

Ecclesiastes 9: 10; “Whatever your Hand Finds to Do”, A Bible Study prepared by Pastor Paul Rendall for the evening of October 26th, 2011, and conducted at the Rendall home.

This verse is directed primarily to men, who are the heads of their households (although its application can be to all people, men and women alike). Verse 9 states – “Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all the days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun.” So the labor being spoken of in verse 10 is the labor of the man’s hands, to provide for his wife and family. It indicates; by the way that it is worded, that every person will be able to “find” something to do with their life. The reason that this is true is because God is the One who gives every person the mental and physical skills that they have, and the opportunities to use those skills. The particular level of their skills he also gives. He is sovereign over all of these things. The exhortation in relation to that finding is; that you ought to do “whatever your hand finds to do”, with all of your might. Whether you have been given very little skill or ability, or you have been given much skill and ability, the exhortation is the same; do it with all of your might. So, this evening we want to look first of all at the “finding” of work. And then secondly we want to look at the “doing” of that work with all of your might.

1st of all – Let’s look at the “finding” of work.

The context of the verse is in relation to your labor; the work of your hands. “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.” These words are a challenge, a warning, and an opportunity for us to work, and to work hard while we have the life and strength to do so. They challenge us to look at ourselves and to see what it is that we can do, and what it is that we like to do, and then that we should work at it with all of our might. These words warn us, because we only have a short time, a few years to work at what we can work at. We only have so much time to work at, what God would want us to work at. Life is short at its longest number of years, when they come to an end. Therefore, take heed. You can see this in the words of Jesus in John 9: 4. “I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.” Day is a word picture for our life. Night is a word picture for our death and the end of all of our work. “There is no work” says Solomon, “or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.” And so, these words are also an opportunity to for us to learn to please God, and do good works among the people in the community that we are living in. Our work may not be seen by us as a calling when we first start out working. But we should be thinking; young men especially should be thinking, what the Lord may have them to do as a calling. This may involve physical labors primarily, or it may involve mental labor primarily, or it may involve a mixture of both. God will providentially lead you into the work and the

works within that work that will be both enjoyable and profitable to you. He will give you the desires and the wisdom related to that work; to learn to do what will in time eventually become your calling. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians Chapter 7, verse 17. "But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk." "And so I ordain in all the churches." "Was anyone called while circumcised?" "Let him not become uncircumcised." "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters." "Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called." "Were you called while a slave?" "Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it." "For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave." "You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men." "Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called."

You can see here that God distributes different gifts and abilities, and has providentially ordered many details of our lives; things which do not need to be changed when we are converted to Christ. Was the person circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was the person a slave? They are not to be concerned about it, but if they can become free, rather use it. Use it to do what? Use it to serve Christ, in whatever situation that they were in; whatever their hand found to do. The Lord is the One who gives us, providentially, things to do. But that does not mean that we should not pray for work to appear. Some persons very much need work, and cannot find it. But turn over to Psalm 90, verse 12. "So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." "Return, O Lord!" "How long?" "And have compassion on Your servants." "Oh, satisfy us early with your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days!" "Make us glad according to the days in which You have afflicted us, the years in which we have seen evil." "Let Your work appear to Your servants, and Your glory to their children." "And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands." You can see how important it is for Christians, or people who may not understand the way of the Lord yet, to be able to pray and ask God to have compassion on them. They should pray and ask God to teach them the meaning of days passing by, and the need of His wisdom in relation to how they should live their life and what they should do with their time. Ask Him to satisfy you early with His mercy that you may rejoice and be glad; that instead of affliction, that He would let you know the work that He would have you to do; that that work would appear and that He would establish the work of your hands. Pray that the beauty of His grace and blessing would be upon you. These are prayers which are pleasing to God.

"Whatever your hand finds to do" indicates that there may be many different jobs and many different kinds of work that you may do, which will all contribute to your being able to do what you have been called to do, later on. You need to see, then, that God most definitely understands what you are capable of working at,

because He has made you that way. Turn with me over to Exodus Chapter 4, verse 1. Here in this chapter, God is calling Moses to be the one who will lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. Moses has already been 40 years on the back side of the desert learning the lessons of humility. And he has had to learn the hard way not to run before he was called, but rather do things according to God's leading and command. Now God has decided that it was the time for him to step up and lead. But after hearing from God about how great a task is set before him, in terms of his speaking to Pharaoh, and showing him the miraculous signs that God was going to give him to do; both with regard to speaking to the children of Israel, and speaking to Pharaoh, he says this to God. "Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you.'" "So the Lord said to him, 'What is that in your hand?'" "He said, 'A rod.'" "And He said, 'Cast it on the ground.'" "So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it." "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Reach out your hand and take it by the tail' (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), --That they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." "Furthermore the Lord said to him, 'Now put your hand in your bosom.'" "And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold his hand was leprous, like snow." You can see, here, that the spiritual call of God to Moses was do "whatever his hand found to do", (that is; whatever work God leads and sets before you; do it with all your might." It may not seem like something that you want to be called to; but God was leading him; God was giving him his work. God was going to be with him to teach him, and yet Moses was wanted to refuse his call, and this work.

Listen to verse 10 – "Then Moses said to the Lord, 'O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.'" "So the Lord said to him, 'who has made man's mouth?' "Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind?" "Have not I, the Lord?" "Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say." "But he said, 'O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send.'" You and I need to understand several things from these verses. God will often times call men to do things in the work which, at first, they may think they are incapable of doing. God knew what Moses was capable of; and He knew that Moses, as he looked at himself, thought of himself as being "slow of speech and tongue". God wanted Moses to work at this calling; of leading the children of Israel out of Egypt. Part of that assignment was to speak to Pharaoh and to command him to let God's people go. Another part was his having to lead a people, many of whom, did not really want to be led in God's way. God knew that by His grace that Moses would become "the meekest man in all the earth", in that day. It says in Numbers Chapter 12, verse 3 –"Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men

who were on the face of the earth.” This is a very significant statement. And I believe that we can link it with our study. Whatever your hand finds to do; make sure that you remember to be humble. Do it with all your might, but as you are doing, remember that it is God who has given you your strength and your might. Remember that it is God who has given you the opportunities to work that you have, and He has led you into your work in order to glorify Him. No boasting in yourself is necessary. But humility and prayer are the way to be blessed by God in your work, and see it develop and flourish. Whatever your hand finds to do; if it is legitimate and righteous Biblically, bless God that he has given you that work and seek to glorify Him in it.

2ndly – We want to look at the doing of the work with all of your might.

In thinking of what this means we can start with Deuteronomy 6: 4. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!" "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." Here we have the very same wording except the word "strength" is used instead of the word "might", but they are referring to the same thing. The first and greatest commandment, Jesus calls it in Mark 12: 39. So we can conclude that if this is the first and greatest commandment that when Solomon says, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all of your might," it means that you are to do all of your work which you do, to the glory of God, using all of your strength. This is confirmed for us if we look over at verse 11 of Deuteronomy 8. "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, lest—when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock; who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end—then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.' "And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day." So we see here that when Solomon says to do whatever we do with all of our might, he does not mean to say that we ought to do anything sinful with all of our might, or think that it is our might that establishes the work of our hands. It is the blessing God and His power that establishes these things. Why is it that so many people are frustrated with their work? Probably it is because they are not remembering the Lord their God in it. They have wrongly thought that it was their own diligence and skill in what they were doing that brings them wealth and provision. It is not.

It is God. Notice that God “tests” people in this regard (verse 16), that He might do them good in the end. Ah, this is what we often forget in relation to our work. It is that God would do us good in the end. If we honor Him in our work, then He will honor us. (1 Samuel 2: 30)

In closing this study I would have us to consider a good example of using your might in terms of “whatever you do”. It is found in 1 Chronicles 29: 2. “Now for the house of my God I have prepared with all my might: gold for things to be made of gold, silver for things of silver, bronze for things of bronze, iron for things of iron, wood for things of wood, onyx stones, stones to be set, glistening stones of various colors, all kinds of precious stones, and marble slabs in abundance.” “Moreover, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, my own special treasure of gold and silver.” You see, King David was not permitted to build the temple of the Lord because he had been a man of bloodshed. But even though that was so, he prepared for its building with all of his might. He did what he could. This is what you and I should do as well. Johnny Farese who a quadriplegic is a man who for years has been doing whatever he could for the Lord. Ministers and people from all over this country send him their emails to distribute out to the churches; information for prayer. It is a very good work. This is his favorite quote concerning himself: “I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do. What I can do, I should do. And what I should do, by the grace of God, I will do.” This is the kind of attitude in our work that I hope that each one of us will have. Even if we cannot do the work that we would like to do, yet we will do the work that we can do, and we should do; that by the grace of God, we will do. Let us not refuse to do the something that we can do; but rather do it with all our might.