

Have you ever heard the proverb, make hay while the sun shines?

It's not a proverb from the Bible, although its truths certainly are in the Bible. Instead, it's a proverb from farming days, when everyone grew hay for their own horses and livestock. Even today, farmers want the best and most nutritious hay for their animals. They not only wait for the hay to mature in the field, but also for sunny weather to bale it. The best hay contains a specific amount of moisture: enough makes it more nutritious, too much makes it spoil. This is why farmers bale hay when the sun shines. Rain makes the hay wet, wet hay spoils, and the cattle go hungry. So, when the hay is mature in the field and the sun is shining, the farmer has a window of opportunity: stop everything and make hay.

So, what does this have to do with our lives? After all, I'm not a farmer and I don't make hay. This proverb is a reminder to us to do what we're supposed to do, while we can.

Did you know we have a specific purpose? Our life is not an accident and what occurs all around us is not happenstance. Every believer has work to do in the kingdom of God. In 1 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul writes about his job working in the Kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 9:21 - I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.

But then he applies it to all of us when he encourages us to make hay while the sun shines, or as he puts it: running the race.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 - Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

Paul's sole intent was teaching about Jesus and discipling believers in Christ. But, this was not just Paul's job, it is all of our jobs, too, regardless of whether we make our living as a tentmaker or a doctor or a fisherman or a tax collector or a carpenter. God calls each of us to give of ourselves to our fellow believers and his work on this earth. He does not allow us to suck up all of his church's resources, simply sitting on a church pew. You and I have a job to do – to work in the body of Christ.

So what do we do? Where do we start? Does this mean everyone should be a pastor? No, but we are all part of the body and every body part has a purpose.

In Romans 12, Paul talks about gifts that God gives us, not for our enjoyment, but to be used in working with the body of Christ – his church and its work, which is the Kingdom of God.

Romans 12:6-8 - God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, then prophesy whenever you can—as often as your faith is strong enough to receive a message from God. If your gift is that of serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, do a good job of teaching. If you are a preacher, see to it that your sermons are strong and helpful. If God has given you money, be generous in helping others with

it. If God has given you administrative ability and put you in charge of the work of others, take the responsibility seriously. Those who offer comfort to the sorrowing should do so with Christian cheer.

We all have common work to do, such as witnessing of the Lord's work in our lives, praying for each other, and studying his word. But God also gave us specific gifts that he intends us to use. What is your gift? If you feel an urge to teach, then teach wherever God allows. If you sing, then humbly share your gift in services. If you are particularly good at fixing machinery, then look for opportunities to do that among God's people. Are you drawn to prayer, organization, acts of service? Whatever your gifts, do them to build up the people of the church for the glory of God.

Using our gifts to build God's kingdom is what it's all about. This not only brings us reward, but it is obedience to the Father, which pleases him.

Jesus had a limited time on this earth. This is why he made hay while the sun shined. He was obedient to everything that God told him to do, which pleased his Father. He spoke about this in the book of John – that we all have a limited time on this earth. Soon enough, we will all be gone.

John 9:4-5 - We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work.

So, now is not the time to sit back and relax and focus on pursuing the pleasures of life. We have a window of opportunity. Get busy now. Make hay while the sun shines.

- Bill Wilson (This article may be copied freely.)