

Answers to the Final

Air Dates: April 10 - 14, 2023

Day One

Final exams don't bring back a lot of good memories for me—how about you?

Ken Blanchard is a well-known American author and management expert, with over 60 books published on leadership and management. He also has taught these topics in universities, and he tells the story that he always handed out the final on the first day of the course, as well as the answers. He said as a result, all of his students got A's. "After all," he said, "isn't it our goal to help the students learn and succeed?"

Well, that's my kind of final—what about you? If you give me the questions and the answers that are going to be on the test, I probably could ace it too.

Sure sounds like the Apostle Paul knew the answers to the final when he wrote to Timothy:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

He was certain he would have the crown of righteousness when he stood before the Lord. How could he be so sure that he had done that well? Because he knew the answers to the final.

He understood that there would be a final exam even for believers in Jesus Christ. He referred to it as "that day"—that day when every believer will stand before Jesus individually to account for what they have done that mattered for eternity. Paul had lived for *that* day and not for today.

Our time on earth as followers of Jesus Christ is the time we have to prepare for that final exam. In the Bible we are told exactly what will be on the exam. The Bible tells us "If you do this, you'll receive certain rewards." That's why Paul was confident, because he had listened to Jesus and then he patterned his life around the things that Jesus said would be on the final, so that at the end he could be certain he would be rewarded.

I want to look at the questions and answers that will be on your final exam, when you stand before Jesus on THAT day. It will help you live with an eternal perspective.

Day Two

Did you know that the Bible teaches that all believers in Jesus Christ will have a final examination in Heaven? It's true—there will be a day when you will stand before Jesus to give an account for the stewardship of your time, money, skills, love—and there will be certain rewards for things you've done. The good news is, the Bible tells us exactly what is going to be on that final test and how we can be certain that we will pass with flying colors and hear Jesus say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Here are some of the questions on that final test:

Have you been persecuted because of your stand and devotion to Jesus Christ?

Matthew 5:11 – 12: *Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

We read again in James 1:12: *Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial. Because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*

We know there are many Christians in other parts of the world today who are truly persecuted, even killed, for their faith. Their crown is waiting on them. But even though you may not live under such persecution, if you have suffered for your stand for Christ, you will pass this question on the final exam. Have you ever been fired for your faith; ostracized by your family or friends because of your faith? Have you taken a clear stand that you are a follower of Jesus Christ, regardless of the ridicule or isolation it may cause or the price you had to pay? That's a question that will be on the final, and if you can confidently say, "Yes, I was faithful even in persecution," you will receive a reward.

Have you made wise and eternal investments—investments that are stored up in Heaven?

Matthew 6:19-21: *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

You have two bank accounts; one on earth, one in heaven. You can put deposits in either one. On the final exam, you will be asked for an accounting of where you put your treasure. We've heard it said, "Just follow the money." Well, following what you've done with your money on earth will be on the final exam. Are you investing in eternity or not?

Day Three

I'm giving you answers to the final—a preview of what will be on your final exam in Heaven. Now, I should explain that this final exam is for those who are Christ-followers and have been born from above through faith in Jesus. The Bible teaches that Christians will have to give an account to Jesus for how we used our resources while here on earth. The good news is, the Bible gives us some insight into what will be important on this final exam.

For example, one question will have to do with your motivation—**why you did what you did for Jesus.**

Matthew 6:3-4: *But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*

Jesus is talking about doing good for the right reasons, because you truly wanted to help others and you didn't do it to impress anyone. Jesus said you will be rewarded for that kind of generosity.

Again in that same chapter, Jesus says: *“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”* (Matthew 6:6).

Jesus said that those who give to the poor or pray and fast for public acknowledgement will get no reward in heaven for it, for they cared more for earthly rewards than heavenly ones.

Here's another question on the final exam:

Did you love unlovable people—did you love your enemies?

Luke 6:35a: *But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great...*

Got any unlovable people in your life right now? Maybe even some enemies who are deliberately trying to do you harm? If you can love them with the love of Jesus, you'll do well on the final exam.

Day Four

I always liked to get good grades in school. I guess everybody did—right? But my grade depended on how prepared I was for the exams. Did you know that as believers in Jesus Christ, there will be a final exam for us? It's called the Judgment Seat of Christ, where believers will be graded—if you will—on how well we represented Jesus while on earth, and rewards will be given to those who are prepared.

I'm looking at what the Bible tells us will be on the exam and what we can do to hear Jesus say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Here are few more things that will be on that final exam:

Did you do for people who could not repay you? Were you generous for the right reasons?

Luke 14:12 – 14: *Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."*

If you did for others without a quid pro quo—without expecting anything in return—you will get a good grade on that final exam.

Did you work for people and money, or did you work for the Lord?

Colossians 3:22 – 24: *Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

That means what you do every day on your job—whether it's in your home or otherwise, whether you receive a salary for it or not—you will be rewarded by the Lord on the final exam for working for the Lord, doing whatever you have to do with excellence and joy, because you are serving the Lord Christ.

Day Five

Were you a good student in school? Did you make good grades? Even if you didn't make particularly good grades in school, there is one test—one exam—where you can do really well, if you're prepared. I'm talking about being prepared for our final exam as believers in Jesus Christ. That day when we will give an account to Jesus for our stewardship while here on earth. In the Bible it's called the Judgment Seat of Christ, and that's where we'll receive rewards for having the right answers—or not.

Here are some more passages in Scripture that give us insight into what will be on that final exam.

1 Thessalonians 2:19: *For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?*

Hebrews 6:10: *God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.*

The people you have touched will be your greatest joy in Heaven. The people you rejoiced with and cried with, the people you reached with the Gospel—this is going to be a big deal on that final exam. People matter to God. Jesus loves people, and what you have done as a servant to help others will truly matter at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

And one last reminder of what will be on that final exam:

2 Timothy 4:8: *Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

This is the bottom line for us as believers, because if you long for the appearing of Jesus, if you are aware that your time on earth is time to prepare for that final exam, and therefore you have an eternal perspective, then you will be prepared for that final exam, and you'll do well when you stand before Jesus.

The final exam is coming whether we're prepared or not. We have time to prepare. Let's go for it.