! (Rom. 8:17). God gives you an abundance of verses on this subject because He wants you to be excitedly looking forward to being in heaven with Him, your loving Lord and Father. (Matt. 19:29, Luke 12:32, Acts 20:32, Rom. 8:16-17, Gal. 3:29, Eph. 3:6, Titus 3:7, Heb. 1:14, James 2:5, 1 Peter 1:3-4). Gal. 4:7 – *"You are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God*." Just think, you are an heir of God, and He won't just give you good things, but Himself. *"The Lord is my portion."* Lam. 3:2

**7. GRACE.** *"God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us… made us alive together with Christ… so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace…"* (Eph. 2:4-7). Do you see what God is saying, that He wants to show you *"the surpassing riches of His grace"*? Everything about your future, your inheritance, blessings, crowns, treasures, and rewards, result from God's love expressed in His grace to you. Your entire and eternal life is wonderfully blessed because of God's grace. But you are only at the very beginning of your Christian life – you have the rest of this life and the ages to come to experience God's grace. There's the 1000-year kingdom age when Christ is reigning over the earth, and then the eternal kingdom age when everything is completely perfect, glorious, and altogether beautiful. *"Fix your hope completely on the grace to be*

*brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."* 1 Peter 1:13

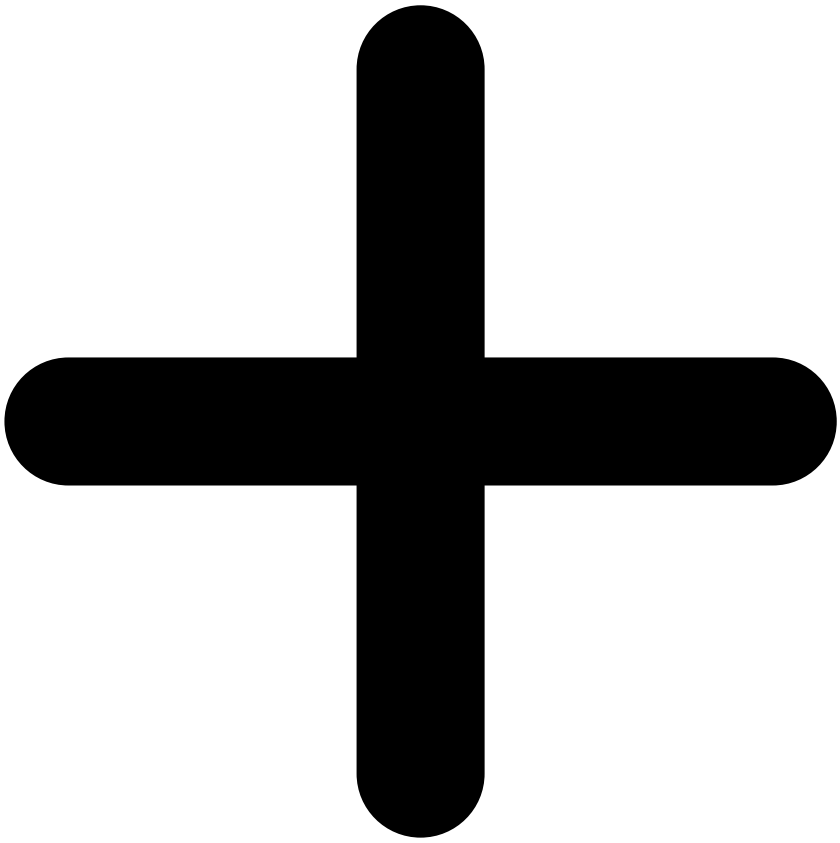
**8. GLORY.** *"Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world"* (John 17:24). What an encouraging prayer, that Jesus is praying to His Father so that you may see His amazing glory when you are in heaven. But what is this glory? It's a big word that speaks of who God and Christ are, their essence and nature, their truth, omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, eternality, supremacy, etc. It speaks of their character, their love, holiness, wisdom, goodness, justice, righteousness, sovereignty, and mercy, etc. Their glory is also seen in who they are, in what they do, in the creation, in Christ's life and work, in the lives of believers, in His dealings with unbelievers, in our glorified bodies, in the millennial kingdom, and in the new heavens and earth. And there's no doubt that God's glory is directly related to the blessings and rewards He will be giving you. *"We exult in hope of the glory of God."* Romans 5:3

God's glory is the single most important truth for the Christian, for it relates to everything about God and our life, now and forever. We have been, and will continue, through all eternity, to know, see, and grow in our understanding of the glory of God and Jesus Christ. And then we are to give Them the honor and glory they rightly deserve – *"To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."* Revelation 5:13

**All that we have talked about – crowns, prize, rewards, recompense, treasures, inheritance, grace, and glory – is speaking of the HOPE God has given us with regards to our future.** God has given us plenty to think about with respect to what He has in store for us, and that's because He wants you to be looking forward to the future and being with Him. *"In your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever"* (Ps. 16:11). What our future exactly looks like, we don't know. (1 Cor. 2:9). Yes, God has

given you a general idea, but the specifics won't be known until you get to heaven, and even then, they will be forever unfolding for all eternity. *"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints"* Ephesians 1:18

P.S. An incredibly important and encouraging subject is heavenly rewards, one that most Christians don't know much about. If you haven't yet read the previous posts on this subject of how God wants to greatly bless your life in the future, then take the time to read: *"God Really Wants to Reward You"*, *"Earthly Work That Results in Heavenly Rewards"*, and *"Your Reward is the* Lord."





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