

BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE!

Ecc1.9:10

INTRODUCTION:

Ecc1.9:10- *"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going."*

- A. One of the **top four advertisers on sports TV** today is the Armed Services of the United States.
 1. Of the several branches, the Army seems to get the most publicity.
 2. **As a result of so much advertising**, their slogan is known by almost anyone who watches sports.
 3. **"BE ALL THAT YOU CAN BE...IN THE ARMY"**
- B. That's a pretty good ambition for any field of endeavor: Militarily; Secularly; Religiously.
- C. BUT IN THE RELIGIOUS REALM its more than just "a good idea" – **IT'S A NECESSITY!**

I. GOD EXPECTS OUR BEST.

- A. In the Old Testament God wouldn't accept the crippled or sick animals from His people for them to sacrifice to Him. – **Lev.22:21-22**- *"When a man offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD to fulfill a special vow or for a freewill offering, of the herd or of the flock, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. 22) Those that are blind or fractured or maimed or having a running sore or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make of them an offering by fire on the altar to the LORD."*
 1. He expected and would receive only the best that His people had to offer!
 2. On the other hand, HE ALSO GAVE ONLY THE BEST. **1Pet.1:18-19**- *"knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19) but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."*
- B. There are many scriptures that teach that God's people should do only their best.
 1. **Ecc1.9:10**- *"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with **all your might**; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going."*
 2. **Rom.12:6-11**. "differing gifts, yet whatever they had, they were to use it the best way possible. (**Rom 12:6**) *"Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith."*
 3. Everyone is expected to do his/her own part, even in this parasitic society in which we live today! **Eph.4:15-16**- *"but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16) from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."*
 4. **Col.3:23**- *"Whatever you do, do your work **heartily**, as for the Lord rather than for men," **"heartily,"** literally **"from the soul."** **Eph.6:6**- *"not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God **from the heart**."* [**same Greek word for both**]*
- C. God wants our full, undivided, dedicated service. **Mk.12:30**- *"And You Shall Love The Lord Your God With All Your Heart, And With All Your Soul, And With All Your Mind, And With All Your Strength."*
 1. In the Parable of **talents** [**Matt.25**] although the abilities varied, the expectation was the same!
 2. Jesus commended the **widow** who sacrificed to give her best, **Lk.21:2-4**- *"And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins. 3) And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; 4) for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."*

3. **Macedonians** commended for giving themselves. **2 Cor.8:1, 5**- *"Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, 5) and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God."*
 4. **Laodicians** were reprimanded for being lukewarm, a condition that was completely repulsive to the Lord!
- D. It should be abundantly clear: **GOD EXPECTS OUR BEST!**

II. WHY DO SOME NOT GIVE THEIR BEST?

- A. Some are **LAZY**, plain and simple.
 1. It is easier to sit at home on the couch watching TV than to be up expending efforts for the LORD, and USUALLY toward those who aren't interested in Christianity anyway!
 2. It's not a laughing matter, but some are even too lazy to feed themselves!
 - a) **Prov.19:24**- *"The sluggard buries his hand in the dish, But will not even bring it back to his mouth."*
 - b) This can be also true spiritually. It seems there are those who won't study the Bible in order to grow, won't worship, or honor, or praise God – that **He might receive glory**, and they a home in heaven!
 3. Christians are WARNED and instructed against laziness, **Rom.12:11**- *"not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;"*
- B. Some seem to have a quitter's spirit, don't they? They may START lots of things, but never seem to FINISH ANY!
 1. Jesus illustrated those who are quick to start, but have no endurance, in His parable of the different SOILS! **Lk.8:13**- *"Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away."*
 2. IT IS VITAL for Christians to be finishers when they start those things that will GLORIFY GOD! **II Tim.4:7**- *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;"* **Rev.2:10**- *"Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."*
- C. HOW SAD, and WHAT A WASTE IT IS, that some are content to be mediocre, in everything they set out to do: work/ play/ religion/ driving/ etc.
 - 1 Never really **"GIVING OR DOING THEIR BEST"** at anything.
 2. Some members of the church would be included in this indictment! **Rev.3:15-16**- *"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. 16) 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth."*
- D. Some act like we don't know that God **ALWAYS EXPECTS** our very best!
 1. We often are selfish with our "best" things! [*Learn this early on by hiding our "best" toys when company is coming over.*]
 2. We want to spend our "special" time on things that *satisfy personal urges*; extra money on *something WE'VE been craving*; and whatever "energy" we might have for a HOLIDAY we often JUST *cater to OUR whims and fancies!*
- E. Some seem to have lost the enthusiasm we once held for their **FIRST LOVE**. **Rev.2:4**- *"But I have this against you, that you have left your first love."*
 1. That spark, that enthusiasm fostered by the new birth is nearly gone, vanished, no longer exciting our efforts to reach out to others with God's message of salvation.

2. ROTE service, efforts just out of habit only, becomes empty and vain and useless!
 G. Some simply LACK THE COURAGE to do their best!

III. BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE.

- A. Assess your strengths and weaknesses, **Rom.12:6-8**- *"Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7) if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8) or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness."*
- B. Resolve, with God's help, that you WILL do your best. **Josh.24:15**.
1. Pray for wisdom, **Jas.1:5**- *"But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him."*
 2. Do you want to KNOW MORE about God's word? PRAY about it, and then **STUDY GOD'S WORD** for guidance and strength, **II Thess.2:15**- *"So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us."*
 3. **Develop a plan** for personal spiritual improvement! Don't expect that it'll "just happen!"
 - a) Put First Things First.
 - b) See each effort through to the end.
 - c) Always be on the LOOKOUT for **NEW OPPORTUNITIES OF SERVICE!**
 - d) Don't compare yourself with others-- only with God's word and your abilities, **Matt.25**
- C. Remember, God is more interested in our **EFFORTS PUT FORTH** and **FAITHFULNESS TO HIS CAUSE**, than He is in a smidgeon of any self-proclaimed successes.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Be the best you can be, **IN THE LORD'S ARMY**. Be as diligent *as if you were trying to work yourself up through the ranks* of a physical army to become an officer!
- B. Two questions:
1. Are you a Christian? B+R+C+B
 2. Have you truly been trying to be faithful to God? R + PRAY