

The Balance of God's Work

7/2011 Mark Beaird

Text: 1 Corinthians 3:5-9 NIV

5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. **6** I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. **7** So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. **8** The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. **9** For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

If you have children or grandchildren and they play sports, you have probably been to a rewards ceremony or had a child proudly show you his or her trophy at the end of the season. Everybody gets one. No matter how good a player they were—they get a trophy—just for playing! In my day, hardly anyone got a trophy, unless they made all-stars or the team won, and then it was a team trophy.

Every so often I will hear someone complain about all the trophies they feel were unearned. The American mentality is all about winning and being first and being best. The idea of everyone getting a trophy is hard for some to swallow.

Well, no matter how you feel about that, it's not much different in the kingdom of God. God is not interested in all-stars, or who's first or who is best. God is interested in who is faithful. This was a lesson Paul was trying to teach the Corinthian church who were choosing up sides to follow their favorite apostle.

Take a moment and look with me at a few *truths* about the way rewards in the kingdom of God really works.

I. Although Our Efforts For The Kingdom Differ, We Are One in Christ (vv.6-7).

A. Everyone's work is to win souls to Christ.

B. We each play a different role in soul winning.

II. We Are Not Rewarded For Success in Man's Eyes, But For Faithfulness in God's Eyes (v.8).

- A. Each will give an account for his or her efforts—not his successes.**
- B. Each will be rewarded according to his or her efforts—not his successes.**

III. God's Work is Bigger Than Us.

- A. In Christ, we are each a part of something greater.**
- B. Most importantly we are God's workmanship.**

We are God's building. We are the field he cultivates. We are the house God is building—the place where He intends to dwell.

Conclusion

In light of the mentality of our society, the truths about the way rewards in the kingdom really work can be surprising in, but in them, God Helps us to see a greater purpose.