

The Christian Arsenal

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INVEST AND INVITE BIBLE STUDY SERIES INTRODUCTION

INVEST and INVITE is not a program, it is a lifestyle to be adopted. This lifestyle is directly related to earning your crowns awarded by God. INVEST means to dedicate time in a person or persons with the sole purpose to INVITE them to our church and /or Bible study. Your goal is to give this person(s) the opportunity to hear the Gospel and find a ministry of their own. INVESTING and INVITING is an activity most Christians, sad to say, do not participate in. If a survey were to be taken and honest answers given as to *why* they do not, the main reasons might be "What's in it for me?" or "I'll do it later". This 5 part series may give the believer a clear picture of what rewards are in store for him or her and create a sense of urgency to start now.

The believer's rewards are explained in I Corinthians 3:8-15. (NKJV)

"Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay and straw, each one's work will become manifest; 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. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss' but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."

There is a vast difference in the doctrine of salvation for the lost, and the doctrine of rewards for the saved. Salvation is the "gift of God, not of works".... Ephesians 2:8,9. Salvation is received by faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. John 3:36. The unsaved will have their just reward before the Great White Throne of Judgement. Revelation 20:11-15. The saved will receive their rewards (crowns) before the "Bema" seat of Jesus and the other saints in heaven Romans 14:10. Those who are saved but have done nothing or performed useless work will receive nothing (I Corinthians 3:15).

Every believer will be rewarded according to his or her own labor. We labor for rewards, not for salvation. The believer is to build on Jesus Christ alone. The believer can choose two types of building material. Precious or eternal things is one option, the other is to build on temporal things. Those who build precious things on Jesus Christ will get the rewards. Some believers will be ashamed at the judgement seat of Christ, ashamed of their works (I John 2:28).

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Create a sense of urgency: I have read of a pastor who visited a dying man in the hospital. As they talked of his home-going, tears filled the dying man's eyes. The Pastor first thought the man was afraid to die, and attempted to speak words of encouragement to him. The man said, "I am not afraid to die, I am ashamed to die." He went on to say how Christ saved him but he lived for himself. Now he was going to meet the Lord empty handed.

Discussion Questions:

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INVEST AND INVITE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Series #1

Review INTRODUCTION. Ask for comments, solicit questions.

The first “Reward” we will look at is the **Crown of Life**.

James 1:12 (NKJV)

“Blessed is the man who endures temptation: for when he has been proved, he will receive the Crown of Life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”

All believers have eternal life (see John 3:15,16), but not all believers will be rewarded with the Crown of Life. This crown will be given to those who are “faithful unto death.” Revelation 2:10. To receive the Crown of Life, the believer must love the Lord more than his own life. “Whosoever shall save his life (live for self) shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s (live for Christ at all cost) the same shall save it.” The reward will be given to those who live for Christ, and endure temptations, in the power of the love of God. See I Corinthians 10:13.

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

We all have faced, and will continue to face temptations to pull our focus from serving Christ and yield to the pressures of society. Whenever you feel you have succumbed to indifference, apathy, and discouragement, read what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 5:3-5 (NKJV).

“And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

Create a sense of urgency: Sometimes INVESTING in someone takes more time than you expected. Getting to know someone, finding common ground, and finding the courage to INVITE this person God has put in your path of life can be more than you expected. Remember the love God has for you and will give you a “way out” of your temptation during your difficult time in serving Him. You will win the Crown of Life when you persevere in the strength of Christ. What methods do you use persevere?

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INVEST AND INVITE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Series #2

Review INTRODUCTION AND Series #1. The second reward we will examine is the **Incorruptible Crown**. I Corinthians 9:24-27 (KJV)

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

Paul makes use of the Greek games to illustrate the spiritual race of the believer. They ran to win a “corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible” crown. No young man could contend in the games unless he was a Greek citizen, born of Greek parents. No unsaved person can participate in the services of the Lord for rewards, only the born of God are eligible. Just as the athlete must deny himself many gratifications of the body, so the believer must “keep under his body, and bring it unto subjection” or he will become a castaway. He will not lose his salvation, but he will lose the Incorruptible Crown. The winner of this crown will get rid of anything that will hold him back from serving the Lord and keep focused on his or her called duty. *The believer must:*

1. keep his eyes fixed on Christ and not look to the right or the left (Heb 12:2).
2. deny self of anything that would weigh him down and hold him back (Heb 12:1).
3. find his strength in the Lord (Eph 6:10-18).
4. place his all upon the altar of the Lord (Rom 12:1,2).
5. by faith, refuse anything that would impede spiritual progress (Heb 11:24-29).

Create a sense of urgency: One of my favorite events is the decathlon while watching the Olympic Games. During each grueling event the participants know they must be in the best condition possible to compete. The athlete does not risk anything that may slow his effort wearing only shoes, shorts, and a shirt. Though he may not win this event, he gives his all to contribute to his final score. You are not likely a recipient of all the spiritual gifts. However, the spiritual gifts you have must be used with all your efforts to “win this race”. You may say that evangelism is not your gift and cannot INVEST time to INVITE someone to your Bible study or a church service. This may not be your “best event” but you can still participate. The Apostle Paul said that we are all ministers of Christ and we all have a testimony. Let the Holy Spirit help you find a way to INVEST and INVITE. Don’t be a spiritual spectator. Enter the race and run to win the Incorruptible Crown.

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INVEST AND INVITE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Series #3

Review INTRODUCTION and Series #1 and #2. It is important to remember the purpose found in I Cor. 3:8-15.

The third reward to obtain in heaven is the **Crown of Rejoicing**.

I Thessalonians 2:19, 20 (NKJV)

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.

The Crown of Rejoicing is the soul winner's crown. The greatest work you are privileged to do for the Lord is to bring others to knowledge of Christ as personal Savior. The degree of your joy in heaven will be determined by the souls you have had a part in bringing to Christ. Paul tells the Thessalonian believers that they are his "hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing" now and when Jesus comes.

1. It is wise to win souls to Christ. Proverbs 11:30.
2. It is a work against sin to win souls to Christ. James 5:20.
3. It is a cause for joy in heaven to win souls to Christ. Luke 15:10.
4. Every soul winner will shine as the stars forever. Daniel 12:3

How can you win souls to Christ?

Witness with your life. Live that others may see Christ in you. II Cor 3:2 and Gal 2:20.

Witness with your mouth, trusting the Holy Spirit to give power to the spoken word. Acts 1:8.

Witness with your tithes and offerings that others may preach Christ and you will have fruit that may abound to your account. Phil 4:15-17 and II Cor. 9:6.

INVEST time in someone or a family and INVITE them to come to church with you. Pray that God will place someone on your heart to be a witness to.

God has promised that your labor will not be in vain in the Lord (I Cor. 15:58). The soul winner will not rejoice alone, all of heaven will rejoice with him or her when he or she receives the Crown of Rejoicing (John 4:36).

Create a sense of urgency: Tomorrow is promised to no one. Relationships take time to develop. Procrastination leads to nothing. All these thoughts should lead one to realize that "today is the tomorrow you talked about yesterday".

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INVEST AND INVITE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Series #4

Review previous lessons. Emphasize the “what’s in it for me” concept.

The fourth reward is the **Crown of Righteousness**.

II Timothy 4:5-8 (NKJV)

“But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will give to me on the Day and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

The Crown of Righteousness is a reward, and it is not to be confused with the Righteousness of God which the believer receives when he becomes a Christian; for at that time, the believer is made the righteousness of God in Him (II Cor. 5:21). This saving righteousness is a gift to be accepted by the lost. The Crown of Righteousness is a reward to be earned by the saved. If the believer looks for and loves the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ, it will affect his or her whole life. Look at the dynamic impact this truth had on the life of the Apostle Paul.

He could say he fought the good fight, which was a spiritual battle throughout his Christian life, and won. He never surrendered to the enemies of righteousness (see Eph. 6:12). Paul finished his course. In other words, he did not detour or take the easy, more convenient road. Neither did he look back; his eyes were always fixed on Christ. Luke records in 9:62, “and Jesus said unto him, ‘No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.’ If you have ever plowed a field or even mowed a yard, you know a straight line is hard to make.

Paul kept the faith never betraying the great doctrines (Acts 20:24-27). Paul looked ahead at the judgment seat of Christ where the Crown of Righteousness will be given to anyone who lives their life as if Jesus was to come back any day.

Create a sense of urgency: What would happen if a church lived as if Jesus were coming back at the end of this week AND everyone was looking forward to it? How would your life change? What would you do different? If you are not happy about His return, sounds like an appointment in the prayer closet may be appropriate.

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INVEST AND INVITE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Series #5

Review as necessary all previous lessons.

The fifth and final crown, but certainly not the least, mentioned in the New Testament is the **Crown of Glory**. I Peter 5:2-4 (NKJV)

Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by constraint but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

The Crown of Glory is a special reward for the faithful, obedient God-called pastor. He will receive this reward when “the Chief Shepherd shall appear.” It is eternal; it “fadeth not away”. Every believer may share in the pastor’s Crown of Glory. Refer to and mark in your Bible, Matthew 10:41 which states, “He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward.” Support your faithful, God-called Pastor by praying for him and encouraging him in the work of the Lord. Under-gird his ministry with God’s tithes and your offerings. Give cheerfully your time, talents, and efforts in helping your Pastor achieve the goals of the church – ministering to others and leading the lost to Christ. A Christian will not get this reward when he or she expects the Pastor to do the work for him or her. INVESTING and INVITING certainly falls into everyone’s lap. Remember, salvation is given to you, crowns are earned. Earning implies there is work to be done. *A Pastor will earn the Crown of Glory by:*

1. Feeding the church. He is expected to proclaim the Word of God without fear and when necessary, he will reprove, rebuke, and exhort. (See II Tim. 4:2-5).
2. Taking the spiritual oversight of the church. The pastor is responsible to God for the message preached to his people. No pastor should preach to please the people; he is to please the Lord. (See Gal. 1:10).
3. Being an example to the church. He is not to serve for the reward of money. Yet the church is responsible to care for his every material need. (See I Tim. 5:18). He is to be a spiritual leader, and not a dictator. He is to walk with God by faith.

Create a sense of urgency: If we study the Gospel of Mark, we notice that Jesus was in a hurry during his ministry. Through out the Gospel we find statements like, “...and immediately He went...” Jesus ministered with a great sense of urgency. The Apostle Peter saw this and warned us all to be ready to share the gospel and your testimony in I Peter 3:15. How many times has there been a “window of opportunity” that closed because we weren’t ready to share?

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What crowns (or rewards) are waiting for me in Heaven? How do I attain these crowns? The INVEST and INVITE series will give some answers to these questions. As your leader discusses these issues, use the outline below for your personal notes.

Introduction: I Corinthians 3:8-15

The Crown of Life: James 1:12

The Incorruptible Crown: I Corinthians 9:24-27

The Crown of Rejoicing: I Thessalonians 2:19,20

The Crown of Righteousness: II Timothy 4:5-8

The Crown of Glory: I Peter 5:2-4