

29. Paul indicates that such an honor is “reserved for me.” Because of his self-analysis in verse 7, he knows from divine revelation that he will receive this accolade for fulfilling his duty to the Lord.
30. We have already noted that the word “crown” is the Greek noun **στέφανος (stéphanos)**: the presentation of a decoration in the service of teaching, writing, and executing the principles of divine integrity.
31. The word righteousness is **δικαιοσύνη (dikaiosúnē)**. This word is translated “righteousness” when describing one of the attributes of divine essence.
32. When describing the attributes of a believer that has spent his Christian life growing in grace and consistently applying the imperative moods of Scripture, that person is considered an advocate of divine righteousness.
33. He reveals that the presentation of this crown will occur at the Evaluation Tribunal of Christ by the term, “on that day.”
34. He goes on to indicate that others will receive this same honor “who have loved His appearance.”
35. The application of righteous standards in the life of a believer enables him to advance to spiritual maturity. When that advance achieves the copacetic spiritual life and occupation with Christ, then reception of this crown is assured.
36. This honor emphasizes the capacity to enjoy all the eternal rewards and decorations associated with escrow blessings and the Nike Awards.
37. Among the Nike Awards is the Uniform of Glory found in the fifth paragraph of the Nike Awards, “clothed in white garments” in Revelation 3:5.
38. Righteousness is the expression of the divine standards that define the integrity of God. As such, God’s righteousness rejects all relative standards of righteousness.

39. Therefore, all human standards of righteousness are inconsistent because of sin, human good, asceticism, and the vicissitudes of human viewpoint.
40. This is why our sins must be judged and our righteousness must be rejected for salvation. However, divine righteousness is imputed to anyone who believes in Christ.
41. Divine justice can only bless divine righteousness. We have the righteousness of God imputed at salvation.
42. This combination sets up the grace pipeline through which logistics are supplied to believers. The justice of God imputes these assets to the righteousness of God.
43. Also through this system, God is able to send blessings to believers totally apart from human works, relative righteousness, or Christian service.
44. When we orient to the integrity of God, our service is directed to Him in response to guidance from His Word. This assures that our works are the **result** of spiritual growth but never the **means**.
45. Therefore, what righteousness accepts, justice blesses. What righteousness rejects, justice condemns.
46. Perfect righteousness demands perfect righteousness for blessing. The righteousness of God is the principle of divine integrity while the justice of God is the function of divine integrity.
47. Consequently, the justice of God is the source of all direct blessing from God to the believer, the source of logistical grace blessing and the source of unalloyed happiness.
48. It is through this system that the believer is enabled to learn divine standards. With the teaching, recall, and empowering ministries of the Spirit, the believer is able to apply the righteous standards of divine integrity in his life.

49. It is within and by means of this grace system that the believer is enabled to advance in his spiritual life: **(1)** The Word of God is communicated by grace, **(2)** the standards of God's righteousness are included in this portfolio, **(3)** the acquisition of righteous standards defines the believer's inventory of ideas, and **(4)** from which he makes righteous decisions followed by right application.
50. Believers who advance to the sophisticated spiritual life arrive there because their advance was accompanied by their loyalty to the righteousness of God.
51. One of the rewards granted to such a believer is the crown of righteousness.

II. The Crown of Life:

1. The noun "crown" is **στέφανος (stéphanos)**, also noted in the crown of righteousness and, later in our study, the crown of glory. In Greek and Roman culture, victors in athletic contests, primarily track and field, and military personnel in combat, were given awards denoting valor, courage, or victory.
2. The former application is mentioned in"
2 Timothy 2:5 If anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. (NASB)
3. The Roman games were similar to those in Greece. They required a ten-month period of strict training in order to qualify.
4. The participant first entered the gymnasium and registered to train. By application to the Christian, this would be the filling of the Holy Spirit.
5. If accepted, he would be classified as an **ἀθλητικός (athlētikós)**: "athlete," one who is in training to compete. The believer positive to Bible study.
6. Also in the gymnasium were the **ἀγωνιστικός (agōnistikós)**, those eager for applause.

7. These types got all pumped up and strutted about like wannabe Greek gods but we not mentally focused on the preparation required to successfully compete. These reflect believers who are unable to concentrate on serious study of the Word.
8. Those oriented to strict athletic discipline were motivated to train for all the events' games no matter their primary focus. Serious students of the Word of God are interested in studying all eleven categories of systematic theology.
9. All athletes did the same exercises under the exercise master. All were rubbed down with oil by the PT (physical trainer). All had the same strict diet. Believers must submit to the authority of the pastor by concentrating on the study of Bible doctrine. All absorb the same information taught by the P-T (pastor-teacher).
10. Also involved was the **γυμνάσιάρχ** (***gumnásiarch***), the superintendent of athletic training. Anyone caught disobeying any rules or violating any of the requirements was disqualified. Jesus grants or withholds rewards at His *Béma*.
11. After successfully completing the 10-month course, the athlete was qualified to compete in the games.
12. At the games, the winner of each event was awarded a **στέφανος** (***stéphanos***), a crown of leaves. An olive crown at Olympia, laurel at Déphī, pine branches and later sellery [*sic*] at Isthmus, and green celery at Némēa. The Roman Capitolia awarded a crown of oak leaves.³
13. To the victor belong the spoils.⁴ And those who advance in the plan of God by maxing out the sophisticated spiritual life will receive the crown of life at the Evaluation Tribunal of Christ.

³ "Ancient Olympics: Crowns," <http://ancientolympics.arts.kuleuven.be/eng/TD012EN.html>, accessed March 03, 2017.

⁴ "The winner gets everything," (Christine Ammer, *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* [New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1977], 673).