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## What God Rewards



**Part 27** (970316AM)

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*Psalm 19:11* Moreover by them is thy servant warned: [and] in keeping of them [there is] great reward. (KJV)

Have you ever heard anyone say, "Well you can't take it with you!" That is true. God no less says the same thing. But so many have tried. Most notably we think of the god-kings of Egypt. Those Pharaohs built giant banks (known as pyramids) to house their fabulous wealth so they could "take it with them". Now empty and looted they stand as silent witnesses to the folly of trying to hold onto this earth.

Perhaps the contrast between the last hours of life in two vastly different men will help us see how great are God's rewards!

The first man was the incredibly wealthy, last king of Assyria (in what is today Iran). Ancient sources give a remarkably clear picture of the destruction of Ninevah. There had been rebellions in the empire for some time. Many of them were repulsed by the armies of Nineveh supported by her allies. But in the year 612 B.C. the doom of the city arrived. Combined armies of Babylonians and Scythians marched up the left bank of the Tigris River and surrounded the city. It happened in early spring at the time of the annual rainfalls. Since the rains were especially hard that year, the Tigris and other rivers flooded and apparently washed away a portion of the walls, leaving a breach for the armies to enter the city.

The Greek historian Diodorus Siculus (c. 20 B.C.) says that the river not only broke down the walls of the city, it also inundated part of it. At this point, the king, Sardanapalus, remembering an oracle to the effect that Nineveh would only fall when the river itself declared war against it, believed that the oracle was fulfilled and abandoned any hope of saving himself. He built a gigantic funeral pyre in the royal precincts, heaped up large quantities of gold and costly clothes, shut his concubines and eunuchs in a chamber he had made in the midst of the pyre, and then burned himself, his family, his concubines and eunuchs, and the palace. For centuries the wealth of the ancient world had been pouring into Nineveh as a result of the Assyrian conquests. Now it burned!

The second man was neither wealthy nor a king. His name was CT Studd. After serving 15 years in China and 6 years in India, he invested his final 21 years in the heart of Africa's vast, dark jungles among the fierce, cannibal, head-hunting pygmies. As his breaths became more shallow and labored, and his skin turned black. We need to remember the passing of this hero of heroes in the Lord's army of faithful servants.

CT Studd, a former lean and fit athlete, now gaunt and emaciated. All his gleaming white teeth now either broken, brown or long gone; stooped, halting with each step, he is surrounded by thousands of glistening black bodies wearing banana leaves. They have come to hear their beloved Bwana for the last time. He speaks to them only after over two hours of singing the songs he had so lovingly taught them: "Wounded for me, wounded for me, there on the cross He was wounded for me, gone my transgressions and now I can sing, all because Jesus was wounded for me!"

There in front of him sit 5,000 former head hunters. Now their oiled bodies, formerly the habitation of dark, foul fiends from the pit are temples of the living God. Once naked and grossly immoral lovers of darkness, now not only clothed in Christ but also modestly clothed in banana leaves. Before their beloved father in the faith they sit in an immense sea of white toothed smiles. With faces turned heavenward they sing of the sweet by and by and that beautiful shore they will someday see.

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Passed now are the years of darkness and savagery. The former enemies sit shoulder to shoulder. No weapons of war are left, only the bond of love. This would be the last sight of his dear saintly converts Studd would see. After his message uttered between gasps for air, with every ear strained to catch each word, he is carried back to his hut. Exhausted, he rests, though only his Savior knew it was his last night. In the night the Faithful Shepherd who had led him to China, then India and finally to the very heart of Africa - took CT home. In the morning only the shriveled earthly tent was left. But around that hut and to the furthest reaches of the jungles and on mission stations around the world, the footprints of this giant can be found today.

CT Studd gave every thing to Christ. And in return he lost nothing. Sardanapalus kept everything to the end and died as it was destroyed. Jim Elliot summed it up the best, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." This morning let's find what we can give up that will last forever!

## WHAT ARE THE BELIEVER'S REWARDS?

### 1. Christ Sees All His Servants Clearly:

- He opens the inner thoughts of our hearts. [1 Samuel 16:7](#) But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For [the] [Lord does] not [see] as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (NKJV)
- He will correct the direction of all who ask. [Psalm 139:23-24](#) Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; 24 And see if [there is any] wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting. (NKJV)
- He brings all the evidence to light. [1 Corinthians 4:5](#) Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. (NKJV)
- Nothing is hidden from Him. [Hebrews 4:13](#) And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things [are] naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we [must give] account. (NKJV)

### 2. Christ Examines each Servant Individually:

- Only those servants who built to "specs" are Rewarded [1 Corinthians 3:12-15](#) 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. (NKJV)
- Jesus gives out correct rewards [2 Timothy 4:8](#) Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (NKJV)

### 3. Christ Promises Rewards for Faithful Servants:

- God calls us great if we teach what we live. [Matthew 5:19](#) "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches [them,] he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (NKJV)
- God gives eternal joy to faithful servants. [Matthew 25:21](#) "His lord said to him, 'Well [done,] good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' (NKJV)
- We can be confidently awaiting Christ. [1 Corinthians 1:6-9](#) even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, 7 so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will also confirm you to the end, [that you may be] blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God [is] faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (NKJV)
- God rewards us based on the big picture. [1 Corinthians 4:5](#) Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. (NKJV)
- The reward appointments come one at a time. [2 Corinthians 5:10](#) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things [done] in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (NKJV); [Colossians 3:24-25](#) knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. (NKJV).
- We can be pleasing God with our lives. [Philippians 1:10](#) that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, (NKJV)
- Keeping the Word gets the Crown [2 Timothy 2:5](#) And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. (NKJV)
- Rewards come for missing Jesus so much you look for his return. [2 Timothy 4:8](#) Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (NKJV)
- God remembers who has earned rewards [Hebrews 6:10](#) For God [is] not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, [in that] you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. (NKJV);
- God is only swayed by what we do for Him. [1 Peter 1:17](#) And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay [here] in fear; (NKJV)
- Spiritual maturity leads to boldness [1 John 4:17](#) Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. (NKJV)

### 4. Christ Promises Loss of Rewards for Fleshly Servants:

- Building for self brings heavenly loss [1 Corinthians 3:15](#) If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (NKJV)
- Undisciplined living always leads to spiritual disqualification [1 Corinthians 9:27](#) But I discipline my body and bring [it] into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (NKJV)

1. O. 1 Swindoll,
2. Swindoll,
3. Donald McCullough, *Waking from the American Dream* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1975), 15.
4. Adapted from Swindoll, *Shedding Light*, p. 61.
5. As told by Charles R. Swindoll in *Come Before Winter . . . and Share My Hope* (Portland, Oreg.: Multnomah Press, 1985), p. 34.
6. Euripides, as quoted in *The Home Book of Quotations*, 10th ed., comp. Burton Stevenson (New York, N.Y.: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1967), p. 377.
7. *From Heaven*, by J. Oswald Sanders, p. 148-49.
8. *Maler, The Book of Nahum*, p. 127. Diodorus's work is called the *Chronicles*. The material on the fall n in turn from *Persica*, a chronicle of Assyria and Persia in twenty-three books by a Greek physician named Cresias, of which only fragments survive.

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