

## **Open Doors**

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In 2 Corinthians 2:12-13 Paul says that God had opened a door for the gospel. Paul saw and took advantage of the open door that God provided. Walking through God's open doors requires developing spiritual eyes to see and the desire to serve. Can we see that God is opening doors also in our lives? Can you see God's open doors?

The last four months have been a whirlwind of activity. The ministry and mission schedule has included 68 days of presentations—teaching, preaching and seminars (plus travel time). Along the way God has also provided opportunities to teach Bible classes in the local church and to serve in ministry to the sick, hurting, bereaved, and imprisoned. In addition to presenting seminars and sermons in five congregations in the US, I spent 21 days in Guatemala and 21 days in Chile and Uruguay. The influence of the ministry--seminars, preaching and teaching—is often multiplied in other parts of the world because church leaders come together from various congregations. In Guatemala the first seminar lasted three days with about 25 church leaders present from 20 congregations. The second seminar was only one day (about 6 hours) but there were 45 present.

Along the way (both in the US and internationally), work is done with local congregations through visits, counseling, Bible studies, evangelism, campaigns, and encouragement. The goal is to develop the spiritual life of the church members, to encourage the process of developing more leaders and teachers, to assist with evangelism, and to strengthen Christian families.

In view of Paul's description of his preaching in Troas, and considering how God is still at work in ministry and missions, I have been thinking of lessons and applications of the open door.

### **God provides open doors of opportunity in our lives**

Paul had gone to Troas to preach the gospel. He had gone to Troas with the calling and purpose of God in mind. He writes, I went to preach and the door was open. Opportunities come when we are in tune with God and his purpose. Opportunities come when we are trying to do what God calls us to do—when we are focused on God's purpose in our lives.

### **Not every opportunity is a God-opportunity**

Not every opportunity is an open door from God. Opportunities are God-opportunities only when we use them according to his purpose and calling and for his glory. Our busyness does not necessarily imply that we are involved in God's business.

### **Ultimately, God's open doors are opportunities for preaching, teaching, and sharing the gospel**

God opens doors when we are trying to do his will and not our will. God's will is often different than our will. What God wants from our lives may be different than what we want. Open doors are more likely to come when we are seeking to do God's will. We can do a lot of good things in this world that do little or nothing to advance the cause of Christ. For Paul and for us,

open doors ultimately lead to preaching and teaching the gospel. God still provides such open doors for his people today.

**Open doors appear in the context of everyday life**

Paul was doing what he was called to do. He was living life in the moment. Open doors come in the context of everyday life. Open doors are not always special callings; they are often provided in the context of our daily lives, as we work and live among neighbors, friends, and family.

**Open doors come because one has prepared for them**

Open doors are not automatic. Open doors are visible because one is ready to see and respond. Open doors thus depend on prayer, getting ready, and putting oneself in a position to recognize and walk through the open doors.

**Sometimes open doors must be bypassed because other doors are opening**

Paul preached in Troas, but he left (prematurely?) because he saw the need to meet Titus and tend to the needs of the Corinthian church. Open doors show us priorities, and a new open door may suggest leaving the present to walk into the future. Open doors help us choose the best over the better and the good.