

# Seize Your God-Opportunities!

*Ephesians 5:15-17 "Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup>making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup>Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."*

Examples of Missed Business Opportunities: Wester Union, HP, Kodak, Blockbuster/Netflix

We have God Opportunities that we need to recognize and grasp this coming year. How do that?

## I. Stay Focused (v. 15)

<sup>15</sup> *Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise, but as wise,*

**Then** = context – Paul is concluding his thoughts on walking in the light of Christ before addressing how walking in God's light effects our relationships.

**Carefully** = "*ble'-pō*" **Meaning:** to discern, to weigh carefully, examine, turning towards an object, facing an item to see clearly... in other words to zero-in, to be focused! (funny whistle)

**Wisely** = *so-fo's* : skilled, expert, forming the best plans and using the best means for their execution.

### A. Keep Everything in Perspective to Eternity

Psalm 39:4 (NIV84) Show me, O LORD, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life.

- We only have so much sand in our hourglass!  
In an average lifetime, the average American spends 3 years in business meetings, 13 years watching TV, 6 years eating food, Consumes 109,354 pounds of food, Makes 1,811 trips to McDonalds, Spends \$6,881 in vending machines, Eats 35,138 cookies and 1,483 pounds of candy, Catches 304 colds, Is involved in 6 motor vehicle accidents, is hospitalized 8 times (men) or 12 times (women), Spends 23 years sleeping.
- Compared to eternity our life on this earth is very, very short!
- We have no guarantee for tomorrow and we need to make each moment count now!

### B. Refocus Often

- Life is filled with distractions and changes.
- The Ephesians lost their focus. Letter in revelation – lost their first love.

## II. Stay Intentional (v. 16)

<sup>16</sup> *making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*

### A. Recognize and **Grab** Your “**God Opportunities**”

- There is a Bulgarian Proverb that says “*Seize the opportunity by the beard, for it is bald behind.*”
- Mark Twain: “*I was seldom able to see an opportunity until it had ceased to be one.*”
- *Have you ever wondered why opportunity knocks once – yet temptation bangs on the door constantly?*

#### 1. **Opportunities to Grow Spiritually**

- Opportunities to grow from *spiritual intake*
- Opportunities to *resist temptation* and thereby grow
- Opportunities to grow through *trials*

#### 2. **Opportunities to Develop Relationships**

- “If opportunity doesn’t knock, build a door.” Be proactive in your calendar.

#### 3. **Opportunities to Share Christ with Your Friends**

- The Ephesians grabbed their opportunity and impacted an entire region
- **Col 4:5** *Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.*

#### 4. **Opportunities to Become a Greater Servant**

What’s sad is when I see Christians who live only for themselves. Their whole world centers around them. Everything is measured on how it affects them. The mark of true disciples is the desire to serve God by serving others.

#### 5. **Opportunities to Invest Financially in the Kingdom**

### B. **Watch out** for Things that **Distract**:

*because the **days are evil.*** = po-nā-ro's

**Meaning:** full of labors, annoyances, hardships, perils; causing pain and trouble, in a physical sense: diseased or blind, in an ethical sense: evil wicked.

## 1. Sin

*ON MY WAY to deliver a computer to a customer, I saw a handwritten sign at the entrance of an alley. It read: "Blocked! Do not pass! Difficult to turn back." I continued anyway, only to discover that the alley was indeed blocked by a fallen tree. As predicted, it took a while to turn the truck around. When I finally got back to the entrance, I noticed a second sign. It read: "Told you so!"*

Sin dulls and clouds our love for God. Sin not only impedes our hearing of God's voice, it causes an unwillingness to even listen to God.

## 2. Time Wasted

## 3. Even "Good Things" - "Good is the enemy of great."

Martha & Mary story - "Martha, Martha," Jesus answered, "You are worried & upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, & it will not be taken away from her" [Luke 10:41-42].

Was Martha committing a sin by fixing a meal in the kitchen? No, of course not! But here's the problem. She was so preoccupied with what she was doing that she didn't realize that God was in her living room. That's the same mistake that you & I make every day. We get so caught up in the here & now that we fail to deal with the eternal, the things that will last forever & ever.

## III. Stay Centered (v. 17)

<sup>17</sup> *Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.*

### A. Centered on Jesus

Find out what Pleases the Lord and Repeat that all Year.

**Ephesians 5:8–10** (NIV84) <sup>8</sup> For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) <sup>10</sup> and find out what pleases the Lord.

### B. Centered on Jesus' Will

**Rom 12:2** Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will.

We must seize the day because within each day there are God-given opportunities waiting to unfold, and every twenty-four-hour period is filled with divine moments.

The key is not the ability to read God's mind, but to know His heart.

## *Conclusion*

**Romans 13:11-12** says, "The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness & put on the armor of light."

In John Maxwell's book, "Developing the Leader Within You." A reflection from a follower of Christ: " I was a revolutionary when I was young and all my prayer to God was: Lord, give me the energy to change the world.' As I approached middle age and realized that my life was half gone without my changing a single soul, I changed my prayer to: ' Lord, give me the grace to change all those who come into contact with me, just my family and friends, and I shall be satisfied.' Now that I am an old man and my days are numbered, I have begun to see how foolish I have been. My one prayer now is: ' Lord, give me the grace to change myself.' If I had prayed for this right from the start, I would not have wasted my life.