

Make the Most of Every Opportunity
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Good morning! I'd like to welcome you to Petra Church. I believe God has given us a word to share with you and I think it's going to be encouraging to your hearts.

I have this vision in my head of someone sitting on the sofa with cereal in one hand and the bible in the other.

Today I'd like to talk to you about a phrase that the apostle Paul uses twice, in both Ephesians and Colossians. He actually uses this phrase to two very different contexts.

Make the most of every opportunity

I don't know what the last two weeks have looked like for you or what the next few months ahead might look like for you, but I think God wants to deposit this word in our hearts.

Make the most of every opportunity

He's saying life is about moments. Moments of opportunities. Make the most of them.

If you know anything about Paul, this sounds like a very Paul thing to say. You can see Paul waking up in the morning ready to go.

Paul is the guy in Acts 14 that got beaten and stoned and dragged out of the city. They thought he was dead. Paul gets up and walks back into the city. Who is this guy? I could see "make the most of every opportunity" being one of those repetitive phrases Paul would use if you hang out with him.

You know people like this:

- Better than I deserve.
- Today is a good day for a good day.
- If it has a purpose, it has a place.
- Don't put it down. Put it away.

He actually uses this phrase to two very different contexts:

Ephesians 5

¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Explain the passage)

The Ephesians' passage is interesting because it comes on the heel of a long section of teaching that actually starts in chapter 4:17. He tells us:

- Do not live the way the gentiles do.
- Put off your former way of life, deceitful desires.
- Put on your new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
- Put off falsehood and speak truthfully.
- Do not sin in your anger. Don't let the sun go down on your anger.
- Don't steal but share.
- Let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouth.
- Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, and malice.
- Be kind and compassionate.
- Forgive as Christ forgave you.
- Walk in love.
- There should not be a hint of sexual immorality or impurity or greed.
- Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking.

¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

The second time that we hear this phrase is at the very end of Colossians.

Colossians 4:2-6

² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

So we have this same phrase in two very different parts of scriptures.

Paul is in Ephesians wrapping up a thought of teaching. In Colossians he is closing the book. In both cases he encourages us to be intentional, wise, and thankful.

If I could sum up these two portions of scriptures in just three words, they would be:

Intentionality, Wisdom, and Thankfulness

Intentionality is expressed making the most of every opportunity. Being strategic, being watchful, being careful.

Wisdom is expressed in devoting yourself to prayer and understanding what the Lord's will is. The wisest thing you could ever do is to know what God wants to do.

Thankfulness is expressed in singing the realities of who God is over one another and to the Lord. Like a song, communicate gratitude to one another and to God himself.

Be Intentional

Intentionality is expressed making the most of every opportunity. Being strategic, being watchful, being careful.

(Story about thinking time)

Make the most of every moment.

Be Wise

Wisdom is expressed in devoting yourself to pray and understanding what the Lord's will is. The wisest thing you could ever do is to know what God wants to do.

Being intentional and being wise are very similar. The defining different is God. In fact, for some of you, before you knew Jesus you were very intentional about the wrong things.

He wisdom Paul is prescribing is a wisdom that leads us to the will of God.

Psalm 90:12

¹² **Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.**

From age 0-18 you have 936 weekends with your child.

If you have a 5-year-old, you have about 676 weekends left before they are 18 and could potentially move out.

If you have a 10-year-old, it's 416 weekends.

By the time they are 15, you have 156 weekends.

One day that number will get to zero.

Story of Esther...

Esther 4:14

14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"

Be Thankful

Thankfulness is expressed in singing the realities of who God is over one another and to the Lord. Like a song, communicate gratitude to one another and to God himself.

Colossians 2:6-7, 3:15, 3:17, 4:2

Paul hits the Colossians with thankfulness in rapid fire.

Colossians 2:6-7

⁶So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 3:15

¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Colossians 3:17

¹⁷And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 4:2

²Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Sometimes you have to find thankful.

Write out what you are thankful for.

Say thank you more.

Reward your children when they say thank you (Chick-fil-A)

How do you make the most of every opportunity?

Intentionality, Wisdom, and Thankfulness

I'd like to close with two thoughts:

Space Shuttle Era: Crawler Transporter

Crawler Travels at a top speed of 2 miles an hour. Normally cruises around one mile an hour.

32 feet per gallon travel about 3 miles to the launch site. It takes six hours.

6.6 million pounds carry things that weigh between 10 to 12 million pounds.

Now is not the time to give up hope.

Welcome to my launch pad.

Some of you need to hear the voice of the Father speak his blessing over you.

**May His favor be upon you
And a thousand generations**

**And your family and your children
And their children and their children**

**May His presence go before you
And behind you and beside you
All around you and within you
He is with you he is with you
In the morning in the evening
In your coming and your going
In your weeping and rejoicing
He is for you He is for you**

Closing Song

Make the most of every opportunity.

Intentional, wise, thankful.

Prayer