

Seek your FULL reward

2 John 8



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June 24, 2017

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Do you look to God to reward you for good deeds you do and kindnesses you show? Or is it self-serving to seek after a reward, or glory and honor from our God who has already given us so much? Which is right? Learn what God Most High says about rewards and what pleases and displeases Him. Learn WHY God actually likes to reward. Perhaps you'll be inspired by this message to get to work serving God and doing works of kindness more than ever before – as you seek a FULL reward.

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Warm welcome everyone!

I remember being part of a conversation one time where the topic was not letting anyone take your crown – or your rewards. One man there said he was hoping for a very high reward. There was a moment of silence, and then another person said, "I'll just be happy to be in the kingdom. I feel strange thinking about going after a reward. It sounds self-serving."

So what do *you* think? What would you have said, if asked? *Should* believers be seeking after a reward from God – or do we just do everything out of gracious gratitude and not seek or want or ... accept – a reward from our God? Does our Father want to reward you and me – or does he ask himself, "What do I have to do to make these people stop expecting more?"

I hope today to really get you thinking about rewards the way our Father wants us to – and get us all really going after the TOP REWARDS possible!

In fact, by the time we're done today, you'll see that our gracious heavenly Abba wants to give you far, far more than you ever even consider!

At the time, it might surprise some of you; I jumped in to say I agreed with the first man, that I too would love to have a high reward. And then the conversation got into high gear.

Where would you stand on this? IS it self-serving to seek a high reward in the kingdom? Today I hope you will be thrilled to learn what scripture exactly says about REWARDS in the kingdom.

Those on the opposing side (who think going after rewards is selfish) could quickly quote how James and John's mom asked that her sons sit on Yeshua's right and left hand – and how she was mildly rebuked for that.

Or they might quote Daniel 5:17 where Daniel refused the rewards first offered for interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream. But nonetheless, he was given high honor and rewards, just as Joseph had been, and Mordecai in the book of Esther, for their works.

Another one might quickly add that rewards speak of payback, or payment, and that's why we call it "rewards". And to these people – since salvation is by grace and not by our works lest we boast (**Eph 2:8-10**), speaking of rewards seems to point someone towards salvation by works, or so they feel.

Let me ask: So where do works and rewards for good works come in to the discussion about salvation and eternal life by God's grace? What's the answer? What's the balance? And once again: Is seeking for a high reward good or not?

Let's be clear. Salvation is purely by God's grace. Salvation is God's work. HE is Saviour. HE is the Creator of the new creation – not you or me. Salvation is not of our works, as we're told so often in the new covenant. So redemption, salvation and eternal life – all of that is a GIFT from God's grace and are HIS works. We can't earn or work for eternal life and salvation. All of that is given to us freely as God's GIFT when we believe that Jesus (Yeshua) is the son of God, came and lived a perfect life for us, died for our sins, was raised from the dead by his father in heaven, and lives again by His Spirit in each of those who are the called according to his purpose (see **Romans 10:8-10**).

Let me repeat: we can't earn salvation. It's a free gift. The "gift of God is eternal life" (**Romans 6:23; Eph 2:8-9**).

Now having said that, though we can't and don't earn salvation, scripture tells us there are rewards God gives his children for their good deeds and work. The rewards do NOT include eternal life. That's a gift. Rewards are more like what your position or your job will be in the kingdom. Will you have cities to rule over – and how many?

Scripture is clear: we're saved by grace. Salvation is not a reward. Salvation, redemption and eternal life are all by God's merciful grace and faith in that grace.

Simply put: the free gifts of eternal life and salvation are because of **what GOD does for us.**

But our REWARDS for eternity (but not including salvation) are because of what WE do.

Now let me show you that clearly in the rest of the message.

Matthew 16:27

"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and **then** He will reward each according to his works."

So I'm saying: we all want to be doing all we can diligently be doing now, in this life, to be rewarded as highly as we can be by our King and Master. And that is encouraged!

You can also study these verses which say similar things: **Romans 2:6; Rev. 2:23; 2 Cor. 5:10; Psalm 66:12; Rev. 22:12-13.**

But don't mix that up with being forgiven and saved and cleansed and restored to our Father by his grace, no matter what your works were in the past. No matter how good you were in the past, you cannot earn your own eternal life and salvation – unless you were sinless. And no matter how bad you have been in your past, if you present your despicable life of sin humbly before your Maker and ask forgiveness in the blood of the Lamb, He WILL lovingly erase it all and grant you eternal life, if you put those sins behind you and accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour and King and believe he rose from the dead and sits on the throne in heaven as your Advocate. (Romans 10:9-10). I know this is true, by personal experience. Praise be to our loving Father and Savior! Amen!

Bonus section here: And let me remind you: the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. So even after we have repented, we sometimes slip back into sin – so be sure you are repenting and be sure you are letting yourself be led by God's spirit so over time we find ourselves completely overcoming our past filthy sins and way of life, which happens especially as we look to Yeshua (Jesus), being transformed into his holiness (read 2 Cor. 3:17-19).

2 Corinthians 3:16-18

“Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away [which reveals God's Presence and glory] 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

But let me say again and again: rewards are not about salvation. Rewards are wages, payment for things we do AFTER God has saved us. That's what Eph 2:10 says, when we keep reading past verses 8-9. But as you'll see, even then... God graciously helps us with the good works we can do.

God will test our works by trials, tests—by fire-- to test what parts of our life's work will burn up (wood, hay and stubble) and which will remain (gold, silver and precious stones). Read this next scripture carefully.

1 Corinthians 3:9-15

“For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, HE will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

So the folks whose works are burned up – ***are still saved (v 15) “yet so as thru fire”*** – because salvation is by grace, not works. But those whose works don't last, won't have much of a reward. So this passage explains we are saved by grace, but rewards are based on the kind and quality of work we are producing and demonstrating for the kingdom of God.

WHY do I speak on this? Because I do feel there is a basic misunderstanding on this topic. On one hand some believe their very salvation is at stake based on their work. I've just read you 1 Cor. 3:14-15 that our salvation is there, but our rewards could burn up if we build shabbily on the work we've been given.

On the other hand, others don't strive at all to present a lot of good work to God because they feel their salvation is already secured. Salvation is secure IF you remain steadfast and faithful to the end, but don't give up on good works – and the HIGH REWARD that comes with that.

Scriptures that clearly show we have to hang on to God and to His works in our lives to the end are these and more: Matthew 10:22; 24:13; Hebrews 3:5-6, 14-16; Hebrews 6:11-12; Rev 2:26; Hebrews 10:34-36.

In fact, in the section best known for stating our salvation is by grace, notice how it wraps up in verse 10:

Ephesians 2:8-10

“For by **grace** you have been saved through **faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the **gift** of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus FOR good WORKS, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

There's no contradiction: we're saved by grace, created for good works and then we're rewarded by our works (but reward does NOT include salvation; that's a gift). 1 Cor. 3:8 – each man will be rewarded according to his labor – but we can't earn salvation by labor or works – so the rewards based on our own labor must be something else. And it is. And it's not salvation. OK, let's move on...

How does our God himself feel about rewards? Does he like the idea – or not?

Hebrews 11:6

“But without faith it is impossible **to please Him**, for he who comes to God **must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder** of those who diligently seek Him”.

Did you get that? Part of pleasing God is to believe He truly exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. Our Father likes to reward us!

WHAT YESHUA SAYS ABOUT REWARDS

Let me read maybe 10 passages about rewards, and then you tell me what you think scripture is telling us.

Yeshua often spoke of rewards.

- **Matthew 5:12** – we are not to worry about being persecuted, but to be exceeding glad, “for great is your reward in heaven...” In Luke's account, he says, “LEAP FOR JOY!”

- **Matthew 5:46** – if we love and are kind only to those who love us, “what REWARD have you?” and he goes on to say it’s no big deal to just be nice to those who are nice to you. But if we’re nice to all, there’s a REWARD.
- **Luke 6:35** – Lend –hoping for nothing in return – “and your reward will be GREAT, and you will be sons of the Most High...”
- **Matthew 6:1** – don’t let others know about the good deeds you’ve done for others – as you would “have no reward from your father in heaven”.
- **Matt 6:4-6**– when we do charitable deeds secretly, “your father who sees in secret will HIMSELF reward you openly.” *Also vs 16-18.*

Is it becoming clear that both God our Father – and God the Son of God – want to, wish to, long to, would really LIKE to...reward you?

Do you feel you can’t possibly compete in the reward points category with the great prophets? Watch this.

Matthew 10:40-42

"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. 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. 42 And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

Wow, folks! Does that sound like Yeshua is against us going after rewards? Help those who are preaching and prophesying and YOU receive a prophet’s reward. Help the poor children – even with just a cup of water – and you have a reward!

So those of you helping us in our work to feed, clothe, educate, and provide a future for the 28 orphans in Kenya we serve – GREAT is your reward. Because of your gifts and generosity, children who had lost both their parents now have a bed, a home that keeps them dry in the hard rains, food in their belly, shoes on their feet, and jackets in the cold rainy months, and they’re learning to read and write. And you helped them have a well of fresh water, medicines for their illnesses, and you paid for the cost of their schooling and school lunch program. In the name of God Almighty himself, and Yeshua our Master, thank you – and may your rewards be great. And to the pastor and his wife doing this for our Kenyan children ... may you both also be richly blessed.

In fact, our father wants to reward his children with FAR MORE than you can imagine. A good father knows that feeling. My grandsons would be thrilled to be given a dollar. So I once in a while give more – plus new swimming masks/snorkel/fins, and a bike, and archery set, and baseballs, and time and more time with grandpa. Yehovah Most High, King of the Universe, your daddy Abba God —*wants* to reward you mightily for every single good thing you do!

Go back and read **Ephesians 3:20** some time. Our Father wants to do exceedingly and abundantly above and beyond everything we could ask or imagine. And remember 1 Cor. 2 says we can't even imagine what God has in store for us who believe.

Ephesians 3:20-21

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

**EVEN THE GOOD WE DO – IS REALLY FROM OUR FATHER
This explains WHY God rewards us when we respond**

Did you realize that even what good you think you're doing – can really be traced back to your heavenly Father, who is very active in your salvation?

Look at what Paul said:

1 Corinthians 15:9-11

"I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 **But by the grace of God I am what I am**, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, **yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.** 11 Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed."

So Paul is telling us, even the ideas, the ability to serve, and going out and doing it – is really just us responding to what Abba (our loving Father) has put into our hearts!

Even the oft-quoted verses about working out your own salvation with fear and trembling... but WHO is the one who *gives* us the will and the power to work hard to please him?

Philippians 2:12-13

"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 **for it is God who works in you both to will and to do** for His good pleasure."

Are we getting it? Even all our good deeds and working hard – are by and through God's GRACE, once again! Perfect good works happen when we respond to HIS mind, HIS grace, His desire for us. Amen – go forth and use the desire and work He has put into your heart.

Are you thinking of writing children's books? Do it, by the grace of God in you, DO IT. Are you thinking of some acts of service somewhere? Do it. It may be the Almighty himself putting those thoughts into you and he will not only put the thought there – but will help open the doors so you can do it. "For it is God who works in you, both to will (want to do something) and to DO for HIS good pleasure."

And I read earlier that when we do our good works secretly, without letting others know, our heavenly Father who sees in secret will reward us openly! Matthew 6:1-4

But my point is, there are so many verses in the Bible which speak of how God is the one who puts things into our hearts and when people respond... our God blesses!

Isaiah 26:12

“Yehovah, You will establish peace for us,
For **YOU have also done all our works in us.**”

Just learn to respond to those impulses for good! To pray for your adult child who wants no contact with you. To do good to those who hurt you and speak evil of you. OH, how I know how hard that is to speak blessing to those who have hurled dung at you and your name. How well I know that. But when we do, we are responding to GOD in us – who died for us all, while we were still sinners. Hebrews 2:8 says it was by God’s grace that his son died for all. By God’s grace that his own and his only son – DIED! So we don’t have to.

John 3:27 – John the Baptist says “A man can receive nothing unless it was given to him from heaven.” Wow! Are we listening?

Paul is known as one of the “greats of the Bible” – because he understood this so well. “Our sufficiency is from God” – **2 Cor. 3:5**. There Paul says everything we’re doing is because GOD is the one doing it and we’re just giving him space to move, speak and act in us. Oh how I PRAY that I will learn that!!

Are you learning WHY God wants to reward us for the good we do? Because it’s his way of saying, “Hey, I’ve really appreciated how you humbly opened the door to me and LET ME work in your life; you LET ME use your body and life to magnify my word to more and more people. Let me reward you.”

Hebrews 13:20-21

“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

You see, to HIM goes all the glory – even for the wondrous things *you* may be able to do through your hands. *It’s really Christ walking the earth again, but this time, through you. Glory be to our God.*

And that is why James says “Every good and perfect gift is from above, from the Father of lights...” **James 1:17**. So when you realize your God above has given you some gifts, man-oh-man, use them. Don’t bury those talents. Use them, to his glory, and He’ll reward you for using talents HE has given you! Are you hearing this? What a great God we have above.

So God loves to reward you – especially when you diligently seek him (**Hebrews 11:6**) – and are using His gifts. *I believe he’ll reward you just for doing good, period, but even MORE so if you’re doing it in his strength.*

What John and Paul had to say about reward

The beloved apostle John taught reward:

2 John 8

“Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but **that we may receive a FULL reward.**”

Wow, are you getting it? Are you hearing scripture? Go for your full reward! I looked up the Greek word “reward” – and it’s translated in KJV various ways, as: reward, wages, hire. “Pay for services, good or bad”. That’s why we’re “rewarded – paid – according to what we do”. (Strong’s word 3408)

But again, don’t mix up reward with salvation by grace, or most of us wouldn’t even be there at all. For by GRACE through faith we’ve been saved – and then additional rewards, or not, will be according to the kind of life we lived, our generosity, our good works, our kindnesses and so on.

Paul certainly teaches reward:

- **1 Cor. 3:8**—“...each one will receive his own reward according to his labor.”
- **Colossians 2:18**—don’t let anyone cheat you of your reward
- Hebrews 11, the faith chapter, he openly states that Moses looked for the rewards to come for his faith. As did Abraham, who sought a city in heaven whose builder and maker is God.

In the book of Romans, Paul without hesitation speaks of the righteous seeking HONOR and glory and immortality!

Romans 2:6-7

“....who "will render to each one according to his deeds": 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good SEEK for glory, honor, and immortality”

Did you realize that Moses and the patriarchs looked for the reward as well?

In fact, the Word of Yehovah appeared to Abram in **Genesis 15:1** and tells him not to be afraid, “...I am your shield, your exceeding great reward”.

Boaz asked for Yehovah to repay Ruth’s work and kindness to her mother in law—“YHVH repay your work, and a full reward be given you BY Yehovah Elohim (the Lord God) of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.” So folks, yes, as Boaz did, you ask your God Most High to bless those who are blessing others!

Look now at what Hebrews 11 says about Moses:

Hebrews 11:24-26

“By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; **for he looked to the reward.**”

IN CONCLUSION

Isaiah 40:10 (also similar – Isa 62:11)

“Behold, the Lord Yehovah shall come with a strong hand,
And His arm shall rule for Him;
Behold, His reward is with Him,
And His work before Him.”

Hebrews 10:34-36

“for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. 35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, **which has great reward.** 36 For you have need of **endurance**, so that **after** you have done the will of God, **you may receive the promise:**”

Revelation 22:12-13

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and **My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.** 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

And I love 2 John 8 again – go after the FULL reward.

Closing prayer, praising our God for his loving works in each of us and more... hear it on the audio.