

# *Treasures*



that will last  
*Forever*

TREASURES THAT WILL LAST FOREVER  
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# TREASURES THAT LAST FOREVER



Isn't it exciting when you win a prize?



But like everything on earth – it doesn't last forever.

Wouldn't it be great if you could win prizes that do last forever?

You can!

Jesus said, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:20).

## **So how do you win prizes from God?**

The Bible says you earn them by the work you do for God.

There are certain things that God has asked His children to do, and if they obey Him they are promised rewards that will last forever.

And what are some of things He has told us to do?

### **1. God commands us to read the Bible every day.**

The Bible is the Word of God and it's food for your soul. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

Just as you have to eat in order to stay strong physically, you need to read God's Word every day so you can be strong spiritually. The Bible says, "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (First Peter 2:2).



When you read the Bible don't worry about what you don't understand. Just apply what you do understand and you'll see that you will understand more and more of the Bible. God will reward your efforts. And one of those rewards is happiness! It says, "Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding" (Proverbs 3:13). This happiness can come only to those who read God's Word and do what it says.

I have some suggestions to make it easier for you. If you have never read the Bible, please start by reading the Gospel of John. If you read it first, it can help make the rest of the Bible easier to understand.

And why not read one chapter a day from the Book of Proverbs too. Proverbs tells you how to gain wisdom.

## **2. God commands us to pray.**

Prayer is simply talking to God. It's not some made-up speech. Can you imagine having a child who said exactly the same thing to you every day?

We should pray for friends and family and ask God to help us to live a life that is pleasing to Him. And when we pray, God wants us to give thanks to Him for all He has done for us (First Thessalonians 5:17,18).

If we are obedient to God He will give us more and more things to be thankful for because He will be answering our prayers. First John 3:22, says, "And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."

## **3. God commands us to choose our friends wisely.**

If we are living good lives and being obedient to God, but we start hanging around people who are living bad lives, guess what is going to happen? Those people can end up making us live bad lives too. The Bible says, "The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray," which means you can't help but be influenced by the people you hang around (Proverbs 12:26).



King David wrote, “I am a companion of all who fear You, and of those who keep Your precepts” (Psalm 119:63). David picked friends who felt the same way about God as He did. They feared God, which means they respected God and were obedient to Him.

And you know what? If you have to lose some bad friends, God promises He will reward you and give you some good ones (Matthew 19:29).

#### **4. God commands us not to grieve the Holy Spirit.**

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by Whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30).

The moment you trusted Jesus alone to get you to heaven, you received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:43,44). That means that God, Himself, lives within us. If we do what is pleasing to God, He rewards us with good feelings like love, joy and peace (Galatians 5:22,23). If you make God happy, He will make you happy.

But if we are doing things we know are wrong and don’t change and confess our sins to God, then we are hurting God’s feelings. That’s what it means to grieve the Spirit. We can’t lose the Spirit, but we can lose the good feelings that come from obedience to God. So instead of feeling happy, we can feel miserable.

Doesn’t it make sense that the God Who made you would know what’s best for you? God loves you and He wants to be your friend. Jesus said, “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (John 15:14).

Isn’t that amazing? You can be friends with the One Who created the universe!

## 5. God commands us to tell others how to go to heaven.

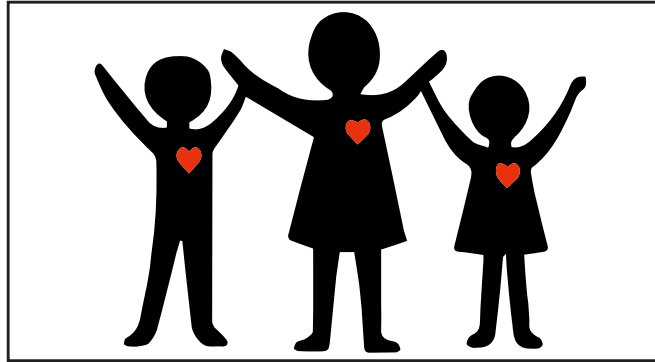
Jesus said, “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

The Gospel is good news! Think about it – we don’t *hope* we’re going to heaven; we *know* we’re going to heaven because Jesus paid our way and we trusted Him alone to get us there. We understand that going to heaven has nothing to do with what we do because the Bible says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

It just makes sense that if God loves every person in the world so much that He came to earth and paid their way to heaven by dying for their sins, He’d want them to hear this message. Since we know how to go to heaven it is up to us to spread the word.



**If you care - you'll share!**



Many people believe Jesus died for their sins, but they don't understand the only condition to go to heaven is to believe in Him. They think they have to do more than that, like be good and keep His commandments. And there are other people who believe in Jesus but think they have to ask Him into their heart and confess Him.

So instead of trusting Jesus alone, they are also trusting in what they are doing. But Jesus didn't leave us our part – He did it all! He didn't die to be our Helper; He died to be our Savior.

And if a person doesn't trust in Jesus alone to go to heaven then someday that person is going to go to a bad place. That's why it's so important for us who know the truth about how to go to heaven to share it with those who don't.

Here is a sample of how to share this wonderful message.

**Tom** Hi, I talk to people about how to go to heaven. Have you ever wondered about it?

**Bill** Sometimes.

**Tom** Do you think you have to be good to go to heaven?



**Bill** Of course!

**Tom** If that is true, would heaven be a gift or a reward?

**Bill** A reward.

**Tom** Right. But let me show you a verse where it says heaven is a gift. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

So since this verse says heaven is a gift, do you have to be good to go to heaven?

**Bill** I guess not.

**Tom** Think of it this way. If you were drowning and someone saved you – what did you do? Nothing, right? It’s the person who saved you who did all the work. When Jesus died for our sins that was God Himself doing everything that had to be done to get us to heaven. He said, in John 6:47, “he who believes in Me has everlasting life.”

The reason to be good is to have a happy life. A happy life is a reward, but eternal life is a gift.

**Bill** I never thought of it like that before.

**Tom** I have a good question for you. If someone believed in Jesus but also thought he had to be good to go to heaven, would he go to the good place or the bad place?

**Bill** The good place.

**Tom** I used to think so too. But, according to the Bible, he would go to the bad place. As long as someone thinks he has to do more than believe in Jesus he is putting faith in himself and

the Bible says in Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Does that make sense?

**Bill** Yes it does.

**Tom** Have you ever heard you have to ask Jesus into your heart?

**Bill** Yes.

**Tom** Did you know it’s a made-up saying?

**Bill** Really? My grandmother told me to do it.

**Tom** The Bible says when you believe in Jesus He comes into your heart automatically. So why ask? He’s already there. And do asking and believing mean the same thing?

**Bill** No.

**Tom** I did have one more question. What if someone trusted Jesus alone to get him to heaven, but stopped believing and lived a bad life and never asked for forgiveness, would he go to heaven because he had once believed?

**Bill** No.

**Tom** **(with a smile on his face)** Let’s see if Jesus agrees with you. Look at John 5:24. Jesus said, “Most assuredly I say unto you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”

**Bill** Wow! That means no matter what someone does after he believes he’ll still go to heaven.

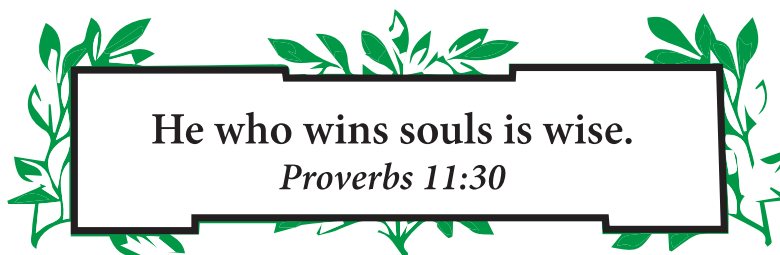
**Tom** Exactly. It's like having children. No matter what they do they are still your children. But good parents don't let their kids live as they please. Even though God promises in John 6:37 that He will never cast us out of His family, He certainly does promise to straighten us out. I can't go to the bad place after I die, but I can spend some time in jail if I break God's rules. God gives His children lots of reasons to be good, like happiness and joy and He even promises us treasures in heaven for the good things we do.

So besides believing in Jesus, what else do we have to do go to heaven?

**Bill** Nothing, right?

**Tom** Right. Look at this great promise. First John 5:13, says, "These things have I written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know you have eternal life." The name *Jesus* means *God our Savior*. So if you believe Jesus is God and He alone is your Savior, you can know you're going to heaven.

**Bill** I'm going! Thanks for sharing that with me. I have to tell my grandmother.



# What is a Disciple?



The Bible says a disciple is someone who tells a lot of people about how to go to heaven. Every person who believes the message is called “fruit.” Jesus said, “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples” (John 15:8).

God has some fantastic promises for those who bear much fruit. Jesus said He would give you joy. And this is not just any joy, but His joy! Imagine, having God’s joy! Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15:11).

Jesus also promised He would answer your prayers. He said, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7).

God is wonderful. Besides these earthly blessings of joy and answered prayers, He also promises to give you rewards in heaven.

You may be wondering what kind of rewards God is offering.

The Bible says when a believer is doing works for God, his works are gold, silver and precious stones. Precious stones are gems like rubies and diamonds. But if you aren’t serving Christ then what you are doing is amounting to wood, hay and straw.

Someday all God’s children will be rewarded for their works. The believer who served God will have treasure in heaven, but the believers who did nothing for God, won’t get any rewards.

The Bible explains that someday, when we are all in heaven, God is going to have a fire come upon these materials of gold,

silver, precious stones, wood, hay and straw. What do you think is going to burn up? The answer, of course, is wood, hay and straw. Because some believers never do anything for God, all their works are going to burn up and they will have no rewards. It says in First Corinthians 3:15, “If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”



Can you imagine if you had built a house and it caught on fire and thankfully you escaped safely, but your house burned down? How would you feel? You would be happy you got out safely, but you’d feel terrible about your house. That is sort of what it’s going to be like in heaven for some people. They will be happy to be in heaven, but they are going to feel badly that they wasted their lives.

I’m sure you don’t want to get to heaven and see just a pile of wood, hay and straw. Believe me, if you don’t serve God you are wasting your life – it’s a big loss.

Think about it - anything done for Christ is amounting to eternal rewards. The Apostle Paul wrote, “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). Because Paul was living his life to please God he knew when he died he would have eternal rewards.

Now I know one of the main reasons some people don't want to share the Gospel is because they are afraid of what other people will think of them. First of all, you should be more concerned about what God thinks about you, don't you agree? And second of all, what if someone does make fun of you – how should you react? Jesus said you should “Be glad in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven” (Luke 6:23).



Now is the time to use your time wisely. Only then will you have treasures that will last forever!





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