

Sunday, January 31, 2016—I Corinthians 3:14-15: Pauline Principles Regarding Reward

Introduction/Review

- I Corinthians 3:14-15—last week through our study of verses 14 and 15 we established that there are two possible outcomes for believers at the JSC in I Corinthians 3.
 - Rewarded by receiving a reward
 - Rewarded by losing reward
- At the outset, it is important to recall from our study that there is a positive as well as a negative aspect to reward. Consider the following scriptural breakdown of the definition for the English word “reward” from *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*.
- “To give in return, either good or evil” (*Webster’s 1828*)
 - Ephesians 6:8; Colossians 3:25—both good and bad things done in the body will be rewarded.
- “Hence, when good is returned for good, reward signifies to repay, to recompense, to compensate.” (1828)
 - Galatians 6:7-9—a man reaps what he sows.
 - I Corinthians 3:8, I Timothy 5:18—reward is simply payment or recompense for a man’s labor.
 - Titus 3:14, Colossians 1:10—a believer’s good works are fruit for which they will receive a reward.
- “When evil or suffering is returned for injury or wickedness, reward signifies to punish with just retribution, to take vengeance on, according to the nature of the case.” (*Webster’s 1828*)
 - II Timothy 4:14—reward is given for bad works.
- II Corinthians 5:10—at the JSC believers “receive the things done in the body . . . whether it be good or bad.” When the Lord rewards Alexander the Coppersmith for the things done in his body, according to this works at the JSC, which outcome will he receive? I believe he will suffer loss.
- I Corinthians 3:8—since all believers will receive a reward we need to understand the Pauline principles for how one’s reward is determined.

Pauline Principles Regarding Reward

- *Principle 1*—there is a difference between inheritance and reward. (Eph. 1:11-14; Rom. 8:17)
 - In earthly terms, an inheritance is received based upon two factors: 1) who your parents are, 2) their wealth not what you do. Contrariwise, reward is handed out any one meeting the conditions or requirements regardless of who your parents are.
 - Inheritance—An estate derived from an ancestor to an heir by succession or in course of law; or an estate which the law casts on a child or other person, as the representative of the deceased ancestor. 1) The reception of an estate by hereditary right, or the descent by which an estate or title is cast on the heir; as, the heir received the estate by inheritance. 2) The estate or possession which may descend to an heir, though it has not descended. (*Webster's 1828 Dictionary*)
 - Reward—to give in return, either good or evil. Hence, when good is returned for good, reward signifies to repay, to recompense, to compensate. When evil or suffering is return for injury or wickedness, reward signifies to punish with just retribution, to take vengeance on, according to the nature of the case. (*Webster's 1828 Dictionary*)
- *Principle 2*—a man reaps what he sows. (Gal. 6:7-9)
 - If saints could get away with bad behavior, the justice of God would be mocked.
- *Principle 3*—reward is simply payment or recompense for a man's labor. (I Cor. 3:8; I Tim. 5:18)
- *Principle 4*—reward is reckoned as a matter of debt. (Rom. 4:4, 11:6)
 - Reward is reckoned not of grace but debt they are earned. One can be entitled to a reward. A man determines what his reward will be because he chooses his work. This helps explain how a believer can “be saved yet so as by fire” at the JSC. Justification is a free gift of God's grace not of works whereas reward at the JSC is based upon one's workmanship in building upon Paul's foundation.
- *Principle 5*—reward is given for bad works. (II Tim. 4:14)
- *Principle 6*—reward is reckoned on the basis of work/labor. (I Cor. 3:8, 14-15)
- *Principle 7*—a believer's good works are fruit for which they will receive a reward. (Titus 3:14; Col. 1:10)
 - Philippians 4:14-16—the Philippian saints had taken it upon themselves to financially support the Apostle Paul.

- Philippians 4:17—while Paul was grateful for the monetary gifts that he received from the Philippians while he was in Thessalonica, his primary desire was that “fruit . . . may abound to your account.” What account is Paul talking about?
- Romans 14:12—the “account” one gives at the JSC in verse 10. When a believer gives in support of the Grace Message, fruit is being added to their account.
- Romans 15:25-28—Paul seals the saints to the “fruit” of their giving. There is clearly a reward associated with the financial support of the work of the ministry.
- II Corinthians 9:6-7—this takes us right back to principle number 2 (A man reaps what he sows.) those that sow sparing in terms of their giving will also reap sparing in terms of their giving.
- *Principle 8*—positive reward is given for work willingly performed; not for things that we are obligated to do. (I Cor. 9:16-18)
 - In an earthly sense is there a reward for being a law abiding citizen? No.
 - I Corinthians 9:16—Paul was obligated to preach the gospel. Necessity was laid upon Paul to preach the gospel.
 - *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* defines necessity as follows: 1) That which must be and cannot be otherwise, or the cause of that which cannot be otherwise. 2) Irresistible power; compulsive force, physical or moral.
 - If a man’s actions are determined by causes beyond his control, he acts from necessity, and is not a free agent.
 - I Corinthians 7:37—necessity is the opposite of having power over your own will.
 - Philemon 14—necessity and willingly are opposites.
 - II Corinthians 9:7—giving of necessity and grudgingly are the opposite of cheerful giving.
 - Acts 9:6—Jesus Christ told Paul what he "must do."
 - Romans 1:14—Paul was a debtor to Jews and Gentiles because he had been entrusted with the truth.
 - I Timothy 3:1—today, unlike Paul, one chooses their ministry based upon desire.

- I Corinthians 9:16—there was no glory for Paul in the act of preaching the gospel because he was necessarily obligated to do so.
- I Thessalonians 2:19-20—Paul’s glory at the judgment seat of Christ will be in the people he ministered to.
- I Corinthians 9:17—did Paul preach the gospel willingly or against his will? Against his will. It is not that Paul was unhappy to preach the gospel but that he did not choose to have the Lord appear to him on the road to Damascus and commit a dispensation unto him.
- II Timothy 1:10-11—Paul did not act willingly because he was appointed a preacher and had to do certain things. Paul didn't chose to have the Lord appear to him on the road to Damascus. Jonah would be an Old Testament example of this concept. Paul had a dispensation committed to him that he had to fulfill. He had no reward for preaching because it was an obligation.
- Positive reward is given for things we are not required to do. If you are required to do it, you don't receive a reward in a positive sense.
- I Corinthians 4:1-2—there is no reward simply for holding to Pauline doctrine since this is something that you are required to do.
- The relevant question is this: What do you do willingly? What do you freely give? What do you sacrifice? We are not just talking about money, but time, talent, effort, etc.
- I Corinthians 9:18—Paul's "reward" was to make the gospel free of charge. His reward was derived out of something he could do that he was not required to do. This is what he could voluntarily give of himself.
- I Corinthians 9:1-6—Paul used his power sparingly and with a view for benefitting others. Paul did this willing not of necessity. Consequently, there is a reward associated with it because Paul willingly laid aside the power that was given unto him as an apostle to function in this manner. Paul used his power sparingly and with a view for benefitting others.
- I Corinthians 9:19—Paul took the mindset of a servant so that he “might gain more.” It is in this that Paul would be rewarded.
- Don't think of your Christian life as doing what you are required to do. Think of what you can do that you are not required to do.
- On the negative side, failing to do what you are required to do can result in the loss of reward.