

## Doctrine of the Five Crowns of Glory

1. The Incorruptible Crown - *“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.” (1 Corinthians 9:25).* Paul has in mind the athlete in the Roman arena. Before the contest, each participant practiced self-discipline, being temperate in all things. As is true of the world today, there were doubtless many pleasures and pastimes that the athletes might have entered into and enjoyed, but they denied themselves these things in order to do their best, and receive the crown of the victor. The incorruptible crown for the Christian is the victor’s crown for those who keep protect their bodies and bring it into subjection. It is a conquering of the old nature.
  
2. The Crown of Rejoicing. *“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy” (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20).* This is the soul-winner’s crown. The first thing that a Christian should pray for and seek to cultivate is the desire, ability, and wisdom to win lost souls to Jesus Christ. Every time an individual is converted, there is joy in Heaven; but at the day of the giving of rewards, the soul-winner will be exceedingly joyful, when those are presented to God whom he had won to Christ. What is our hope of reward as Christ’s witnesses? The answer is in those who will be in Heaven because of our prayers, gifts, preaching, and personal work.
  
3. The Crown of Righteousness. *“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto them also that love His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8).* Here the character of the reward corresponds to the character of the Giver. Both are said to be righteous. The doctrine of our Lord’s return is regarded very highly by God. In spite of the fact that Jesus said He would come again, there are many people who scoff at the thought of Christ’s appearing. This and kindred truths have brought suffering and hardship, and in some cases death to those who insisted on preaching and teaching them. But how wonderful to know that God has prepared a special reward for all who look for that blessed hope, who wait for His son from Heaven, and who love His appearing.
  
4. The Crown of Life. *“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him” (James 1:12).* *“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).* The Crown of Life is reserved for those who have given their lives for the sake of the Gospel. Not all of our Lord’s witnesses have been called to suffering and martyrdom. Not all would be willing to pay with their lives to take the message of salvation to the lost. How thoughtful and just our heavenly Father was when He prepared a martyr’s crown for those who suffer persecution for Christ’s sake! Though some of us will not receive the Crown of Life, we will rejoice with those who refused to count the cost and have died proclaiming the Gospel of Christ.

5. The Crown of Glory. *“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble”* (1 Peter 5:2-5). There are many who have been called and ordained by God to preach and teach His Word. These are the under shepherds who care for the flock of God during the absence of the Chief Shepherd.