

Opportunity
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Introduction: May God's wisdom be in us so that we can see the opportunities placed before us.

- A. What is "opportunity?"
 - 1. It is defined as: "a combination of circumstances favorable for the purpose."
 - 2. The key word here is "purpose." What may be an opportunity to one would be a disadvantage to another.
- B. Often the opportunities presented to Christians would be considered as burdens to the world.
 - 1. Suffering is an opportunity to the Christian! Why? (**1 Pt 4:12-14, 19**)
 - 2. Can we see where our real opportunity lies?

I. Some Facts about Opportunity

- A. All have them! (**Jn 15:1-2,6-8**)
 - 1. Are you bearing fruit?
 - 2. Opportunities must be taken to bear fruit. Do you see your opportunities?
- B. Must be Recognized.
 - 1. If we have a keen awareness of what is important, we will. (**Mt 6:33**)
 - 2. We often fail to recognize them because we do not want to!
- C. They are time related.
 - 1. Consider the foolish virgins. (**Mt 25:8-10**)
 - 2. Where do elders come from? They come from men taking opportunities over several years.
 - 3. Why do some lament about the difficulty of reaching the lost?
- D. They must be acted upon.
 - 1. The foolish virgins should have been more urgent. They acted too late!
 - 2. Brethren, we have no promise of tomorrow. (**Eph 6:18-20**)
 - 3. Often I think of this while holding my children. I must take advantage of today!

II. Opportunities for the Young

- A. To be converted to the Lord. (**Ecc 12:13**)
 - 1. The greatest opportunities to serve the Lord and lay a solid foundation for life comes at youth.
 - 2. If we could talk to each one here about their conversion to Christ, most were converted while young.
 - 3. Young people die too. They also will be judged. (**Ecc 11:9**)
- B. To grow in the Lord. (**Psa 71:5, 17**)
 - 1. The foundational teachings I most use today were taught to me while young.
 - 2. As a young person you will find opportunities to study with good men and women. Take them!
 - 3. This world is against our youth. The things they are encouraged to do are against God's will. Issues such as immorality, drugs, and violence are loudly taught to our young. (**Gen 8:21**)
- C. To influence others. (**Acts 26:4**)

1. The ones who fervently serve the Lord stand out!
2. Those who are younger will likely have the greatest chance to influence others for the Lord than at any other time in their lives,

III. Opportunities for Young Couples

- A. To make a godly home.
 1. We can overcome the influences of this world! (Prov 22:6)
 2. It is important to have the couple committed to the Lord. **(Lk 1:5-6; 1 Pt 3:7)**
 3. Often this begins before marriage! Be a strong Christian and marry someone who loves the Lord!
 4. Do you take the time to really be with your children? TV does not count!
- B. To use your talents for the Lord.
 1. There never has been a more talented and prosperous generation in this country.
 2. Sadly some couples have given themselves over to worldliness. How do you spend your money? What do you give to the Lord's cause?
 3. We need more who will open their homes.
 4. We need more who will develop their Bible skills to be a teacher. **(2 Tim 2:2)**
 5. Where do Elders come from? Is this your goal?
- C. To influence others. **(Acts 19:26)**

IV. Opportunities for Older Christians

- A. To be an example to the young. **(Prov 16:31; Isa 46:4)**
 1. You may not realize the encouragement provided by those who have lived for the Lord for years. **(Titus 2:3-5)**
 2. Some of the greatest encouragement I have received have been from the example and words of older, godly men and women. **(Acts 9:36-41)**
 3. Some of the greatest discouragement I have received has come from older men who never learned to discipline their spirits nor their tongues.
- B. To continue to grow. **(1 Pt 2:1-3)**
 1. The best way to become ineffectual for the Lord is to think you have obtained.
 2. You will never stop learning and loving to learn if you serve the Lord.
 3. It is never too late to begin. (Example of my father.)
- C. To build up the church.
 1. We need the maturity and influence of godly men. **(Jas 3:13)**
 2. Sadly, age does not always mean maturity.
 3. When will this church face another internal crisis? The way we overcome our problems will depend upon the cool heads and careful actions of older, mature men.

Conclusion: How will we handle opportunity?

- A. We are in the midst of opportunity in our selection of elders.
 1. We will take a large step forward if we will patiently do the Lord's will.
 2. Let us act by faith and not by fear.
- B. Are you ready to take the next opportunity in your life?