

## The Corinthian Letters, Lesson 64, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 16:5-9, "Opportunities"

- ✚ Often what we see is a test of who we really are. We looked last time at the stewardship of our finances and this time we are going to look at the stewardship of our opportunities. "So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise." Ephesians 5:15. Paul recognized a great opportunity within Macedonia in front of him, and when we read Acts 19 we find out that indeed it was, Acts 19:8-10. This didn't just fall into his lap, he had to endure a lot of difficulty and trials to see this ministry through.
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### **1. Difficulty, trial, hardship, sleeplessness, opponents, loneliness, what do you see when you see these things?**

- ✓ Do you see an open door of opportunity and blessing, or do you see a closed door and a no trespassing sign? The difference between a pessimist and an optimist is that a pessimist sees a problem in every opportunity whereas an optimist sees an opportunity in every problem. What constitutes an opportunity or open-door for you? No resistance, no opponents, ease, all the money is up front? Many times, many people have the idea that the path of least resistance is the Lord's path or the Lord's will for us. "God wants our lives to be easy and trouble free" or so we think. I challenge you to search the scriptures and find even one instance where the direction of God for a person was trouble free. These servants of God did not have trouble free lives as they followed God's will for them.

### **2. What constitutes an open door?**

- ✓ Somethings we can learn through simple observation of those who honored God with their lives.
  - 1) God gives a vision or direction for a person.
  - 2) Between that directive and its fulfillment are many trials and obstacles.
  - 3) The fulfillment of God's will is always worth the trouble it takes to get there.
- ✓ God gives us a vision to serve Him; a call or a motivation of what we can do for His kingdom purposes. It may only come over us one time, so we need to write it down. We need to hold that vision in the macro not the micro: we tend to dream of how it all will work out which God never promised us. There is always some of us and our thinking that gets mixed up in God's visions for our lives. God is obligated to His vision and call, not our interpretation of it, Proverbs 3:5-6. God will confirm and further define our vision as time passes. This vision is partly dependent on us because we have to want it; we have to want to fulfill what God created us for and if we don't, we will regret it.

### **3. Once we have a vision or call or clear leading from God, we need nothing else.**

- ✓ We don't need a vision *and* everyone else's approval, or money to get it done, or everything working out the way we planned it. Sometimes the only confirmation we get initially is that nothing seems to be working out! We have to be settled with knowing what it is that God has for us; nothing else needs to go our way. It is not that we ignore the problems, trials or opposition, instead we need to count the costs. But those things cannot make our decisions for us. For Paul, his decisions were strictly vision and call based. A "Wide door of opportunity has opened and there are many adversaries." Not there are many adversaries, so the door isn't open. This is how we act if we are not driven by vision and call.

### **4. When there are open doors, there will be adversity.**

- ✓ If we are determined to follow the Lord in His work, we should expect to encounter the Lord's enemy!, 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:10-14. This is what following God's will can look like because of our adversary. So, we step through an open door with our eyes open. On the front line, we should expect to get shot at! So, if we want to follow the Lord and His will for our life, we need to be prepared to meet a great enemy. There can be no opportunity from the Lord without an adversary on the other side of it. The fields are white unto harvest, but we will have unwanted company in those fields.

### **5. One more thing we can learn about open doors and God's call is that they are always worth the trouble it takes to accomplish them.**

- ✓ It sure was for Paul, he endured a lot. Most of Paul's life and ministry was a fight, a fight that resulted in great victory.

**Someone has said that ministry and serving the Lord is 90% depression and 10% exhilaration.**

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