

5 FACTS ABOUT GREAT OPPORTUNITIES

Opening text: **1 Corinthians 16:5-9**

5 Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia). 6 And it may be that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go. 7 For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits 8 But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. 9 For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

“For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”

Amplified Bible:

“A wide door of opportunity for effectual service has opened to me there, a great and promising one”...

Introduction - Paul is writing to the Corinthian Church from Ephesus (AD56), where God is moving in a powerful way. He explains to them his future plans but at the moment he has to stay in Ephesus because a great opportunity is set before him.

This message is about opportunities. There are 5 facts I want to share with you today concerning great opportunities:

1. Great opportunities are more important than little problems.

Verse 7 - *7 For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits.*

Why did Paul want to see them for a while and not just see them briefly? – Maybe because there were problems in the Corinthian Church that needed attention. Paul spoke about those problems in the epistle.

If there were problems, shouldn't Paul proceed immediately to Corinth?

I am sure Paul was confronted with that idea also. However, he decided to seize the great opportunity of such a great and effective door and minister to a group that was totally unreached.

Problems are common. They will always be there. Opportunities are unique.

We can be so caught up trying to solve our problems, so focused on ourselves that we can really miss out on great opportunities to win the world for Jesus.

2. Great opportunities must be discerned.

3. **9** *For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.*

Paul saw the adversaries but was also able to discern the great opportunity ahead. We need that kind of discernment; we need to be on the lookout for opportunities to be effective for God.

These are days of great opportunities: There are more people alive today than at any time in history.

Ephesians 5:14-17 (AMPC): ¹⁴ *Therefore He says, Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine (make day dawn) upon you and give you light.* ¹⁵ *Look carefully then how you walk! Live purposefully and worthily and accurately, not as the unwise and witless, but as wise (sensible, intelligent people),* ¹⁶ *Making the very most of the time [buying up each opportunity], because the days are evil.* ¹⁷ *Therefore do not be vague and thoughtless and foolish, but understanding and firmly grasping what the will of the Lord is.*

Great opportunities cannot be discerned by sleepers. Determine to be fully present, fully awake, fully aware. Let's go for REVIVAL!

Colossians 4:5 AMPC *Behave yourselves wisely [living prudently and with discretion] in your relations with those of the outside world (the non-Christians), making the very most of the time and seizing (buying up) the opportunity.*

3. Sometimes great opportunities come in small packages.

If we go to Acts 19 we can see exactly the report of the great and effective door that Paul was talking about.

Let us read **Acts 19: 1-7**

That does not sound like a great door. There are only 12 people there. This is not a Reinhard Bonkke crusade, this is a home cell meeting. Big things start small. Look now to verses **10-12; 17-20.**

In two years what was known then as Asia Minor received the Gospel. Asia Minor was a considerable vast area with many of the great cities of those days.

Zechariah 4:10 tells us *not to despise the day of small things*

What may look like a small door of opportunity may turn out to be a great opportunity.

4. There is a great God behind great opportunities.

Verse 11-12 - *11 Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.*

We can seize great opportunities with faith because there is a great God behind those great opportunities.

In God we can do mighty exploits because He is a Mighty God of miracles and deliverance.

5. Great opportunities require great prayer

Verse 20 - *So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.*

Verse 23 - *And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way.*

That is why Paul said, *“a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”*

We must seize the opportunities but, at the same time, we will have to deal with our adversaries. Diana was the local stronghold. It is not by accident that it was to the Ephesians that Paul wrote concerning spiritual warfare, the armour of God and the need to pray.

Ephesians 6:18 - *praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—*

1 Corinthians 15:32 - *If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, (...)*

Conclusion:

5 facts about great opportunities:

1. Great opportunities are more important than little problems
2. Great opportunities must to be discerned
3. Great opportunities sometimes come in small packages
4. There is a great God behind great opportunities
5. Great opportunities require great prayer