
Words of Truth

What Is Your Mindset Towards The “Reward”?

By: Brian A. Yeager

I was lying in bed a few months ago thinking about the end of this life. I was pondering a few Scriptures and the points therein. The word “reward” got a little stuck in my mind. Let me present you a few of those Scriptures to help you get your mind jumpstarted on this subject.

Some of those Scriptures I thought of were these: *“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is **your reward in heaven**: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you... I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own **reward according to his own labour**... Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive **a full reward**”* (Matthew 5:10-12, I Corinthians 3:6-8, and II John 1:8).

As I thought about those Scriptures, and a few others, I was anxious to rise from bed and get into a word study concerning the word “reward” in those verses and a few others. I could not do so though, I was recovering from surgery and the mess I went through after the surgery that put me back in the hospital. Now that I am able to start this study, I wanted to share it with you. I think you'll find the considerations to be profitable. Let's start by considering the word translated “reward” in the Scriptures quoted above.

The Meaning Of The Word “Reward”

If you grab a Greek Lexicon or your Strong's dictionary you'll find the Greek word “μισθός” [misthos] under Strong's # 3408. You'll find a definition like this: “pay for service (literally or figuratively), good or bad:—hire, reward, wages.” If you take the time to look up other Scriptures that have this Greek word in them you will find the term is translated as “reward” (i.e. Matthew 5:46, Matthew 6:1, etc.), “hire” (Matthew 20:8, Luke 10:7, and James 5:4), or “wages” (John 4:36 and II Peter 2:15).

As the definition stated, that word isn't always speaking of a good reward. The word is also used in talking about the negative. For example... *“Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward”* (Matthew 6:2). We know the “reward” for hypocrites is not eternal life (Romans 2:1-11).

As you read those verses and consider the definition of the term “reward”, what do you think about? What comes to mind? Are you considering working harder for the reward? Are

you thinking of what you deserve as a reward? What is on your mind? I will share with you what was on my mind and now is as I do this study.

My Thoughts

First, I know the subtitle of this section of this article is weak at best. I know my thoughts do not mount to more than a pile of dung in the short or long run (Isaiah 55:7-9). I just knew of no better way to transist, frankly!

As I think or even thought about the word "reward", I thought about how I do not deserve anything from God. In fact, it was a prayer of thanksgiving that got me down this road of thought. I was lying in pain, in bed, and was thankful for everything. I was most thankful for the hope in front of me. Tears crept into my eyes as I confessed to my Heavenly Father how much I know I am not worthy of any reward in the sense of an earning. What have I earned? What have you earned? Now, what are your thoughts? Let's consider some Scriptures.

Some Scriptural Thoughts About Our Reward

Are we really worthy of, on our own, a reward? Can you or I really, aside from God, do anything that comes close to earning of eternal life for our services? The Scriptures try to keep our minds right on this subject. Therefore, consider them: *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"* (Ephesians 2:1-10).

It is not that we are not required to do good works for our salvation (Philippians 2:12 and James 2:14-26). It is not that we do not gain something for our work either (Matthew 25:31-46, John 5:28-29, and Galatians 6:7-9). Grace teaches us to work (Titus 2:11-14). However, in doing all we are expected to do, we are still unprofitable servants (Luke 17:7-10). The humbling factor is that no matter how much we do, we cannot earn the grace of God (II Timothy 1:8-10). Nor should we start thinking that way lest we do our good works out of a thinking process of debt repayment (Romans 4:1-5). No one can repay God for what God has done. Therefore, we have to think of the reward on a spiritual level rather than on the carnal basis of some kind of paycheck at the end of a workweek.

Conclusion

Do you think God owes you something? Are you earning your own way? The truth is, God has done much more work toward our salvation than we have (Colossians 1:12-23)!