

Question: "What are the five heavenly crowns that believers can receive in Heaven?"
<https://www.gotquestions.org/heavenly-crowns.html>

Answer: There are five heavenly crowns mentioned in the New Testament that will be awarded to believers. They are the imperishable crown, the crown of rejoicing, the crown of righteousness, the crown of glory, and the crown of life. The Greek word translated "crown" is *stephanos* (the source for the name Stephen the martyr) and means "a badge of royalty, a prize in the public games or a symbol of honor generally." Used during the ancient Greek games, it referred to a wreath or garland of leaves placed on a victor's head as a reward for winning an athletic contest. As such, this word is used figuratively in the New Testament of the rewards of heaven God promises those who are faithful. Paul's passage in 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 best defines for us how these crowns are awarded.

1) The Imperishable Crown – (1 Corinthians 9:24-25) "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate [disciplined] in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown" (NKJV). All things on this earth are subject to decay and will perish. Jesus urges us to not store our treasures on earth "where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal" (Matthew 6:19). This is analogous to what Paul was saying about that wreath of leaves that was soon to turn brittle and fall apart. But not so the heavenly crown; faithful endurance wins a heavenly reward which is "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:3-5).

2) The Crown of Rejoicing – (1 Thessalonians 2:19) "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?" The apostle Paul tells us in Philippians 4:4 to "rejoice always in the Lord" for all the bountiful blessings our gracious God has showered upon us. As Christians we have more in this life to rejoice about than anyone else. Luke tells us there is rejoicing even now in heaven (Luke 15:7). The crown of rejoicing will be our reward where "God will wipe away every tear . . . there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

3) The Crown of Righteousness – (2 Timothy 4:8) "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." We inherit this crown through the righteousness of Christ which is what gives us a right to it, and without which it cannot be obtained. Because it is obtained and possessed in a righteous way, and not by force and deceit as earthly crowns sometimes are, it is an everlasting crown, promised to all who love the Lord and eagerly wait for His return. Through our enduring the discouragements, persecutions, sufferings, or even death, we know assuredly our reward is with Christ in eternity (Philippians 3:20). This crown is not for those who depend upon their own sense of righteousness or of their own works. Such an attitude breeds only arrogance and pride, not a longing, a fervent desire to be with the Lord.

4) The Crown of Glory – (1 Peter 5:4) "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away." Though Peter is addressing the elders, we must also remember that the crown will be awarded to all those who long for or love His appearing. This word "glory" is an interesting word referring to the very nature of God and His actions. It entails His great splendor and brightness. Recall Stephen who, while being stoned to death, was able to look into the heavens and see the glory of God (Acts 7:55-56). This word also means that the praise and honor we bestow to God alone is due Him because of who He is (Isaiah 42:8, 48:11; Galatians 1:5). It also recognizes that believers are incredibly blessed to

enter into the kingdom, into the very likeness of Christ Himself. For as Paul so eloquently put it, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18 NKJV).

5) The Crown of Life – (Revelation 2:10) “Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” This crown is for all believers, but is especially dear to those who endure sufferings, who bravely confront persecution for Jesus, even to the point of death. In Scripture the word “life” is often used to show a relationship that is right with God. It was Jesus who said, “I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). Just as things such as air, food, and water are vital for our physical lives, Jesus provides us what is required for our spiritual lives. He is the One who provides “living water.” He is the “bread of life” (John 4:10, 6:35). We know that our earthly lives will end. But we have the amazing promise that comes only to those who come to God through Jesus: “And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life” (1 John 2:25).

James tells us that this crown of life is for all those who love God (James 1:12). The question then is how do we demonstrate our love for God? The apostle John answers this for us: “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). As His children we must keep His commandments, obeying Him, always remaining faithful. So, as we endure the inevitable trials, pains, heartaches, and tribulations—as long as we live—may we ever move forward, always “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2) and receive the crown of life that awaits us.

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