

Doors of Opportunity

(Acts 15:41-16:15)

Introduction.

The television game show “Let’s Make A Deal” premiered in 1963. Created, produced, and hosted by Monty Hall. In one form or another, the game show continues to be broadcast today featuring host Wayne Brady.

A summary of the game show is that contestants win prizes and are often given the OPPORTUNITY to trade up for an unknown gift. Usually multiply choices or OPPORTUNITIES are presented, although the contestant knows that only part of the options are more valuable than the gift they are trading –in. The game show premise is that choosing the right DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY will lead to a more valuable prize or success.

Certainly, life choices are more serious and have eternal results. However, like the game show, people are often presented DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY in life. In other words, we are given choices to make regularly. The goal is to choose only what is within the WILL OF GOD for your life and not the others.

Today, we are looking at an event in the life of Paul and Barnabas that illustrates the reality that you and I will likely experience several DOORS of OPPORTUNITY in life and must make good choices to remain in the will of God.

Contextualize this section of Scripture.

- 1) Paul and Barnabas completed their first missionary journey.
- 2) Tension grew between Paul and Barnabas, over John Mark, as the two considered a second missionary journey and they ultimately went in differing ministry directions.
- 3) Paul then chose Silas to accompany him on another missionary adventure.

Contextualize this sermon series.

I. Enjoying A Productive Ministry (15:41-16:5)

- A) Strengthening the Saints (15:41)
- B) Preparing the Preachers (16:1-4)
- C) Delivering Decrees (16:4)
- D) Daily Decisions (16:5)

II. Experiencing Closed Doors of Opportunity (16:6-8)

Principle: *Not only is God the Lord of opportunity (open doors), but He is also the Lord of closed doors.*

- A) Forbidden to Preach (16:6)
- B) Forbidden to Progress (16:7)
- C) Forbidden to Prosper (16:8)

Why does God open and close doors of opportunity?

1) God opens and closes doors of opportunity to fulfill His plan for mankind. The divine intertwining of lives on earth often requires times of progress and patience, as God works out the details of His plan. The opening and closing of doors allows for that cycle of progress and patience.

2) God opens and closes doors of opportunity to meet our needs. Not only do doors open and close for the benefit of others, but also for our own spiritual benefit. God's plan for mankind includes you and your spiritual growth.

New opportunities cause His children to exhibit or learn new virtues or character traits.

3) God opens and closes doors to teach obedience. The way to learn obedience is by obeying.

III. Entering New Areas of Opportunity (16:9-15)

A) Divine Appointments (16:9)

B) Divine Assurance (16:10)

1) If not doors open, stay put. Never try to force open a door of opportunity. Many of God's people have lived to regret that action.

2) If one door closes and another opens, pray and patiently wait for divine assurance. Be sure that what appears to be a door of opportunity really is a door of opportunity.

3) If several doors of opportunity open, pray and patiently wait for divine assurance. The fact that one opportunity pays a higher salary or appears to be the best opportunity does not necessarily make it the right choice. Seek God's choice!

Conclusion