

# Christian Discipleship Guide



*“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.’” (Matthew 28:18-20)*

## 14. The Judgment Seat of Christ

Many new Christians know that there is a heaven and a hell. They know they are saved by grace through faith and that they will be with the Lord Jesus Christ forever in heaven. They know there are consequences for sin, and that God disciplines His children when they disobey His Word. But, they also wonder if there will be a Judgment Day for Christians and what will be their accountability to a holy God.

The Christian life is a series of paradoxical truths. The Bible says that God's ways are not our ways because man looks on the outward physical matters, while God looks at the heart attitude and operates in the spiritual realm. If we are going to serve God effectively, we must take our focus off of physical matters and concentrate on the spiritual and eternal matters. We need to focus on eternal matters and have a thorough understanding of our final accountability to the Lord Jesus Christ as His servants.

So, yes, there will be a Judgment Day and a final accountability for all Christians. But, what is the "Judgment Seat of Christ?" The Bible says that God will judge every human being who has ever lived (Proverbs 29:26; Hebrews 9:27). But God already judged the sin of the world at Calvary. So by placing our faith in Jesus Christ, we do not have to fear judgment of our sins, because Jesus took our judgment upon Himself (1 Peter 2:24; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13). Our judgment, when we stand before Christ, will be for our service to the Lord Jesus Christ after our salvation. This event is called the "Judgment Seat of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10).

At this event, we will be judged for our work as a servant of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). Our work will be judged for the motive behind it and the quality, as opposed to the quantity. It will matter "of what sort (what kind) it is" (1 Corinthians 3:13). And, our heart attitudes will be more important than actual works. If the proper attitudes are developed, the proper works will come naturally (Ephesians 6:6; 1 Thessalonians 2:4).

We also need to understand that there are negative consequences of this judgment. The apostle Paul said, in speaking of the Judgment Seat of Christ, that it is the "terror of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:11). A Christian should never fear going to Hell, but there are some things to beware of in relation to the final judgment. Some Christians will be found ashamed for not living for the Lord Jesus Christ at His appearing (1 John 2:28). Some will be suffering loss because their works were temporal and not eternal (1 Corinthians 3:15). Some will be losing rewards because they lived in sin rather than for Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:7-8; 2 Corinthians 5:10). We need to remember that appearances are many times very deceiving. So, we should not be fooled by outward appearances, in our own lives as well as the lives of others. Many people only appear to be servants of the Lord (Luke 16:15; 1 Corinthians 1:27-31). We need to be sure to invest in heavenly rewards instead of earthly rewards. The real servants of the Lord will be revealed at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Matthew 6:19-20; Colossians 3:1-4).

The rewards obtainable at the Judgment Seat of Christ can be seen by studying the five crowns in the New Testament:

1. The **Crown of Righteousness** will be given to those who love the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 4:8). The Bible closes with "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). Our overriding desire should be, at all times, to be with the Lord (Philippians 1:23-24).

2. The **Crown of Life** is the martyr's crown (Revelation 2:10). It will be given to those who endure temptation and are faithful to death (James 1:12), that is, to those who overcome temptation by dying to self (Romans 6:6-11).
3. The **Incorruptible Crown** will be given for temperance or moderation (1 Corinthians 9:25). The context of 1 Corinthians 9:18-27 deals with temperance or moderation in all matters (physical, spiritual and mental) to be a testimony to others. This is balanced by remembering that some have infirmities for the purpose of glorifying God. Paul is a great example (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).
4. The **Crown of Rejoicing** is the soul-winner's crown (1 Thessalonians 2:19). It will be given to those who win people to Jesus Christ (Philippians 4:1). It will be called the Crown of Rejoicing because it produces rejoicing in Heaven when someone gets saved (Luke 15:7).
5. The **Crown of Glory** is the shepherd's crown (1 Peter 5:4). It will be given to those who pastor or shepherd people in the Word of God. The New Testament is very clear that all saved people are to be actively teaching someone the Word of God, not just preachers (Ephesians 4:11-16). It requires great wisdom which can only be obtained through the Word of God (Proverbs 4:7-9).

The focus on the return of the Lord Jesus Christ is one of the most practical doctrines in the Bible for everyday living. Notice in the following verses how many practical character qualities are produced by focusing on the return of the Lord Jesus Christ:

1. Patience (James 5:7-8; 2 Thessalonians 3:5).
2. Peace (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
3. Joy (1 Thessalonians 2:19).
4. Holiness (1 Thessalonians 3:13; 1 John 3:1-3).
5. Confidence (Philippians 1:6; 1 John 2:28).
6. Diligence in service (2 Timothy 4:1-8).
7. Righteous living (Titus 2:11-14).
8. Faith even in difficult times (1 Peter 1:5-7).

The rewards we receive on earth are all temporal and will perish. The rewards we receive at the Judgment Seat of Christ are eternal and will never perish (2 Corinthians 4:17-5:4). By constantly focusing on the Judgment Seat of Christ, we will naturally develop a desire to please God rather than men. Developing this attitude is the surest way to handle criticism and opposition (2 Corinthians 5:6-9; 1 Corinthians 7:23).

In summary, we need to set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

### **Questions:**

1. What group of people will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

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2. For what will we be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

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### **Additional Scripture Verses:**

*2 Corinthians 5:8-9; 1 John 2:28; Luke 16:15.*