

What is in your hand?

Exodus 4:11 and 12

Introduction:

God uses people who are willing to serve Him.

He may choose someone to serve His purpose before they realize they are ready.

Moses gave excuses because he did not know he was ready (Exodus 3).

Gideon thought himself to be poor, insignificant, and too young (Judges 6:15).

The prophet Jeremiah questioned God's choosing Him by asking, "Who would listen to someone like me?" (Jeremiah 1:6).

People who are willing to serve God will be powered by God to accomplish His will.

Moses was told by God, "When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power..." (Exodus 4:21).

God told Gideon, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as [if you were fighting against] one man" (Judges 6:16).

Jeremiah was given a lengthy response from the LORD, which he wrote in Jeremiah 1:7-10; After Jeremiah voiced his concern, then he wrote, "But the LORD said to me, 'Do not say, "I am a youth," Because everywhere I send you, you shall go, And all that I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, For I am with you to deliver you,' declares the LORD. Then the LORD stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me, 'Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, To pluck up and to break down, To destroy and to overthrow, To build and to plant.'"

In other words, God told Jeremiah, "I appointed you to do this, and I will give you the power to do it."

If we are willing to serve God, we need to turn everything we have over to Him.

What is in your hand that you could give to God for His use?

I. Time

When a young person dies, it is almost inevitable that someone will say, she had her whole life ahead of her, or he was just getting started.

For an infant, the reference is about setting up without support, teething, learning to crawl and walk, or learning to vocalize.

For a toddler, the reference is about learning to run or draw, toilet training, self-feeding, and talking.

For a child, the reference is to starting school or mimicking adults and peers.

For a preteen, the reference is to gaining independence and responsibility, showing care and concern for others, or working on relationships.

For a teen, the reference is about learning to drive, getting a job, or thinking about and planning for his/her future.

For a young adult, the reference is to college, career, or family.

For a middle-aged adult, the reference is to the empty nest or boomerang children, becoming grandparents, preparing for retirement, or caring for aging parents.

For a senior adult, the reference is to retirement, changes in priorities, or even confronting death.

As you can see, finding time to serve God does not get easier as we get older.

James 4:14 tells us we should depend on God for the future, for we “do not know what [our] life will be like tomorrow. [We] are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.”

Solomon encourages us to honor God early in life (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

Paul advised, “whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

In a prayer of Moses, Psalm 90:12 requests of God, “So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.”

Serving God does not get easier as we get older; if anything, serving God gets more difficult as we age.

How can we glorify God with the time we have now?

We need to give God our time early in life, give our life to Him when we can commit to take up our cross daily and follow Jesus, and use the rest of our time to God’s glory.

II. Ability

God has given you a specific personality combined with certain interests and abilities linked to a spiritual gift(s) and life experiences.

God expects you to use what He has given to you!

Matthew 25:14-30 gives the parable of the talents.

Consider what was said to the five talent and two talent men, 21 and 23 “Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things.”

What have you been given by God to be used in His service?

Brawns if you are young; brains if you are old enough to use strength intelligently.

Energy, if you are young; Wisdom, if you are mature.

The ability to adapt quickly to new things, if you are youthful; The ability to be consistent, if you are older.

Faithfulness with a few things will open the door of opportunity for many things to be used.

How can we glorify God with the ability we have now?

Aspire and succeed.

Use and share.

Learn and teach.

This is being “faithful with a few things.”

How can we glorify God when he puts us “in charge of many things”?

Continue being faithful with the few things.

Do more of the same.

Start doing something new.

We need to give God our ability.

The one talent slave had the ability to do greater things, but he did not do it.

Do what you have been given the ability to do to the glory of God.

III. Influence

The apostle Paul wrote about influence in 2 Corinthians 10:13-16 (ESV).

“But we will not boast beyond limits, but will boast only with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us, to reach even to you. For we are not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach you. For we were the first to come all the way to you with the gospel of Christ. We do not boast beyond limit in the labors of others. But our hope is that as your faith increases, our area of influence among you may be greatly enlarged, so that we may preach the

gospel in lands beyond you, without boasting of work already done in another's area of influence."

In verse 13, Paul conformed himself to God so that the work he did influenced who God intended, and the success which came with it was the work of God's grace in Paul's life.

In verse 15, Paul prayed that the faith of those he influenced would grow and his influence among them would grow with it.

Then, in verse 16, Paul prayed that his influence might grow to regions beyond where they were.

Paul used God's work in him to influence others who would increase God's influence through Paul in their area of living and even beyond their city.

Paul instructed Timothy, "If anyone cleanses himself from [what is dishonorable], he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified (set-apart), useful to the Master, prepared for every good work" (2 Timothy 2:21).

We are "not to be conformed to this world," Romans 12:2, "but be transformed by the renewing of [our] mind."

How can we glorify God with the influence we have in our hand?

Be cautious about what we view and promote online.

Use friendships and social media to share the gospel.

Be committed to the Lord; seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.

IV. Destiny

Considering where we will spend eternity is not easy.

Young people are too busy playing sports, going to parties, watching movies, hanging out, playing on their phones, and doing homework.

Adults are too busy watching sports, talking about parties, critiquing movies, hanging with their friends, being on their phones, and working for a living.

Jesus asked in Matthew 16:26, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

We need to consider our eternal destiny now, while we have the time, the mental ability to make sound decisions, the opportunity to be influenced by godliness, and the invitation to obtain salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

God sent His Son to die for our sins.

He gave us the church to equip, influence, and stir us up for good works.

God gave us the Bible to guide us.

We must respond to His offer of salvation with faithful obedience (Acts 2:40; Philippians 2:12-13).

How can we glorify God with our destiny?

Obey Him.

Live for Him and die for Him.

Application:

Give yourself to God.

Let Him use the time, ability, and influence He has given to you for His glorification.

Consider what you have in your hand that God can use?

A set of keys, a wallet or purse, the Bible, or a cellphone.

Mobility, financial means, wisdom, or ideas.

God wants you and what is in your hand to be used to His glory.

How you use what is in your hand will effect your destiny.

Conclusion:

When you are willing to serve God, He will deal with all your concerns and excuses, just as He did with Moses, Gideon, Jeremiah, and others like them.

When Moses acknowledged in his fourth excuse (Exodus 4:10), "Lord, I don't have what it takes," God responded (vv. 11 and 12), "I created you. I can certainly use you for My glory."

So, Moses gave his final excuse (Exodus 4:13), "Send someone else...anybody but me," God told him (vv. 14-16), "You are so full of excuses, I will send someone else...and you."

No matter what our excuse is for not using what is in our hand to serve God, He has an answer.

We may not know the answer to our excuse right away, but it will be revealed.

If we say, "I don't have time." God says, "I gave you time. I will give you time to serve Me, but I will not tell you how long you have. If you ask me, I will enable you to use your time wisely."

If we say, "I don't have the ability." God says, "I have given you every ability you have. It is not by your ability but Mine that My work will be done through you."

If we say, "I don't have the influence." God says, "I set the areas of influence. I will provide the message, the followers, and the increase."

If we say, "I don't have control of my destiny." God says, "Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matthew 16:25).

What is in your hand?

When you come to God, may you say the words of Augustus Montague Toplady, "Nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling."

When we leave from this place, may we say the words of Ruth Johnson Carruth, "Into our hands the gospel is given; Into our hands is given the light. Haste, let us carry God's precious message, Guiding the erring back to the right."

In the wisdom of God, He has chosen through the preaching of the gospel "to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21).

"God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness..." (Acts 17:30).

"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" (Romans 10:9 and 10).

Peter told many who had blood stains on their hands, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins..." (Acts 2:38) and "those who had received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:41).

Will you please receive God's word, believe it, repent of sin, confess the name of Jesus, and be baptized?