



Do What You Need To Do

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

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The courage to do the right thing is the secret to success. Needs and wants are not always the same. Sometimes wants are opposed to needs (Galatians 5:17). Paul pointed out that "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient..." (I Corinthians 6:12;10:23). For example, a student may want to play when s/he needs to study in order to succeed. Similarly, a person who needs to be in hospital daily for dialysis treatment, would be wise to reject an offer of a two months free round-the-world pleasure trip. The wisdom to separate wants from needs, and the courage to do what needs to be done irrespective of the feelings or circumstances is what separates the successful from the failures. Ignorance of one's true needs is often manifested in flimsy excuses, as illustrated in this teaching.

"And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. 16 Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: 17 And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. 18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. 19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. 20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21 So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. 22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. 23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper" (Luke

"Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man" (Proverbs 6:10-11).

14:15-24).

Please note the following from this parable:

- 1) As Jesus sat at meal, someone said "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of heaven". This prompted this parable. We note from this that true needs must be linked to eternal values otherwise they will be ephemeral, superficial, transient and only bring temporal satisfaction.
- 2) Blindness to eternal values generate flimsy excuses based on the temporal that blocks access to eternity and divine provisions. In contemporary times excuses for obedience to God could include:
 - ⇒ Young: When I grow older
 - ⇒ Singles: When I get married
 - ⇒ Student: When I graduate
 - ⇒ Graduate: after career development
 - ⇒ Unemployed: when I get a job
 - ⇒ Employed: Too busy with career
 - ⇒ New Couple: when we have children
 - ⇒ Family: Family responsibilities
 - ⇒ No Car: If I had a car
 - ⇒ Car Owner: I have packed the car
 - ⇒ Poor: No money
 - ⇒ Rich: Saving for the rainy day
 - ⇒ Sick: when I am healed
 - ⇒ Healthy: fear/risk of becoming sick.
 - ⇒ Weather: too hot /cold/dark/bright.
 - ⇒ (And lots more to add to the list).
- 3) None of the excuse makers was idle. They

were just busy on the wrong things at the right time for the feast (1 Kings 20:39-40).

- 4) Anyone can make excuses (Proverbs 26:12,16). It takes courage to act and do what needs doing and be rewarded for it.
- 5) The servants courageous obedience to their master's orders furnished the feast with guests who also courageously binned their excuses (e.g. being maimed, poor, halt, blind) and doing what needed to be done.

A successful person finds a way to demolish excuses and to courageously take the necessary actions to accomplish his/her goals. The first step to overcoming the problem of excuse making is actually to understand their root causes and manner of manifestations - which could be many and varied depending on circumstances and situations. Some of these are:

1. Peer pressure and attempt to please others at the expense of what is expedient – “Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept” (Songs of Solomon 1:6).
2. Fear:
 - Fear of man - “The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe” (Proverbs 29:25).
 - Fear of what others would say
 - Fear that I might look stupid / lose friends.
 - Fear of failure. There is a reason the Bible commands “let the weak say, I am strong” (Joel 3:10): and why Paul declared “I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me” (Philippians 4:13).
 - Fear that it is not a popular course
3. Wrong Thinking that results in self-deception – “Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him” (Proverbs 26:12).
4. Laziness – “The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets. 14 As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed. 15 The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth. 16 The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason” (Proverbs 26:13-16).
5. Foolishness and misunderstanding (Rm1:21)
6. Misplaced priorities (2 Samuel 11).

7. Living in a ‘shell’ (e.g. of habits like procrastination) (Jeremiah 4:14; Proverbs 23:7).
8. Being held back by the past (e.g. experiences or mistakes) (Philippians 3:13-14).
9. Living either in the past or in the future but never in the “now”. Mary and Martha believed that Jesus could have healed Lazarus hath he come earlier or would do so in the future but never thought he could do so there and then even when Jesus told them “I am the resurrection, and the life...” (John 11:25). Hebrews 11:1 begins with the word “Now”, a salient reminder that the faith that works is the “Now” faith. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”.
10. Obsession with Religious fantasy to the neglect of obedience to God's word. To the Jews in Paul's days it was zeal without knowledge (Romans 10:2). To others it was ritual prayers with fasting (Zechariah 7:1-14; Isaiah 58: 1-14) and hypocrisy (Isaiah 59: 1-16) - both without obedience.

It is noteworthy that while God wondered that there was no intercessor in Isaiah 59:16, the earlier verses of the same and previous chapters (vs1-3) paints a picture of people frantically praying but with no answers. It is “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). This scripture may not have been written in the days of Prophet Isaiah, but its principles was already effectively working. What the solution? The Holy Spirit provides them:

- 1) “Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer” (Proverbs 25:4).
- 2) “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. 20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. 22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:19-22).