

Do Not Lose Your Full Reward

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Look to yourselves,
that we lose not those things which we have wrought,
but that we receive a full reward.

II John 1:8

Behold, I come quickly:
hold that fast which thou hast, **that no man take thy crown.**
Revelation 3:11

Introduction:

- A. The theme of rewards or recompense is strong in the Bible, promised by God but conditional to men.
- B. The Bible has over 100 references to rewards (with crowns included). But as expected, they take effort.
- C. The two fundamental axioms for the Hall of Faith only offer rewards for the diligent (Hebrews 11:6).
- D. **Reward** = a gift, payment, or recompense for service or merit, sometimes unconditional or for evil.
- E. **Recompense** = a synonym for reward = compensation for trouble, exertion, services, merit, or evil.
- F. We have reviewed the glorious life of our Lord, Who for the joy set before Him earned a full reward.
- G. The Hall of Faith lists O.T. examples of exploits by faith, which are witnesses of our lives (Heb 12:1).
- H. But the verse's context shows He is the greatest example and leader of faith, Whom we should follow.
 - I. You know enough about compensation and bonuses (recompense and rewards) to work your job hard.
- J. God rewards good men with blessings (II Chron 15:7; Psalm 18:20; Prov 11:18; 13:13; Isaiah 62:11; Matthew 5:12; 6:18; 10:41-42; Luke 6:23,35; Hebrews 11:26; 10:35; Col 3:24; Rev 11:18; 22:12; etc.).
- K. God rewards bad men with punishment and vengeance (Prov 11:31; Deut 32:41; Job 21:19; Psalm 31:23; 58:9-11; Proverbs 26:10; II Timothy 4:14; Hebrews 2:2; II Peter 2:13; Revelation 18:6; etc.).
- L. Though "reward" is not used, God repays parental honor and faithfulness (Eph 6:2-3; Matthew 25:21).
- M. God's reward may be an unconditional gift (Col 3:24), or it may be a conditional blessing (Ps 19:11), or it may be both a conditional blessing here and eternal life in the world to come (Mark 10:28-30).
- N. The Bible throughout encourages obedience and blessings for it with if-then promises. See Beatitudes.
- O. Before Moses died, he offered Israel conditional blessings and curses (Deut 28:1-68; Lev 26:1-46).
- P. For a full reward, you must achieve the goal and follow the rules (II Tim 2:5; Rom 12:8; I Cor 9:24).
- Q. We are familiar with Malach 1, where attitude, effort, and expense of worship were dissected by God.
- R. We also know Malachi 3, where God's jewels are distinguished from others by love (Malachi 3:8-13).
- S. John exhorted an elect lady to not lose her full reward by holding Christ doctrine fast (II John 1:7-11), and

this sober warning should frighten true believers to not backslide or lose godliness or truth gained.

- T. Jesus exhorted the pastor / church at Philadelphia to keep holding doctrine tenaciously (Rev 3:7-13), for false teachers can beguile Christians of their faith (Col 2:18; Romans 16:17-18; II Tim 2:16-18).
- U. More than stuff, God rewards truth, wisdom, fellowship (Pr 24:14; 3:13-18; Jer 15:16; Jn 14:21-23).
- V. Conditional rewards of stuff are found in Solomon's book of Proverbs, but there are greater rewards.
- W. The martyrs may have had a hard life and death here, but they had grace here and special glory above.

Under the Wings of the Rewarder: The Choice of Faith

Faith is more than a quiet belief; it is a courageous departure from the familiar and sacrifice of self to please God. While the scriptures exalt Moses—who famously walked away from the prestige, power, and pleasures of Egypt to seek a heavenly prize—the story of Ruth offers a beautifully tender example of what it looks like to believe that God is a Rewarder.

In the fields of Bethlehem, Boaz recognized a spiritual beauty in Ruth that went far deeper than her circumstances. He had heard how she left her parents, her home country, and the safety of her past to care for Naomi. He saw that her devotion was not mere sentimentality, but based on a committed and sacrificial faith. Boaz understood the principle of Hebrews 11:6 long before it was written: that God exists, and He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. With a heart of appreciation, Boaz spoke a blessing to her that remains a promise for us today: “The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.” History shows that God’s response to Ruth’s trust was fabulous. He rewarded her with a home, a wealthy husband who cherished her character, and a legacy that changed the world. Her son, Obed, became the grandfather of King David, placing this Moabite widow in the lineage of Jesus Christ. Ruth received a “hundredfold” in this life and eternal heaven in the next.

Yet, this story carries a contrast and warning. While Ruth chose the “wings” of Jehovah, her sister Orpah returned to family and friends and her old religion. Orpah disappeared into the shadows of history, while Ruth stepped into the light of a King.

This is the story of every soul. A “full reward” is not coincidental; it is the result of a life held fast in faith. As the apostle John and Jesus Himself warned, we must “look to ourselves” and “hold fast” so that we obtain a full reward and no one takes our crown. Our Lord is the greatest example of one who endured the cross for the joy of the reward, and He reigns in heaven.

Today, the opportunity is the same for you as it was for Ruth. Will you, like David, seek the heart of God with diligence? Will you trust that His wings are wide enough to cover your past and strong enough to carry you into a glorious future?

Ruth 2:11-12 ... Ruth's exceptional love of Naomi and religious zeal for Jehovah brought His full reward.

Mark 10:28-30 ... leaving possessions or family members for Christ brings 10,000 now and heaven later.

II Samuel 7:1-29 ... David thought to build God a magnificent temple, but God built him a house instead.

Hebrews 11:24-26 ... Moses is a great example, but are you willing to forsake prestige, power, pleasure?

Hebrews 10:34-36 ... Paul exhorted Jewish believers to their past knowledge of recompense and reward.

Colossians 2:18 ... warns that false teachers can steal your reward of true faith and worship (Col 2:4,8).

Hebrews 12:28 ... acceptable worship in the eternal kingdom of Christ includes reverence and godly fear.

Ephesians 6:5-8 ... God rewards – obedience, fearful, single heart, good will, as to Christ (Col 3:22-25).

I Peter 2:18-23 ... proving your conscience toward God to deserve His praise requires froward authority.

II Corinthians 9:6 ... generous giving brings God's generous reward (Pr 11:25; 22:9; Is 32:8; Luke 6:38).

II Corinthians 9:7 ... cheerful giving of the heart without grudging is rewarded (Exodus 25:2; Acts 20:35).

I Peter 4:9 ... believers are to be given to hospitality, but it must be done without grudging (Rom 12:13).

Luke 14:12-14 ... when planning hospitality, Jesus taught to pick guests very carefully (I Cor 12:22-25).

Matthew 10:41-42 ... Jesus promised rewards from a prophet's level down to a certain reward for a drink.

II Corinthians 7:1 ... rejecting false religion brings seven glorious, intangible rewards (II Cor 6:14-18).

Deuteronomy 28:47-48 ... the abundance of all things requires joyfulness and gladness, or else judgment.

I Peter 1:22 ... love of brethren must be unfeigned with a pure heart fervently (Rom 12:9-10; II Cor 6:6).

II Timothy 1:5 ... faith is a key basic goal, proved by good works, but it must be unfeigned (I Tim 1:5).

Galatians 6:9 ... using opportunity to do good things for believers is a goal, but do not get weary or faint.

Matthew 6:1-8,16-18 ... God only rewards alms, prayer, or fasting when done in secret away from others.

Matthew 5:46 ... love that gets God's reward is love of enemies like He does (I Sam 24:19; Pr 25:21-22).

Matthew 5:12 ... Jesus promised a great reward for those persecuted for His sake or for righteousness.

II Timothy 2:5 ... for pastors to obtain a crown, they must keep pastoral rules like athletes (I Peter 5:1-4).

I Corinthians 3:8,11-15 ... for pastors to get a reward they must work hard and adorn the one foundation.

I Corinthians 9:24-27 ... Paul gave his example by athletic metaphors for you to run for first place prize.

I Corinthians 14:15 ... singing is enhanced for God with heart and mind (Ps 47:7; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16).

James 1:12 ... enduring temptation by love, trials and lustful enticements, earns a crown of life (Rev 2:10).

Philippians 3:14 ... Paul had zeal, or intensity; he ignored past running to finish strong for God's prize.

Philemon 1:14 ... Paul negotiated with Philemon as to whether his benefit would be willing or necessary.

Jeremiah 29:13 ... serving God should be done with all your heart (I Sam 12:24; I Chron 29:9; Is 29:13).

Hebrews 6:1-3 ... first principles, basic or initial truth, is baby food, with Christ higher (Heb 5:10-14).

Genesis 15:1 ... God Himself was Abram's exceeding great reward (Deuteronomy 33:26-29; Ps 16:5-6).

Rev 2:7,10-11,17,26; 3:5,12,21; 21:7 ... Jesus listed all kinds of special blessings for being an overcomer.

II Timothy 4:6-8 ... Paul had a crown waiting and so can you by fighting, finishing, and keeping the faith.

Conclusion:

- A. Ask yourself? Are you as committed as Ruth? Are you more like David or Saul? Paul or Demas?
- B. The two fundamental axioms for the Hall of Faith only offer rewards for the diligent (Hebrews 11:6).
- C. For a full reward, you must achieve the goal and follow the rules (II Tim 2:5; Rom 12:8; I Cor 9:24).
- D. John exhorted an elect lady to not lose her full reward by holding Christ doctrine fast (II John 1:7-11), and this sober warning should frighten true believers to not backslide or lose godliness or truth gained.
- E. Jesus exhorted the pastor / church at Philadelphia to keep holding doctrine tenaciously (Rev 3:7-13), for false teachers can beguile Christians of their faith (Col 2:18; Romans 16:17-18; II Tim 2:16-18).

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- G. Conditional rewards of stuff are found in Solomon's book of Proverbs, but there are greater rewards.
- H. The martyrs may have had a hard life and death here, but they had grace here and special glory above.

For Further Study:

1. Running Your Race.
2. Running Like Jesus.
3. Running Scared.
4. Kingdom Priorities.
5. Seven Great Promises ... Perfecting Holiness.