



Discipleship Guide

Sermon: Earning Crowns for Jesus | The Five Crowns

Speaker: Pastor John Zayas

Date: November 2, 2025

Key Takeaways

1. Five Crowns of Reward

- The Incorruptible Crown (self-discipline)
- The Crown of Righteousness (keeping faith during trials)
- The Crown of Life (the martyr's crown - endurance through persecution)
- The Crown of Glory (faithful shepherding/leadership)
- The Crown of Rejoicing (soul-winning)

2. Central Truth

Salvation is free, but building a kingdom resume requires sacrifice, faithfulness, and complete surrender to God.

3. Living Set Apart

We cannot be half in and half out with God. He requires all of us, not just parts we're comfortable giving.

Discussion Questions

Section 1: Examining Our Commitment (15 minutes)

1. Pastor John asked, "Are you totally sold out, or do you want God with conditions?" How would you honestly answer that question today?
2. The sermon mentioned having "fingerprints" on your work for God - evidence of actually doing something. What fingerprints do you currently have? Where do you need to get your hands dirty?
3. Read 2 Timothy 3:1-5 - The passage warns about "having a form of godliness but denying its power." Where might you have turned off the "power switch" of God in your life?

Section 2: The Cost of Discipleship (15 minutes)

1. Pastor John said, "If it doesn't cost you anything, then you're really not struggling." What is your faith currently costing you? What might God be asking you to sacrifice?
2. The sermon emphasized that Christians will be betrayed and hurt. How do we practice "Father, they know not what they do" when someone betrays us? Share an example if you're comfortable.
3. Discuss this statement: "You want to hurt an enemy? Love them to death." Why is this so difficult? What makes it powerful?

Section 3: Running Your Race (15 minutes)

1. Which of the five crowns resonates most with you right now? Why?
2. Pastor John talked about keeping hope alive even when things don't come when we want them. What area of your life requires this kind of enduring hope right now?
3. Read James 1:12 - What does it mean practically to "persevere under trial" in your current circumstances?

Section 4: Soul-Winning and Mission (15 minutes)

1. The Crown of Rejoicing is about soul-winning. When was the last time you shared the gospel or invited someone to know Jesus? What holds you back?
 2. The sermon challenged: "Why do we wait till funerals to feel bad?" Who in your life needs to hear about Jesus while they're still alive? What's your next step?
 3. Pastor John said we need "fishing holes" - opportunities throughout the week for people to encounter Jesus. What could that look like in your sphere of influence?
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to commit to this week:

1. The Incorruptible Crown Challenge: Identify one area where you lack self-discipline (prayer time, purity, habits). Commit to 7 days of intentional discipline in that area.
2. The Crown of Righteousness Challenge: Write down one trial you're facing. Each day, thank God for something about that trial and declare His faithfulness.
3. The Crown of Life Challenge: Pray blessing over someone who has hurt or betrayed you. Ask God to free them and show you how to love them.
4. The Crown of Glory Challenge: Reach out to a spiritual leader (pastor, small group leader, mentor) and ask them genuinely, "How are YOU doing?" Offer to pray for them.
5. The Crown of Rejoicing Challenge: Have one gospel conversation this week. Ask someone, "Do you know Jesus?" or invite them to church/small groups.

Accountability:

- Share which challenge you're committing to with at least one other group member
- Exchange contact information to check in mid-week
- Come prepared next week to share what happened

Group Activity: Prayer Stations (15 minutes)

Set up four corners/areas in your meeting space:

1. **Confession Corner:** Come before God to confess where you've been lukewarm or conditional in your faith
2. **Surrender Station:** Lay down what needs to be cut off or released
3. **Empowerment Point:** Ask God to fill you with His Spirit and power for the week ahead
4. **Intercession Area:** Pray for those who need to know Jesus (write names on paper if helpful)

Allow people to move freely between stations as the Spirit leads.

Closing Prayer

Pray together:

"Heavenly Father, search our hearts. Remove everything that keeps us from running this race with excellence. Give us courage to be all in - no conditions, no holding back. Help us to earn crowns not for our glory, but so we can lay them at Your feet. Strengthen us to love our enemies, endure our trials, and win souls for Your kingdom. We want to hear 'well done, good and faithful servant.' In Jesus' name, Amen."

5-Day Devotionals

Day 1: The Power of the Blood

Reading: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Hebrews 9:11-14

Devotional:

The blood of Jesus is more than enough. It saves, heals, and delivers us from every bondage. When we remember Christ's broken body and shed blood, we're not just performing a ritual—we're declaring that His sacrifice has transformed our identity. Every breath we take speaks the name Yahweh. The communion table reminds us that without Jesus, we are nothing, but because of Him, we are brought near, made whole, and set free. His body was torn so ours could be healed. His blood was spilled so we could have life. Today, plead the blood of Jesus over every area of your life—your family, your struggles, your future. Let His sacrifice be more than a memory; let it be your living reality.

Day 2: Fingerprints of Faith

Reading: James 2:14-26; Matthew 25:31-40

Devotional:

Faith without works leaves no fingerprints. When you serve others with compassion, you leave marks that God can clean, refine, and multiply. Salvation is free, but your purpose costs something—it requires you to get your hands dirty in the work of the kingdom. Are you building a resume for eternity? Every act of service, every moment of compassion, every time you feed the hungry or visit the lonely, you're earning crowns to lay at Jesus' feet. Don't wait for perfect conditions or perfect feelings. Step out in faith today. Serve someone. Love someone who's hard to love. Care for someone outside yourself. Your

fingerprints matter. Your scars tell a story of faithfulness. Let God see you working, not just waiting.

Day 3: Standing Firm in Trials

Reading: James 1:2-12; Revelation 2:8-11

Devotional:

The crown of life belongs to those who persevere under trial. When your world is upside down, when betrayal cuts deep, when circumstances crush your spirit—this is when you earn the martyr's crown by standing firm. Maturity isn't measured by the absence of struggle but by your response to it. Can you say, "My world is falling apart, but I trust You, God"? Can you love those who've hurt you? Can you bless those who curse you? This is the narrow road. The enemy wants you to give up, but God is asking you to hold on just a little longer. Your pain is not wasted—God measures every tear and rewards every act of faithfulness. Stand firm today. Choose faith over feelings. Choose hope over despair.

Day 4: The Crown of Rejoicing

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20; Philippians 4:1-9

Devotional:

Your greatest joy in eternity will be seeing those you've influenced for Christ. The crown of rejoicing is the soul-winner's crown—earned by investing in others, sharing the gospel boldly, and living mission-minded. Who around you needs to hear about Jesus? Your coworker who gets under your skin? The neighbor you pass daily? The family member who's far from God? Don't wait for funerals to feel regret. Share life while people are still alive. When you witness to someone, heaven rejoices. When you disciple a believer, you're building eternal treasure. Ask yourself: What moves my heart? Who has God placed in my path? Today, be intentional. Ask someone, "Do you know Jesus?" Pray for someone struggling. Invest in someone's growth. This is worship that brings joy.

Day 5: Finishing Well

Reading: 2 Timothy 4:6-8; Hebrews 12:1-3

Devotional:

Paul declared, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." His goal wasn't just to start well but to finish well. Salvation is free, but the race requires endurance, discipline, and keeping your eyes fixed on Jesus. You're not running for earthly prizes but for eternal crowns—the incorruptible crown, the crown of righteousness, the crown of life, the crown of glory, the crown of rejoicing. These crowns represent faithfulness through trials, purity in temptation, bold witnessing, and sacrificial service. What needs to be cut off so you can run freely? What relationships, habits, or distractions are slowing you down? Today, make the decision: you will finish well. You will cross the finish line and hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Run with purpose. Fight with faith. Finish with joy.