

WHAT IS THAT SMELL?

2 Corinthians 2:12-17

EVERY OPEN DOOR MAY NOT BE THE RIGHT DOOR FOR THAT TIME

- *“When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though the Lord opened a door for me, 13 I had no rest in my spirit because I did not find my brother Titus. Instead, I said good-bye to them and left for Macedonia.”* (2 Corinthians 2:12-13)
- **Sometimes we need to walk away from the “good thing” to be obedient in fulfilling the “better thing.”**
- *“For those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit have their minds set on the things of the Spirit.”* (Romans 8:5)
- **As we grow in our understanding of how to walk in the Spirit, the direction of the Lord becomes clearer.**
- *“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.”* (John 16:13)

BEING ON MISSION FOR GOD IS ESSENTIAL EVEN THOUGH NOT ALL WILL BE RECEPTIVE

- *“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in Christ’s triumphal procession and through us spreads the aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. 15 For to God we are the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 16 To some we are an aroma of death leading to death, but to others, an aroma of life leading to life. Who is adequate for these things?”* (2 Corinthians 2:14-16)
- **When we understand the nature of being “captive to God” we will truly find our strength and joy in the mission work of God.**
- *“Paul was defeated and taken captive; but he was brought to faith and forgiven and justified and made a glad and willing servant of the greatest General who ever was.” – Piper*
- **As we spread the “aroma of the knowledge of Christ” we have the joy of seeing others join the family of God and inherit everlasting life.**
- *“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So, then, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.”* (1 Corinthians 3:6-7)
- **The fact that some people reject the message of the gospel of Jesus does not mean we have failed in our proclamation of the Jesus.**

WE NEED TO GUARD OUR HEART AGAINST SELFISH MOTIVES

- *“For we do not market the word of God for profit like so many. On the contrary, we speak with sincerity in Christ, as from God and before God.”* (2 Corinthians 2:12-17)
- **Our motives should always center on what honors Christ and advances His mission.**
- *“It is necessary to silence them; they are ruining entire households by teaching what they shouldn’t in order to get money dishonestly.”* (Titus 1:11)
- **Those who operate out of selfish motives should be addressed and silenced when necessary.**
- *“The others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition.”* (Philippians 1:17a)
- **When we are being led by God’s Spirit we can be confident in the message we proclaim about Jesus.**

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION

Observation:

- Why did Paul leave Troas even though "a door was opened" for ministry there? What concern was weighing on his heart?
- What images does Paul use to describe believers and their witness to the world? What do those images communicate?
- How does Paul contrast his ministry with those who "peddle God's word for profit"?
- What repeated emphasis do you notice throughout this passage about Christ's role in Paul's ministry and success?

Understanding

- How does Paul’s example of ministry challenges and opportunities challenge the way we respond when our life plans don’t pan out?
- Share about a time when a difficult season ultimately produced spiritual growth or opened unexpected opportunities for ministry.
- What kind of "fragrance" do you think your daily attitudes, conversations, and actions leave in your workplace, neighborhood, school, or home?
- What subtle selfish and sinful motives can creep into our service to God, and how can we guard our hearts against them?
- How would your priorities change if you became more aware that you ultimately serve Christ rather than the approval of others?
- What is one specific step of obedience you sense God calling you to take this week so that your life more clearly reflects the aroma of Christ to those around you?