

THE CONNECTION

FALL 2021

**MANY
OPPORTUNITIES**





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FLY Beyond

MAKING THE MOST OF MANY OPPORTUNITIES

PR. JASON HOLT

School and homework.
Activities and work
Friends and family.
Church and youth group.

The opportunities around us seem to multiply all the time. One thing comes to our attention and another thing is right behind it. How does a Christian navigate these areas?

Making the Most

The apostle Paul encouraged a local congregation to think these things through. Right after allowing the Holy Spirit to guide him into handling different human relationships in a healthy way (Col. 3:18-4:1), Paul was inspired to write these words:

"Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart. Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains. Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should. Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity" (Colossians 4:2-5 NLT).

It is striking to me that Paul asks first for prayer. He was facing a full schedule with serious responsibilities, so he asked his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to pray for him. When did you last

ask people to pray for you with the areas that you are facing?

His prayer request was to speak about Jesus in his interactions with everyday people and to be plain about it. Paul wanted conviction to share and clarity in sharing the message of Jesus. In addition, Paul wanted to "live wisely" among people who did not know Jesus. The life of faith expressed a desire for discernment both for the believer's life to reflect the Savior King and for this reflection to be evident to the people around him.

Making the most of every opportunity understands that many, many good things will come (as well as some bad things), but staying watchful before God and grateful to God positions us to handle situations that come with God's wisdom. Ultimately, we all want the mind of Christ in making sense of the situations in front of us. This process begins with God's Word and God's people. The truth from God's Word directs us. The insights from God's people develops us. Without these two, our chance of staying watchful and grateful are greatly reduced.

Many Opportunities

You protest, "But Jason, I'm still staring at a ton of options!"

That may be true, but the passage doesn't only talk about being proactive with the specific "make the most" language. These same verses also acknowledge the "many opportunities." In fact, the phrase Paul is expressing often comes through in English as "God opens to us a door."

If you have ever heard the phrase "an open door" from Christians, it is connected with this passage. (If you are interested, another two places are I Corinthians 16:9 and II Corinthians 2:12). The concept is not something random or distant. **"An open door" reflects the believer's perspective looking at the many opportunities and trusting the Savior King to guide through them all.** The confidence for decision-making is given in Christ and in our dependence on him. Paul's desire was for many opportunities to share about Jesus, because his life was defined by the Savior King's redemption.

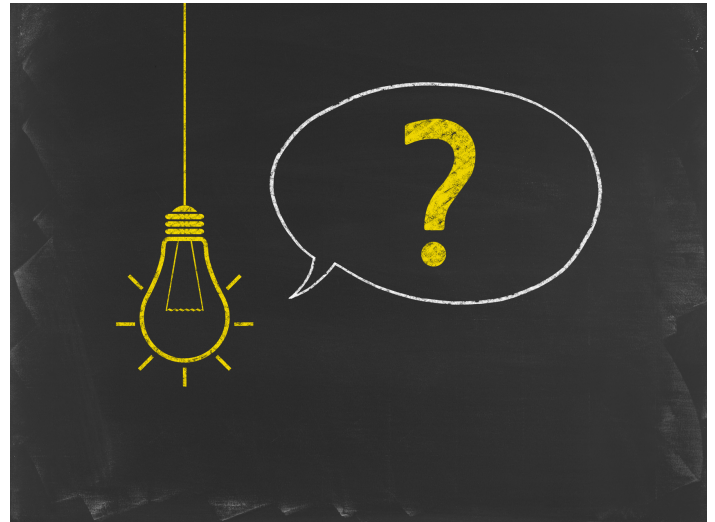
When we see our identity in Christ, then every decision is informed by the lens of faith. We have interests, hobbies, and dreams. They are all worth considering! Making the most of every opportunity is not a result of some crazed schedule taking every option that comes to our attention. The concept is not "taking every single opportunity" and it is also not a declaration to refuse all opportunities. We won't do our best when we attempt to avoid them all. At the same time, we will benefit when we don't attempt to weigh them all at the same moment.

An instructor of mine would use an insightful phrase when a student was stuck on reviewing a question over and over...and over again. He would say, "It sounds like you have analysis paralysis!"

The process of deciding can bog us down, but when we remember the nature of our Savior King, it changes us.

Jesus is faithful. We can bring the many opportunities to him in prayer. **Jesus is powerful.** We can be confident that he will lead through the details. **Jesus is gracious.** We can step forward in a decision entrusting it to him. **Jesus is loving.** We can trust that he will redirect us with compassion, if we need it.

Many opportunities need not alarm us as we keep our eyes on Jesus.



Thinking It Over

- 1.What opportunity have I been cautious to make a decision on? Why is that?
- 2.How does the character of Christ influence this decision? How can I rely on him with it?
- 3.What would I like to handle differently when the next opportunity comes up?



Pastor Jason Holt
Director of Youth Ministries

EPH. 4:11-16

UPWARD

FLY BEYOND 2022

PHYSICAL CAMP

at the ARC in Wisconsin
Sunday, July 17 - Thursday, July 21, 2022

Teen Rate = \$425

Leader Rate = \$150

Biblical equipping for today's teens
at a camp.

Rate provides training, food, and
housing.

Registration opens in February at
aflc.org/youth

DIGITAL CAMP

at Your Local Congregation
Starting Wednesday, July 20, 2022

Congregational Rate = \$199

One digital rate covers all teens and
leaders for your congregation.

Rate provides access to 16
training sessions.

Registration opens in February at
aflc.org/youth

FLY Beyond 2022 features dual tracks; a physical and digital version.

Which one is **best** for you?

media minute



WandaVision

The release of Marvel's WandaVision took viewers on a rollercoaster of uncertainty while paying tribute along the way to classic TV shows. One of the memorable lines from the later episodes unfolded when Vision (Paul Bettany) makes a heartfelt comment to Wanda (Elizabeth Olsen).

"But what is grief, if not love persevering?"

From a biblical worldview as followers of Jesus, the question brings multiple things for us to consider as we live with the human experience of loss.

- Since our Lord God is Creator (Gen. 1-2), how does this impact our view of loss?
- Since physical death is a result of the fall (Gen. 3), what is our reaction to a loved one passing away?
- Since Jesus' life, death, and resurrection provides hope (1 Thess. 4), how do we best handle grief?
- Since the final restoration will be brought with Jesus coming again (Rev. 21-22), what can be said about "love persevering"?

Media Minute engages with today's youth culture by reviewing different messages within it and moving to God's Word to discern what to do with it.

This column sometimes features sacred and other times secular media. It will grab a message or a line from a particular media piece and seek to begin the conversation on it, in order to drive us all back to Scripture.

AFLC Youth Ministries exists

- to Win teenagers to Christ through the Gospel
- to Build them up in God's truth and God's love
- to Equip them to live their faith and share their faith with others, which results in the multiplying of maturing teen disciples of Jesus



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