

**Planning to Grow
Becoming a Person with a Plan
Looking for Open Doors**

Proverbs 21:5 - *The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance.*

1. Continue to Discuss, Refine, and Implement Our Discipleship Process.
2. Organize and Launch Our New Cluster of Ministries at Faith West.
3. Work Together as a Church Family to Develop Our Next 5-Year Strategic Ministry Plan.

4 principles to help you see and seize the ministry opportunities the Lord provides

I. Be Amazed that God Would Provide Open Doors for People Like Us

"The Lord's worker must have a vision for the future. The Christian who is motivated and consumed by God's love will see needs that are not yet filled and opportunities that are not yet met. He cannot help planning ahead, looking for more ways to serve and more doors to open." (John MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, p. 460)

A. Considering the history of the apostle Paul

1 Timothy 1:12-17 - *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*

B. Considering the character of the Corinthian church

1 Corinthians 1:2-9 - *To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

1 Corinthians 16:7 - *For I do not wish to see you now just in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits.*

C. Considering what people like you and me bring to the table

D. Proof of God's amazing grace

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 - *For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.*

Hebrews 11:6 - *And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*

E. Founded on God's transforming power

1 Corinthians 15:58 - *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.*

II. Be Encouraged that Walking through Open Doors Can Lead to a Life of Effectiveness

A. For people like us today

B. It's the opposite of living in a way that is "vain"

1 Corinthians 15:58 - *...knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.*

1 Corinthians 16:9 - *for a wide door for effective service...*

C. This characterized the way Paul lived

1. Ministry to the Gentiles on the first missionary journey

Acts 14:27 - *When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.*

2. An open door at Troas

2 Corinthians 2:12-13 - *Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord, I had no rest for my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia.*

3. His prayer request of the Colossians from prison

Colossians 4:3 - *praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned;*

III. Be Aware that Open Doors are Often Accompanied by Hard Challenges

A. For Paul

1 Corinthians 16:9 - *for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.*

"Paul was not intimidated by opposition. He seemed even to flourish on it, perhaps because he realized that the devil's greatest opposition is to the Lord's greatest work." (John MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, p. 466)

G. Campbell Morgan – "If you have no opposition in the place you serve, you are serving in the wrong place."

B. For us

Romans 1:16 - *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

IV. Be Joyful that Walking through Open Doors is Often a Team Sport