

# The Way to Serve God

by Jack Hyles

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*Jack Hyles emphasizes the importance of finding and pursuing one's God-given purpose with increasing intensity as one ages.*

**Duration:** 34:39

**Scripture:** Psalm 8:4-8, Proverbs 4:26-27, Ecclesiastes 2:11, Ecclesiastes 9:10, Matthew 6:33, Romans 6:4

**Topics:** "Serving God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of finding one's purpose and doing it with passion and dedication. He encourages the audience to identify what their hands should do and to pursue it wholeheartedly. The preacher also emphasizes the need to continue pursuing one's purpose as they grow older, and to approach it as if they have a chance to be young again. Lastly, he challenges the audience to approach their purpose as if they have died and come to life again, emphasizing the urgency and significance of fulfilling their calling. The sermon draws inspiration from the book of Ecclesiastes and encourages the audience to live a life of purpose and service to God.

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## Transcript

days in my life was when I became 40 years of age. These lashes are a sign of it, by the way, and I will not fiddle with them. I won't.

I won't. I won't. I won't.

But when I became 40, how many here are over 40? Would you raise your hand, please? Be careful putting it down, you may hurt as it goes down. But I'll never forget the day that I became 40, the day before. I was, the week before, I was in Jacksonville, Florida, preaching with Dr. Bob Gray.

Dr. Gray and I are the same age, except his birthday is in May, and mine is in September. September 25th. Two-five.

September. Two-five. You got that? You'll be gone, but I expect the card.

And, you know, when he came here, he started wearing those sister's shoes. And, and he gave me a pair, and I never have worn them, but I bought me a pair of them, or at least somebody gave me a pair a long ago, and now I wear them. And I said this morning to the staff in the office, I said, I'll be glad to be the leaves so I can become a man again.

But anyway, I, I'll be glad you leave, for many reasons. But anyway, I, I was in Jacksonville, Florida. Dr. Bob Gray had already turned 40, and I was a week away from 40.

And so I, everywhere we went, I'd say to the person, I said, he's in his 40s, and I'm in my 30s. And we went to a cafeteria, and everybody, everybody in the line, you know, passed by the servers, and I'd say, be a little careful with this fella, he's in his 40s, and I'm in my 30s. And it got to be a great joke, but when I became 40, it was a real crucial time in my life, really.

I don't know why, I think you'll agree that I'm the youngest-looking 45-year-old man in this pulpit. But I, it was, it was a very soul-searching time. In fact, I stayed awake till midnight the night before, because I wanted to enjoy every moment of my 30s awake.

There was a verse of scripture that I studied the week before I became 40, and I have tried to live by it in these almost six years. It'll be six years, September 25. And that scripture is this, Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.

For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave where thou goest. I got all my commentaries and began to study this verse, and used it as a verse for my life after 40. They say life begins at 40, but you're too sick to enjoy it.

But I, I've used it in my 40s. This has been my life's verse for these almost six years. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, or thy hand findeth to do, do it with all your might.

Now, you may not have as much might as you were in your 30s, but you can do it with all your might. For there is no work in the grave where thou goest. Now, I'll tell you what I learned about this before I became 40, and may I share it with you this morning.

Solomon is talking to a great crowd of people. He's an old man. He's about to die.

He gathers all of his relatives together, gets all of his children, all of his grandchildren. And if he had great-grandchildren, he gathered all of them together. All of those who worked for him, his employees, his servants, all of his household.

Thousands and thousands of people he gathers in a great crowd. And he says, I want to give you what I've learned in life. I want you to walk across the bridges off which I fell.

I want you to profit from my mistakes. And so he tells, can you picture an old, old man with his hair white and flowing, as he talks to all of his children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and all of his employees and all of his servants. And he tries to tell them what he's learned about life.

Now, there are four things he says in this one verse. The first thing he says is this, find what your hands should do. The second thing he said, do it as if you had a chance to be young again.

The third thing he said, do it more as you get older. And the fourth thing he said, do it as if you are one coming to life once again. Now, I can't teach you all this this morning, but this is what I learned from this passage of scripture for almost six years ago, just about six years ago.

The first thing he's saying is this, he's saying children, grandchildren, young people, those who follow, find what thy hand should do. When he says, what should thy hand find it to do, it doesn't say what happens to come across your hand. It's what your hand finds to do.

Your hand is hunting for what it ought to do. There's something your hand ought to do. Find it and do it.

That's what he's saying. First, find what thy hand should do. I, across this pulpit, has echoed these words for 13 years.

And that is this, you are here for a purpose. There's a reason you're here. God did not put you here to fill up your stomach for There is a reason you're here.

Find it, find it. Let me ask you a question this morning. Do you know why God made you? Do you know the purpose for your life? For example, I'm sure that Dr. Billings, there's a reason for his being here in this world.

I have no idea what it could be. God alone knows. But I'm convinced, seriously, that Dr. Billings has come in this world to encourage Christian schools.

Dr. Governor Maddox said this morning, talking about our school, he said, your school, that those schools like that are the hope for this nation. And I'm sure that Dr. Billings was brought into this world for that purpose. I was made to do what I'm doing right now.

Now, I want to know, so I want to know why I'm here. And the wise man said, find what your hand was meant to do and do it. Unhappy is the person that wonders why he was made.

Miserable and wretched is the person who wonders what his purpose in life is all about. The lady, one of our very finest ladies came, and I would not embarrass her for the world, but she was in my office last night. And she said, Pastor, why is it I get so rested? I want to maybe do this and then do that.

And I said, you don't have a goal. You don't have a goal. Find what you're here for.

Find the purpose for which God made you and do it. Solomon said, listen, children, listen, grandchildren, listen, my fellow employees, listen, my workers, listen, my servants, each of you, regardless of how insignificant, regardless of how menial is your task, God has made you come to this earth for a purpose. Now he said, find it and do it.

There's nothing else that matters. Nothing else that matters. What does God want me to do? That's all that matters.

It's not who knows me or how much I have or how much fame or how much popularity. It's what am I supposed to do? Did you know that if I do the purpose for God bringing me into this world, if I fulfill that purpose, you know that I'm as great a person as Governor Lester Maddox is? Did you know that the person who sweeps the floors of this building, if that is the will of God for his life, if that's the purpose for his being here in this world, if he does it and he does it with all his might in the sight of God, he's as great a person as Lester Maddox or Jack Hiles or Lee Robertson or John Riess or Bob Jones. I'm simply saying, young girls on the front row this morning, there's a reason God puts you in this world.

Teenagers, there's a reason why you're here. Older people, there's a reason why you're here. Young folks, there's a reason why you're here.

Find it! Find it! Pursue it and do it! Everything else in life ought to fit right into this one goal, the thing for which God made you, the purpose for your being here. Find it and do it. But the second thing that Solomon is saying, he's saying, do it more as you get older.

Yeah. Now, he says in these passages, he said, do it as you get older, do it more. That's just the opposite from the way we feel about it.

We say, well, I'm old now and I'm getting up in years and I'll let the young folks do all the work. That's not what Solomon said. Solomon said, as you get older.

I'm a track fan. In fact, I'm a sports enthusiast and Jim Ryan is one of my heroes. I like Jim Ryan.

He's the miler. Anybody here know who Jim Ryan is? Oh, the rest of you poor, ignorant folks. No wonder America's going to the devil.

But anyway, Jim Ryan, he ran a mile in 352.8, I think it was, yesterday in Canada. And I'm a Jim Ryan fan. But you check with Jim Ryan.

Check sometimes his mile. A mile is composed of four quarter miles. Four times around the track is the usual outdoor mile.

Now, you check the times. He'll run the first quarter in about 59 or 60. And the second quarter in about 61.

And the third quarter in about 61 or 61.5. But the fourth quarter, he'll run in about 55 or 56. Why? The end of the race is coming. And he's going to put on his finishing kick, they call it.

Of course, the older you get, the less kick you have. But the finishing kick. And so as he gets toward the end, and Solomon says, you folks that have white hair, get busy, run faster.

Don't slow down because you're old. The race is almost over. Solomon is saying, you folks that have, you're aging and you have wrinkles and your ears don't hear like they did.

And your voice doesn't speak like it did. And your shoulders aren't as erect as they once were. And life is not as fresh as it once was.

And there's no spring in your step like you once had. He said, don't quit running. He said, the race is almost over.

Get busy for God. Find what you're supposed to do. And then as you get older, do it with increasing intensity.

Some of you folks know Dr. Charles Weigel. You know him well. The old saint of God that lived to be almost 100 years of age.

And one day, and I'm not sure I've shared this with you, but one day I was preaching in Chattanooga, Tennessee. In fact, Dr. Weigel, I was up in had built the Weigel Music Center in his honor and named it after him. He was in his nineties at the time.

And so Dr. Weigel, Dr. Robertson asked him, who would like to have the dedicated and bless his heart. He said, I'd like to have Dr. Jack Hiles to come. And he couldn't have chosen a finer man.

But anyway, I get all over town that I'm cocky again. But anyway, he said, I'd like to have Dr. Jack Hiles to come and preach the dedication message. And so I went down to preach and I preached on singing the Lord's song in a strange land and how that the children of Israel had placed their harps on the willow trees.

And they said, we can't sing because we're in bondage. And I said, well, if any folks ought to sing, it's folks are away from home in bondage where folks ought to hear them. And so that night after it was all over, I went over to Dr. Weigel's room.

I wanted to pray with him. And I got up close to the door and I heard somebody going, praise the Lord. And it was Dr. Weigel's voice.

And he was saying, hallelujah, glory to God. And he was tapping his hands and the old man is making noise. He's jumping up and down and making noise almost a hundred years of age.

And I, I wanted to talk to him, want to pray with him, want to thank him for inviting me down. And I said, Dr. Weigel, he didn't hear me. He said, glory to God, praise the Lord.

Then he said, I love you, Jesus. I love you, Jesus. And he tapped his hands and I guess he was jumping up and down, a lot of noise going on.

And finally I said, Dr. Weigel, Dr. Weigel, this is Dr. Hiles. And he came to the door and his eyes were red and his cheeks were moist and his eyes were red and tears rolling down his cheeks. And there was a smile on his face and he had his collar about like that.

And he looked just about like I look right now. And I said, Dr. Weigel, there's something wrong. He said, nope, nope, nothing wrong, Dr. Hiles.

I said, what are you doing? What's going on? He said, I'm just rehearsing for heaven. And you know what he meant? He's going to be in heaven before long. And he's going to praise the Lord forever.

He wanted to get all rehearsed up. Just rehearsing for heaven. And that old saying of God kept on going and he wouldn't quit.

Then he kept on serving God. And the older he got, the more he went. And the older he got, the better he did.

And the older he got, the more faithful he was. I heard him when he was in his nineties, preaching like a house of hearts. Why? Because the wise men said he should get older.

That's no time to stop. It's not my forties now. It's about time to slow down.

Good night. What do you mean? It's time to floorboard it. Solomon said, hey, watch out with your hand.

Find what you're supposed to do. Find why you're here. Don't live to make money.

And don't live to get popular. And don't live to have fun. Live for the purpose that God placed you here.

And then keep on doing it. And as the race gets longer, run faster. And as you get older, run faster.

And as you get older, do more. And run the last lap faster than you did the first lap. I promised God that in my forties I'd run faster than I did in my thirties.

And I have. I preach more. I work harder.

I get more done in my forties than I did in my thirties. Why? Because of this passage right here. Whatsoever thy hand finds to do.

Find what your hand is supposed to do. And when you find what it's supposed to do, do it. How should I do it? With all your might.

How? The more you get, the more you ought to do it. There's a third thing. Do it as if you had a chance to be young again.

Do it as if you had a chance to be young once again. Dr. Billings, you and I are the same age. You look much older than I am.

And my heart goes out to you. People often think you're my father. But I know.

And you're putting your wayward son. But anyway, you're now about the same age. Did you ever look at some of these young fellows and think what you'd do if you had the youth again that they have? If I was young again, I'd spend hours of the day combing my hair.

Wouldn't you, Governor? I really would. But, and appreciating it. But you know, I've often, now Solomon said, he said, what would you do? He said, if you'd get young again, if you had the energy of youth, you had the zeal of youth, what would you do? Solomon said, that's the way you ought to do it.

He said, listen to me. Serve God. All your mind, everything you do, do it with all your mind, all your mind.

He said, do it more as you get older. But more than that, he said, do it as if you were young once again. Let me go back to Dr. Weigel.

Dr. Weigel, I overheard Dr. Weigel. He doesn't know I overheard him, but I overheard him talking to an older, an old preacher, not as old as Dr. Weigel, but an older preacher. And this preacher, up in years, but younger than Dr. Weigel.

He said, Dr. Weigel, he said, you know what I'd do if I was young again? Dr. Weigel said, what would you do if you were young again? He said, I'd do this and this, and he lifted all the things that do. He said, I'd preach harder and louder and stomp a pulpit. I'd be zealous and I'd be aflame.

He lifted all the things that do if you're young again. Old Dr. Weigel, almost a hundred years of age, looked at him and he said, you know what? He said, what? He said, that's the way I'm still doing it. That's the way I'm still doing it.

That old preacher down in Durham, North Carolina, up in his eighties, one morning heard me preach on the eighth psalm, what is man that art mindful of him, the son of man that thou visitest him. For thou hast made him a little lord of the angels. Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor.

Thou hast put all things under his feet, all beasts, the sheep of the field, and the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and so forth. I preached on what is man that art mindful of him. That old preacher stood up at the end of the sermon and he said, I'd like to say a word.

He didn't weigh over 110, and his arms looked like they were broomsticks, skinny, and the skin was hanging off his arms, especially up here. That old preacher looked out to a great crowd of people, and he said, people, I heard this young man preach this morning, and he said, I've been looking forward all my life

to retiring, and I've been preaching over a half a century, and I'm weary, and I'm tired. And he said, I've been looking forward all my life to having some time to fish, and hunt, and rest as an old man.

And he said, my pension just came a few days ago, and I retired. But he said, folks, I can't retire. And then he held his little old arms up, and he had on a short-sleeved shirt.

His muscle looked like a grape in a piece of macaroni. And he held his little arms up, and he said, I've been preaching and preaching for over a half a century, and he said, I've been looking forward to retiring. But he said, after that young man preached this morning, on what is man a dark, mindful of him, that everybody's important to God, he threw one leg up in the air like this, and he held his little arms up like this, and he said, brethren, I'm reenlisting.

No time to quit. Only one life will soon be passed. Only what's done for God will last.

We never are going to read your bank account. We have your service here at this altar. I'm not going to get your bank book and read the balance in it.

I'm not going to list all the honorary positions you held. All that will matter is did you do what you were supposed to do with all your might, all your life. That's all that matters.

Good night. Our country is going to hell while we fiddle and play. Somebody's got to say, I'll give everything.

Somebody's got to pull out all the stops and put out the throttling, floorboard the accelerator, and do what we're going to do for God while the day is still here. So find what your hand should do, said the wise man. And then he said, once you find it, do it faster as you get older.

And then once you find it, he said, do it as if you had a chance to be young once again. The fourth thing, and I think the most challenging part of this entire passage, Solomon is saying this, do it as one who died and comes to life again. Hey, suppose this morning that suddenly while I was preaching, I grasped my chest and slumped to the floor.

And Dr. Billings would rush up and unloose my collar, take off my coat. And Dr. Streeter would be called. He would come up to the platform and do what he could.

And suddenly somebody said, he's gone. And about Wednesday morning, my body would lie in a casket here at the altar of this building. And a few folks would come by and cry.

And some folks across America would have parties and give presents. Did you hear about that lady that got a divorce and had a reception? Yeah. She got a divorce and had a reception.

And did you hear what she did? Instead of throwing the bouquet, she threw her wedding rings into the lake and rejoiced. Suppose they had a reception. And you followed the hearse out to the grave and laid this body beneath the soil.

And folks all over Hammond said, that big loud mouth won't bother us anymore. And next Sunday morning you wondered what the church would do. What in the world would the church do? The pastor's gone.

Who's going to take over? Where are we going to find a preacher? We've got to appoint a pulpit committee. And so next Sunday morning, Dr. Billings is going to preach maybe. And so Mrs. Colston is

playing the operatory.

And the door opens over here and I walked in. And you said, good night? I thought we buried that rascal. I thought he was dead.

He was. I was at his funeral. I swam.

I had a seat here. And I stood and said, folks, the Lord has granted me one more Sunday. There's some things I've seen I want to tell you about.

And some things that God has told me. Let me ask you a question. Do you think you'd listen very intently? You think you'd have trouble staying awake? You think you'd say, let's hear what the man has to say.

He's been dead. He's been to heaven. He's come back.

Let's hear him. Let me ask you this question. Do you think I'd preach with fervor? Oh, I'd say, folks, if you've seen what I've seen, I saw him.

I saw him. These eyes that held him and these hands touched him. I saw him.

The one whom I've preached and whom I've loved and about whom I've told all these years. I saw him this week. I've been waiting the whole week.

I've come back to tell you how wonderful he is. Oh, I'd say, folks, serve him while you have breath. Where I've been, there are no unsaved people to win.

Where I've been, there are no hungry people to feed. Where I've been, there are no thirsty folks to get a drink of water. Where I've been, there are no sorrowing brows to wipe.

Where I've been, there are no tears to catch. Where I've been, there's nobody to help. It's a wonderful place, but, folks, while you're here, serve him.

Serve him. Serve him. I've been there.

I know I've seen him. Serve him while you have breath to serve him. That's the way I preach.

And you'd listen. And you'd stream down these aisles and you'd say, oh, I will. I will.

I will. I will. I've seen a man come back from heaven.

I've seen a man come back from the grave. Solomon is saying, that's what he says here. He says every time you do the thing that God's called you to do, do it like a man who's died and gone to heaven and come back again.

One more time. One more sermon to preach. One more chance to do it.

That's the way you ought to do it, says the wise man Solomon. That Sunday school class that you teach, teach it like you only had one more Sunday to teach it. With all your might.

For 13 years, I've been walking through this door, the one over there. Every time I walk through the door, I say, oh God, help me to preach today as if this were the last sermon I'd ever preach. The old man looks toward the sunset years.

It'll not be long till he joins his father David. It won't be long till he'll lay down his crown. His son Rehoboam will reign in his stead.

The old man gathers his family and he says, oh family, I've made some mistakes I don't want you to make. I've done some things I don't want you to do. I've said some things I don't want you to say.

I've been some places I don't want you to go. He says, find what you're here for. Do it.

Do it with the vigor of your youth as long as you live. Increase your vigor with the passing of the years and do it as if you died and came back and had one more chance to do it. Or he put it in these words, whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.

And that's the way to serve God. Let us pray. Our Heavenly Father, help us to serve Thee more and more.

Help us to praise Thee o'er and o'er. If our job is the job of the custodian, the teacher, the preacher, the singer, the choir director, the musicians, the nursery keepers, the Sunday school superintendent, the departmental superintendent, the mower, the grass, whatever our job is, may we find it and do it with all our might. With all our might.

Our heads are bowed, eyes are closed. Ladies and gentlemen, what else matters in this life of serving God? What else matters? Solomon said, find what your hand is supposed to do. The lady came by my office this week.

I was busy and couldn't speak to her, but I will be, and she said, her husband said she's homesick, wants to go back home. Oh, good night in the morning. Get busy for God.

Forget about yourself. Forget about your selfishness. Forget about your own desires.

Forget about you and think of God and others. Find what God wants you to do. Find what God wants you to do.

Why are you here? Why are you here? Why are you here? Why are you here? And do it. Do it with all your might. All your might.

Do it more as the years pass. Do it in your middle years and older years, as if you were young once again. And do it with all the vigor as if you had died and came back and had one more chance to do it.

That means that some of you this morning ought to come down this aisle and join this church and say, I'm going to get busy for God. I'm going to get in a church. The very idea of a Christian person living in an area and having no church home and having no place of service for God and no headquarters to serve.

Mr. Sir, you come this morning and say, I want to get my membership. I want my life to count. I used to sing a song, I want my life to count for Jesus.

I want my life to count for Him. Living for Jesus, a life that is true. Striving to please Him in all that I do.

Yielded allegiance, glad-hearted and free. This is the pathway of service. Have you found the will of God to your life? Are you doing it? Are you doing it? That means that some ought to say this morning, I'm going to obey Christ in baptism.

When we stand and sing the invitation song, you come down the aisle and say, preacher, I want to obey Christ. I want to get baptized. I want to obey Christ in the first step of the Christian life.

You come for baptism this morning. This morning, if you've never received Jesus as your Savior, you come and trust Him. He's the answer.

He's the way. Our heads are bowed. I wonder how many would say this morning, Brother Hiles, I don't even know that I'm saved.

I wish I did. I'd like to be a Christian. I'd like to know that I'm saved, but I don't know it.

Pray for me. Would you lift your hand, please? I promise I'll pray for you. Way up high.

God bless you. Is there another? You say, pray for me. I want to be saved and know it.

I want to know that I'm ready to die. Pray for me. Lift your hand way up high, please, on the lower floor first.

God bless you. Is there another? On the lower floor, way up high. Would you raise your hand? You don't know that you're saved.

Young folks, bow your heads. Who else would say, include me in the prayer? Pray for me. Lift your hand.

Would you please way up high? In the balcony. Pray for me. I'd like to be saved and know it.

God bless you in the balcony. Yes. God bless you.

Who else, quickly, please? You want to know that you're saved. You'd say, pray for me. I want to know that I'm saved.

In the balcony. Raise your hand, please. Anywhere in the balcony.

I'll wait for you just a moment. Our Heavenly Father, I pray for these who need to receive Christ. May they do so today.

Now our heads are bowed. When we sing, I'm going to ask you to leave your seat. Come to the nearest aisle and down the aisle to the front and make the wisest choice you've ever made in your life.

That choice of receiving Jesus as your Savior. Wait a minute. How many of you are saved? And you know you're saved.

But you've not been baptized since you got saved. Would you lift your hand, please, that I may know you're here. God bless you.

And you. And you. And you.

And you. God bless you. Other others.

You know you're saved, but you've not been baptized since you got saved. Would you lift your hand, please? God bless you. God bless you.

In the balcony. In the balcony. Would you lift your hand? You're saved.

You know it, but not baptized. God bless you. Other others.

I'm not going to embarrass you. I want to know if you're here. Other others.

God bless you. Other others. All right.

Now, this morning, we have the water. We have the robes. We have the towels.

All we need is an obedient Christian. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do. What did your hand do? Trusted Jesus.

He became a Christian. Now, what kind of Christian are you supposed to be? With all your might. How do you start? Obedience.

Obedience. Obedience. You come this morning for baptism.

But wait a minute. There are those who ought to come and say, I'm going to join the church, but transfer. When we stand and sing, I ask you on the first verse, the first stanza of the first invitation song, to leave your seat and come to Christ.

Come for baptism. Come for church membership, but come and let's fill these aisles. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do.

Do it with all thy might. Our Heavenly Father, bless the invitation. Crown it with our power and blessing.

Help us to do what we ought to do. Find what we ought to do and do it and do it with all our might. Help us to do it as we grow older, even more fervently.

Help us with the passing of the years to be more dedicated to the task. Help us to do it with the strength of our youth. And help us to do it as if we only had one chance, coming back from the grave.

In Jesus' name, amen. Shall we stand, please, on the first stanza of the invitation hymn, the first word. The choir will sing all to Jesus.

I surrender all to Him. I freely give in the balcony on my left, back up here in the center, over here on my right, all over this great lower floor with no one leaving unless, no one moving unless you're coming forward. Come and say, yes, I will arise and go to Jesus.

I'll come for salvation. I'll come for baptism. I'll come for church membership.

I'm a Christian now and I'm going to do whatever I ought to do with all my might, all my might. Come and say yes to God. Do it while the choir sings.

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