

Eccl. 9:10; Col. 3:17 (1984 NIV)
Do All Things Well

Introduction

A young man applied for a job as a farm hand. When asked for his qualifications, he said, "I can sleep when the wind blows."

This puzzled the farmer, but he took a liking to the young man and hired him.

A few days later, the farmer and his wife were awakened in the night by a violent storm. They quickly began to check things out to see if all was secure. They found that the shutters had been securely fastened. A good supply of logs had been set next to the fireplace. The farm equipment had been placed safely in the storage shed. The tractor had been moved into the garage. The barn had been properly locked. All was well. Even the animals were calm.

It was then that the farmer grasped the meaning of the young man's words, "I can sleep when the wind blows."

Because the farm hand had performed his work loyally and faithfully when the skies were clear, he was prepared for the storm when it broke. Consequently, when the wind blew, he had no fear. He was able to sleep in peace.

(<https://www.awakin.org/v2/read/view.php?tid=74>)

We do different things in life—in our homes, in our workplaces, in our schools. And we want to do all things well. Now, what do we mean when we say we want to do all things well? Does it mean we have all things so securely put in place that if the financial market should collapse; if the economy should plunge into deep recession; if an earthquake should hit Singapore; if a major war should break out; if an accident should happen; if an illness should strike; we can still stand back and say with no panic and anxiety, "Well, everything is still okay because I have done all things well. I have everything figured out and factored in. I have everything under control"?

Many of us today may tend to understand doing all things well as driving ourselves crazy with busyness, having all things figured out and factored in such that we feel so secure that nothing can ever shake us.

But what does the Bible mean when we are called to do all things well with our might and in the name of the Lord? Let's see what God through His Word wants to teach us today about doing all things well. God wants us today to do all things well, and it means we are to ...

I. Do whatever lies close at hand (Eccl. 9:10).

Eccl. 9:10a says, “Whatever your hand finds to do ...”

Eugene Peterson’s translation (The Message): “Whatever turns up, grab it and do it.” He emphasizes the unpredictable nature of life. No matter how well planned your day may be, something unexpected may “turn up”. And when it does, grab it and do it.

The deeper meaning here challenges us to take hold of the ordinary responsibilities of life and make sure these get done. It’s easy for us to live in the never-never land of what we plan to do someday. Meanwhile, there is work to be done. But somehow much is left undone because we are so caught up with dreaming about what we are going to do “someday”. Now, if we don’t do what we need to do today, that “someday” will never come at all.

Better to do the small things you need to do now than to waste hours dreaming of that big project you would like to do someday. When Solomon says, “Whatever your hand finds to do,” he doesn’t mean, “If your hand happens to find something to do, do it, and if not, then take the day off and do nothing.” Rather, the wise Solomon is telling us that your hand will always find something to do. There is always work to be done.

That’s what life is—a whole load of duties big and small that someone has to do. It won’t do to complain, “I don’t feel like doing it.” Your feelings don’t matter. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it! We all have work to do—house chores, jobs, responsibilities, assignments. So, we can’t stay in bed forever and be bored with life.

One of the best cures for boredom is to get involved helping others. Stephen Grellet, a prominent French-American Quaker missionary of yesteryears, once said these wise words—“I expect to pass through the world but once. Any good therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.”

It is very difficult to be bored when you are giving yourself to help those around you. Boredom comes when we focus solely on our own needs. Move out of ourselves, and our problems will seem smaller and our boredom will soon disappear.

Eccl. 9:10b continues, “Do it with all your might ...”—do your work and do it with passion.

Not only are we to do whatever lies close at hand, we are to tackle our work with gusto. Life is too short, too fragile, and too precious to take lightly.

Whatever we do, we should do it heartily, with enthusiasm, with passion, with zeal, with commitment.

But we all struggle with this. Society tells us that some jobs matter more than others. Certainly some jobs pay more than others and some jobs gain much more praise than others.

One day, I was driving with my wife beside me. Suddenly, a taxi cut in recklessly and inconsiderately in front of me. I blurted out without thinking, “This kind of drivers can only drive taxis.” On hearing this, my wife corrected me, “All jobs for an honest living are noble. It is the attitude with which we do a job that makes the difference.”

Indeed, the biblical view of work is that all work is noble if it is done for the glory of God. Even the most mundane task is worthwhile if we do it in the right spirit. And if you do it well, you honour God just as much as Billy Graham had when he led thousands to the Lord in his evangelistic rallies.

It’s easy to fall into the trap of saying, “I hate my job. I don’t like the place where I work. My colleagues are no fun. My boss irritates me. The pay is lousy. No one likes me.”

And God’s answer to you is this—“You’re not supposed to like your job every day. It’s not supposed to be fun all the time. That’s why it is called work. But work anyway. Do what you have to do. And do it with all your heart. Put your passion into it.”

Read the text again. It doesn’t say, “Do it with all your might if you feel like it.” Or “Do it with all your might if you enjoy it.” Or “Do it with all your might if people treat you well.”

A son was telling his mother one day that he hated school so much that he didn’t want to be in school. The mother encouraged, “But son, you need to be there whether you like it or not. You just do your part as best as you can, and let God take care of other things.” The son continued to groan, “But mum, I hate the teachers. I hate the students. I hate everything in school. I hate to be there.” The mother then reminded him, “But son, you really need to be there whether you like it or not. You are the school principal.”

Indeed, God says to us today, “Whatever you do in wherever you are, do it with all your might even when you don’t feel like it. And then leave everything else in my hands.”

Eccl. 9:10c goes on, “For in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom”—earthly work is not for eternity because of the brevity of this life.

Who wants to hear that they are going to the grave? That's a fact we would rather ignore. But it is entirely true whether we like it or not.

Recently, we read how an A* scholar from Singapore was knocked down by a bus in UK in the early hours. She was a 2nd year medical student studying in Cambridge University. Her body was dragged for some 2km because the bus driver was unaware that he had knocked her down and her body was somehow hooked onto the bus. She met a sudden, tragic and gruesome death at age 20 when the future seemed to hold so much for her.

At the funeral service of his late wife, Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew said this in his eulogy, "I should find solace at her 89 years of her life well lived. But at this moment of the final parting, my heart is heavy with sadness."

Death comes to both young and old. We must acknowledge the certainty of the grave and brevity of life. A time will come when we can live and work no more here on earth.

We are not to deny our human mortality. We are all going to die one day unless we live till the Rapture. In light of this, God calls us to do whatever we are going to do, and do it now. If you intend to do some good deed, do it now. If you have some great plan, work on it now. If you intend to do something or try something, do it or try it now. You don't have time to be bored.

God wants us today to do all things well, and it means we are to do whatever lies close at hand. Not only that, it also means we are to remind ourselves that ...

II. We represent the Lord Jesus in the work we do (Col. 3:17a).

Col. 3:17a says, "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus"—we are to remember that we represent Jesus in everything we do.

The New Living Translation puts it this way—"And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus." Sometimes we are sloppy about what we say and do because we don't think anyone pays attention to what we are saying and doing. Let's think about it. What if Jesus has to sign His name to everything you say and everything you do? For every careless word, the name "Jesus Christ" is to be attached. And for every careless complaint, the name "Jesus Christ" is to be attached. That might stop us in our tracks if His name is attached to our words and our deeds.

Indeed, His name is attached to our words and deeds because His name is attached to us! We are "Jesus people" who claim to follow the "Jesus way". We call Him our Master, our Saviour and our Lord. Whether we like it or not, His name attaches to everything we say, even the foolish remarks, the unkind

words, the angry insults, the swear words, the threats we utter. And His name attaches to our complaints, our excuses, our boasts, our lies, our flattery, our moral compromise, our laziness, our dishonesty, and even to the worst sins that we can commit. If we steal money, the name of Jesus goes with us. If we abuse our children, the name of Jesus gets dragged down with us.

We would be more concerned about the details of our lives if we remember that we are the face of Jesus on the earth today. We like to say that Jesus is the light of the world, and certainly He is. But we ourselves are also called to be light of the world. We may be the only “Bible” some people will ever read, and the only “Jesus” some people will ever see.

In Children’s Sunday School, the teacher asked her children this—“Joseph of Arimathea had an expensive and new tomb. Who was the first to be buried inside it?” Many children raised their hands, wanting to answer. The teacher called on one of them to answer. “Jesus,” said the boy. “That’s right. Now, here’s a harder question. Why did Joseph of Arimathea allow Jesus to be buried in his expensive and new tomb instead of keeping it for himself?” The teacher was expecting an answer like—“Because Joseph loved Jesus.” But this time, no hands were up. After a long pause, someone shouted from the back of the class, “Because Joseph knew Jesus would only need it for the weekend!” Of course, we know Jesus arose three days after he was in the tomb on the 1st day of the week, which is our Sunday today.

God calls us to be light of the world. We may be the only “Bible” some people will ever read, and the only “Jesus” some people will ever see not only on weekends when we are in church, but also every day of the week when we are in the world. Remember that we represent Jesus in everything we do not as weekend Christians in church, but as everyday Christians in where God has called us to be.

Col. 3:17b adds, “Giving thanks to God the Father through him”—we are to be thankful to God for things big and small.

If you go back and read Eccl. 9:7-9, you discover that the writer urges us to enjoy the simple pleasures of life.

- You’re going to die one day so enjoy your food and drink (v. 7).
- Dress up and smell good (v. 8).
- Enjoy your wife and the pleasures of married life (v. 9).

Indeed, all these things are gifts from God. They are often simple pleasures—food and drink, nice clothes, a happy marriage. This is not hedonism. It is taking pleasure in the daily blessings of God. Think about your family and friends, and give thanks and pray for them by name one by one. Stop from time to time to sing praises to the Lord.

God calls us to do all things well. The ultimate goal is not to elevate ourselves high above other people. But it is to exalt Christ high before other people. So as Christians, we are called to move beyond “climbing up the ladder” to lifting up Christ—to move beyond doing something for ourselves to doing something for One bigger than ourselves. There are many successful Christians who still lack a sense of significance—they have been doing all things well, but merely for a performance on earth and not for a purpose from God.

That purpose from God is to point people to Christ. Yes, we are not all gifted by God to be evangelists. But we are all called by God to be witnesses for Christ. And one way we can be such a witness is to do all things well with our might and in Christ’s name in where we are—e.g. marketplace, army camp, campus, school, sphere of influence.

What then are some things we can work on as a witness at work for Christ? Let me suggest two for our consideration today.

- One, use high quality work as our means of presenting Christ. One of the means we can impact for Christ is by doing our work with quality. A follower of Jesus should be a worker that exemplifies high quality in how he does his work. Bezalel was a man hand-picked by God to do an important work—to design and build the Ark of the Covenant. In fact, Bezalel was the first man in the Old Testament described as being filled with the Spirit of God.

Ex. 31:1-6 reads, “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship.’”

One of the easiest ways to discredit Christ in the workplace is for us to do our work sloppily. In order to gain the right kind of attention and reputation our work should stand out because we do our work unto the Lord. Col. 3:17 reminds us, “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Doing quality work may not be our primary means of winning others to Christ, but it can disqualify us very quickly from ever having the opportunity to present Christ in a positive light. Go the extra mile when necessary. Make the effort to serve those around you. So, when you do your work, do it with quality.

A group of salesmen went to a week’s regional sales convention in New York. At the John F. Kennedy International Airport, and in their rush, with tickets and briefcases to return to Texas, one of these salesmen accidentally knocked over a table which held

a display of apples. Apples flew everywhere. Without stopping or looking back, they all managed to reach the plane in time for their nearly missed boarding.

All but one. This man paused, got in touch with his feelings, and experienced a twinge of compassion for the girl whose apple stand had been overturned. He told his buddies to go on without him. Then he returned to the terminal where the apples were all over the floor. He was glad he did.

The young girl was totally blind. She was in tears with frustration as she helplessly groped for the spilled apples. But no one stopped to help.

The salesman knelt on the floor with her, gathered up the apples, put them back on the table and helped organize her display. As he did this, he noticed that many of them had become battered and bruised. These he set aside in another basket.

When he had finished, he pulled out his wallet and said to the girl, "Here, please take this \$40 for the damage we did. Are you okay? I hope we didn't spoil your day too badly."

She nodded through her tears.

As the salesman started to walk away, the blind girl called out to him, "Mister, are you Jesus?"

The man stopped in mid-stride and he wondered. Then slowly he made his way to catch the later flight with that question burning in his soul—"Are you Jesus?"

Do people mistake us for Jesus? We are called to be like Christ, are we not? We are called to be like Jesus as we live in a world that is spiritually blind to His love, life and grace.

If we claim to know Jesus, we should look like Him in our manners, sound like Him in our speech, act like Him in our deeds. Knowing Jesus is more than simply knowing and quoting Scripture, and going to church. It's actually living the Word as life unfolds day to day.

(<https://www.goldenrostrum.com/2018/05/15/would-someone-mistake-you-for-jesus>)

The Bible tells us that while we were yet sinners Christ came and paid our penalty so that we might live eternally. Many in the workplace have

never known the love of Christ. You might be the only one they ever meet who can introduce them to His love.

Someone once said that people do not care what you know; they want to know that you care. When you genuinely take an interest in people in where God has placed you, you will become a credible person in their eyes. You will stand out among the crowd.

God calls us to do all things well—do them with quality so that we can present Christ before people. Let them see Jesus in us because we look, sound, and act so much like our Master.

- Two, practice integrity as our means of guarding the heart. In December 1983, The Princeton Religion Research Centre published a landmark survey conducted for *The Wall Street Journal* by the Gallup Organization. The researchers measured a wide range of moral and ethical behaviours, such as calling in sick when not sick, cheating on income tax, and pilfering company supplies for personal use.

What the researchers found most startling was that there was no significant difference between the churched and the unchurched in their ethics and values on the job. In other words, despite the fact that more and more people attend churches, churches seem to be having less and less of an impact on the moral fibre of their people, at least in the workplace.

(<https://www.crosswalk.com/family/career/attributes-of-a-workplace-witness-part-i-11581934.html>)

Is this also true of Christians in Singapore? I believe this trend can change if we see our work as a ministry and calling. We have so segmented our work life from our faith life that we have allowed the culture to lure us to believe that integrity is not as important as the bottom line. Remember, integrity is defined by what you do when no man is looking. Of course, God is always watching us ... both inside and outside church.

Conclusion

How's your work? Are you trying so hard to do all things well, becoming so busy yet feeling more and more bored? If that is so, it is a sign that you are moving in the wrong direction in life. You need Jesus to come and be your Master. And if you are not a Christian and you want to do all things well such that you feel a deep inner peace and not boredom in your soul, you can ask Jesus to help you by inviting Him into your life right now. If this is what you want, you say these words after me from your heart to Jesus:

Jesus, my life is so busy yet I feel so meaningless. There's a restless and listless spirit in me. I want your peace and your guidance. I know I

am a sinner who is not at peace with myself, with others, and even with you. I believe you come to die for my sins and you arose from death to give me a new life. I ask you to forgive me, and to help me live a new life with you as my Master. I now receive you into my life. Take charge of my life from this day onward. Help me to do all things well with my might and in your name. Amen.

The Lord calls us to do all things well regardless big or small.

Pray that whatever you and I do in word or deed, we will always give thanks because the Lord has considered us worthy to do His assigned work, and we will always do it well so that His name is glorified in and through us. Amen!