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# *My Personal Notes . . .*

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Ed Smithson, Editor

## **MEDAL OF HONOR**

***“For conspicuous heroism and courage above and beyond the call of duty.”*** That is how the Medal of Honor text reads. It has been awarded ***3467 times in the history of the United States, 620 of which have been awarded posthumously.***

Some time ago I watched a program of NCIS (Navy Criminal Investigative Service) on TV. Charles Durning, the fine character actor that has played in many a movie and TV programs, played an elderly recipient of the Medal of Honor. I thought it was quite a good program.

I don't know about you, but the Medal of Honor means a lot to me. It cannot be “won.” It is “awarded” to persons who have showed particular courage in the face of certain danger, including the loss of life. No soldier ever found himself steeped in danger and said, “I am going to get the Medal of Honor for this. He received it because in the fact of that danger, he showed himself a man. My reaction to a recipient of such an honor brings a tear to my eye and a feeling of pride in our country and our people.

I can never remember anyone in the church being honored with certificates or rewards in the New Testament. In recent years, such rewards or certificates have been given however. Most, it appears to me, seem to be because the preacher (most of them are preachers) has made a “hit” with the folks of the congregation. It is certainly not given for the number of conversions or baptisms since he has been there.

Some justify such action with the response that the Bible says we should give “honor to whom honor is due.” They are usually referring to Romans 13:7 and that is not the subject under discussion. Strange it seems to me, how many folks ignore the context of a passage to try to “prove” a point.

I have no problem with people being recognized for the good work they do. I hardly think it will have significance when we meet the Lord at the judgment since we will be judged by our deeds. (2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14) Even the idle words we speak will be judged, according to Jesus. (Matthew 12:36)

I suppose such recognition is harmless enough, if we do not take it too seriously.

But what about those who have given their lives, made the ultimate sacrifice? You know of course, there was a time when people died because of their belief in God and devotion to His service. Remember Stephen in Acts 7? They stoned him to death. There were others in the first century of course, and before.

It is nice to be accepted! It is nice for people to think well of us. But remember the words of Jesus, “[Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for in the same manner did their fathers to the false prophets.](#)” (Luke 6:26) It is really of little consequence what men think of us. It is God’s acceptance that matters in the end.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Smithson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

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