

## Billy Graham's Reward and Our Reward

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Billy Graham died at the age of 99. We can rejoice in the many souls that came to Christ throughout his lifelong ministry as an evangelist. I know of several people who have come to personal faith in Christ through the ministry of Billy Graham. All of us should be thrilled whenever a person trusts Christ's as their Savior. However, from a Biblical and Fundamentalist perspective, many wonder how God will reward Billy Graham. Will Billy Graham receive any reward for being the "Father of Ecumenical Evangelism?" It has been historically documented that Billy Graham advanced cooperative evangelism with infidels which questioned or rejected the key doctrines of the Bible. This raises the question about Graham's future reward which Christ will one day give to His faithful saints (2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Cor. 9:24-25; Rev. 22:12).

Will Billy Graham receive reward in view of his cooperation with theological liberals who have denied essential Bible doctrines, including the true Gospel? Will the souls won to Christ through his evangelistic efforts bring no reward to Billy Graham in view of his compromises with the apostate systems of Romanism and Liberalism? The Biblical view is that God always rewards His people for obedience and those things that reflect righteousness. However, between to two bookends of our Christian lives, we all have failed God in various ways. Since this is true for all of us, how will God reward His saints, who have both good and defective qualities related to their time of service and living on earth?

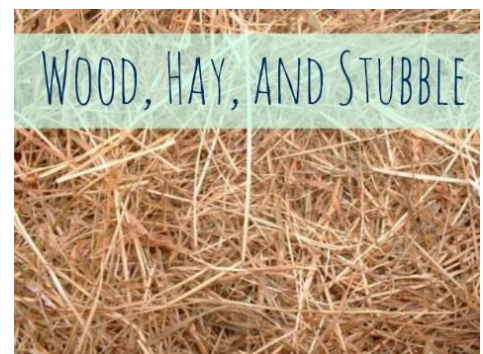
Now, imagine yourself in this silhouette picture, and let's get more personal. Let's move from Billy Graham to yourself. Will you receive any reward in view of the wrong things that you have done and the times you have been unfaithful to the Lord throughout your life? How will the good things which we have done stack up against the carnal things we have done with our lives? Although not every Christian compromises with religious liberals, we all fall under the umbrella of imperfection (Phil. 3:12). In view of this, let's sort through the above questions and get a Biblical



perspective on how God will reward His saints, who are flawed and imperfect. The truth of the matter is this; you should be more concerned about yourself, instead of Billy Graham, reflecting on the “that day” (2 Tim. 1:12; 4:8; Phil. 1:10; 2:16) when you will personally appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

The Bible teaches that each Christian will receive payment or reward “according” to what he has done or how he has lived (2 Cor. 5:10) or “according as his work shall be” (Rev. 22:12). This speaks of receiving a payment that relates to either gain or loss of reward, in view of how we have lived out our lives on earth. In 1 Corinthians 3:13 we are told that “every man’s work shall be made manifest: (for what it really was – worthy or worthless, good or bad, holy or unholy, honoring to God or dishonoring to Him) for the day shall declare it.” It also states that “the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is” (1 Cor. 3:13). God’s impeccable holiness and perfect omniscience (Rev. 1:14) will reveal the kind of works or deeds that we have done, and we will be rewarded accordingly, which means in relation to the type of work that it was. Quality will be just as important as quantity in this coming day.

Christians who serve the Lord in compromising ways and become involved with music, ministries, men and movements that they should not be involved with, will be examined accordingly. All of us will be examined according to how we have lived out our lives on earth. Only that which is worthy will last but that which is worthless will be bypassed in this final examination by Christ. Only that which is “gold, silver, and precious stones” (deeds that are worthy and acceptable) will remain and bring reward; however, the “wood, hay, and stubble” (deeds that are unworthy and not acceptable) will not pass the final test (1 Cor. 3:12). Our *faithfulness* to the truth and righteousness will be rewarded but our *flaws* will not produce any reward.





How will Christ reward Christians for the good that they do in view of their compromises? How does a life of twenty years of faithful service compare to one or two years of unfaithful living as a Christian? How will the failures and sins of one day stack up against the victories of the next day? Only the Lord Jesus will be able to balance it all out in the day of judgment! He is the final Judge (James 5:9), who with one broad sweep of His brush, will examine everything that is worthy and worthless, reveal that which was faithful or a failure, judge between the temporary and eternal, and sift through the web of our lives, unraveling the good versus the bad, the ethical versus the corruptible.

The Scriptures teach that we can lose reward by embracing false teaching, which causes us to live out our lives in a manner that is contrary to God's holy will (Col. 2:18; 2 John 1:8; Rev. 3:11). We will lose reward whenever we follow errant teaching and stray from God's holy and righteous purposes for our lives (1 Cor. 3:15; 2 Cor.



5:10). The lesson seems to be this. When we fail to do what is right, we lose reward. This is reward we otherwise could have acquired, if we had learned, lived, and served Christ differently. We should not think that the loss of reward means that Christ takes from us something we once had. Rather, it means that we lose out on what we could have received or possessed (Matt. 10:42), if we would have been more discerning and faithful (1 Cor. 4:2).

We can be sure that we will not receive any reward for what is actually deemed as unfaithful living, compromises, unrighteous deeds, or unbiblical teachings (Matt. 25:21, 23; Rev. 2:10), on the other hand, God will reward us for everything that does



directly honor Him (His Word, the truth, sharing the Gospel, salvation of souls, purity, Christlike living, integrity, giving, etc.) and which has eternal value attached to it (Matt. 6:20). Let's face it, the life of every Christian contains a mixture of both good and bad. Ultimately, only God can dig into the cracks and crevices of our Christian lives, sorting out that which

honors Him, and those things which have dishonored Him, and reward us accordingly. One thing is certain; God will only reward us for those deeds which are truly righteous and honorable (Rev. 19:8) and reject anything that does not reflect His glory (1 Pet. 1:7; Eph. 1:14; Phil. 1:11). In view of this, we should seek doctrinal and moral purity, be obedient to God, follow after righteousness, and strive for excellence in everything that we do (Phil.1:10-11).

We know that every Christian will receive some reward and praise in the coming day of examination (“then shall every man have praise of God” - 1 Cor. 4:5). Christ will sort out the wheat from the chaff, the good from the bad, the worthy and worthless, our faithfulness versus unfaithfulness, and reward us accordingly. Only the “righteous judge” (2 Tim. 4:8) can quickly scan the time we have



spent on earth, the entire history of our lives, and sift through our faithful and unfaithful actions, examine our motives and manner of living, and bring out the good that we have done, while leaving behind the ugly.

Dr. Frank Logsdon once said:

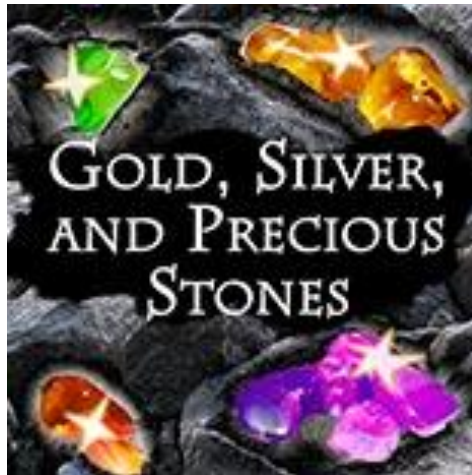
“It is a solemn engagement indeed to project our thoughts toward this day when, on bended knees before the fiery eyes of Omniscience, we face the record.”

“Every man on earth is given just one life  
Every life on earth is but a vapor.  
It appears, then it's gone  
With a record of what's done,  
Then we stand alone at the judgment seat of Christ,  
God's Holy Son.

Every deed I've done and every thought I've known,  
Every choice I've made tried by fire,  
Will it burn or remain, will it bow my head in shame,  
Will I hear God say, ‘Welcome home my child, well done, My faithful one?’

We must all bow down at the judgment seat of Christ  
We must give account for the things we've done with our lives.

I will live my life for Jesus Christ,  
So that in eternity my life will be  
Gold and silver and precious stones!”



“Only one life, twill soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last.”