

# Opportunities

By: Jim Hohnberger

*“As we have therefore opportunity,  
let us do good unto all men...”*  
—Galatians 6:10—

Opportunities—they come to us every day. In fact, every moment can be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to serve either God or self. We can bless others or drain others. We can lift them up or we can pull them down.

Most opportunities are ordinary, but some are *extra-ordinary*! They usually present themselves through a unique combination of favorable circumstances.

Of course, we know that God opens these windows, though sometimes only briefly; their success depends on the use we make of them. Often one well-used opportunity prepares the way for another; while conversely, an opportunity neglected can close future avenues forever.

**Opportunities—are you making the most of yours?**

At Southern Adventist University near Chattanooga, Tennessee, a successful businessman was invited to speak at a chapel service for the entire student body. What an opportunity!

He'd always been a private person who never enjoyed the limelight, but he decided to make use of the unusual chance to influence so many young people. Yet for a month, he pondered whether he should follow the safe route and share something inspiring, but not personal ... or whether he should be vulnerable and share what really meant the most to him.

God spoke to his heart, urging him to dispense with the superficial and engage these young people heart to heart while on stage. So he shared how the injunction to “pray without ceasing” had seemed like an interesting metaphor, not meant to be taken literally.

But reading a copy of *Escape to God* utterly changed his life. He realized that God is personal and always present, that He is interested in every detail of our lives. Suddenly, “pray without ceasing” had taken on a whole new meaning: It was a way to empower our Christian walk. He described a real day in his life when he took God at His word and filtered all his thoughts through God before speaking or acting. He discovered God's transforming presence molding his entire day—he was excited!

As the student body sat riveted, he presented them with an awesome offer: They could get a free copy of the book, one of 750 that he'd purchased prior to the meeting, if they would simply read it and then pass it on to someone else.

The response was exceptional. Every copy was taken by an interested student as they exited the chapel. One student even asked him to share his story at a local church, and that church was also deeply impressed. He had made the most of the opportunity, and as a result, many were given a chance to see God in a deeper, life-transforming way.

**What about you? Is God giving you the opportunity to use your influence to tell others of a real God, a personal God—a God that is there for them now?**

When Michael Duehrssen, director of the International Rescue and Relief program at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, read *Escape to God*, its message helped improve his marriage and family life. So Duehrssen and his wife desired that their local college and church experience that same transforming power.

They didn't wait for an opportunity. They created one. They partnered with a friend to purchase 2,000 copies—1,200 for the college and 800 for the church. They also decided to give students a little motivation—they'd give \$25 to each student who read *Escape to God* and responded to a survey by the end of the semester!

The International Rescue and Relief program, in addition to the College's Campus Ministries team, grasped Duehrssen's vision and helped make the dream possible. They also used an innovative way to sell their opportunity to the entire student body last October. In a skit, a businessman pretended to lecture the audience while a student sat in the front row reading *Escape to God*. The businessman soon challenged the student for so rudely reading during his presentation. After all, what could possibly be more engaging than his lecture?

The student said the book was full of fascinating stories illustrating how to walk with a personal God.

The businessman exclaimed, "I'd pay \$25,000 for what's contained in that book!" and opened up his briefcase, letting \$25,000 in cash spill out onto the floor. He then offered the stunned students the \$25,000 if they would read the book and respond to the survey.

The response was sensational. At one vesper meeting, 95 percent of those students present said they had either read the book or were currently reading it.

When Sally and I visited that college in mid-November, we talked firsthand with many of those dear young people. One man explained that the book showed him how to gain a victory for the first time over his hot temper in a volleyball game. Another young man realized his need to treat his fiancé more gently, rather than arguing.

Two young ladies found freedom from fear and signed up to be student missionaries to Papua New Guinea. And many others shared how they found new hope in a close-by God who will take care of them.

Mike and his wife unlocked fresh possibilities to young people because they took advantage of their chance to break out of the status quo. By doing so, they've made it possible for young people to catch the vision of *Escape to God* and reach out to others with the same opportunity. It has a tremendous ripple effect!

So what's so special about *Escape to God*? Why does it appeal to old and young from so many different walks of life? The appeal lies in the book's simplicity, depth, and practical application. I set aside theological jargon and simply chronicled my own journey from being fed-up with the rat race of the world and the superficiality of religion to finding God—personal, present, and powerful.

*The message is simple: Where you are, God is.* You can sense His presence and discern His direction. When you respond to Him, He will empower your life, revitalize your marriage, and reconnect your family. This is the heart of the gospel, the center of the Scriptures, **and** the science of salvation. It is a message that the world is dying for, and **it needs to find its way into every nook and cranny of the farthest reaches of this**

**globe—a living God, big enough, strong enough, loving enough to restore into His image anyone who will trust Him.**

Although it has been successful in helping people find a genuine experience with God, up until recently *Escape to God* has been available for only a small audience. But now, **you and I** have a golden window of opportunity.

As you know, Thomas Nelson Publishers, the largest Christian publisher in the world, published a new hard cover print of *Escape to God*. Thomas Nelson's market includes 4,500 Christian bookstores and secular outlets such as Amazon.com, Wal-Mart, K-Mart, Target, Sam's, Costco, and Barnes & Noble.

Released February 7, this new, expanded edition of *Escape to God* probes even deeper, explains even plainer, and challenges even higher while still presenting a message full of love and possibility.

To say I'm EXCITED is an understatement! Do you see the window of opportunity God has opened before us—to advance this message to the world? Are you catching the vision? *Escape to God* will be scattered into the hearts and homes of millions! Abso-

Success  
depends  
on the use  
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lutely incredible!

However, this window of opportunity will only be open briefly. We must use it to our advantage or see it slip by forever. You see, when Thomas Nelson publishes a new author, they watch the public's response. To put it more bluntly, they monitor sales. If the book sells well, they promote it more vigorously and publish more books by the same author. They also promote spin-off materials—his DVDs, CDs, etc.—and they arrange media appearances.

But if the book doesn't sell well, they don't wait around and give the author another try. They simply move on to someone else. So we need to step through this window **now**—because later may be too late. Let's prayerfully, thoughtfully, and courageously step through it **together!**

By now, you might be saying, "That's great, Jim. But how else can we help?"

While God may have used me and my experiences to write the book, this book is not about Jim. Moreover, the success of the book is not about me. It's about God's message to a dying world. **It's about God and His desire to reach the hearts of His people—people He loves! Accomplishing that takes more than Jim! We all have a part to play!**

So what can you do?

#1. Live the message. Make God your pilot—not your co-pilot.

#2. Purchase as many copies of the book as you can through markets other than our ministry. We suggest Amazon.com or Barnes & Noble, because those sales will help drive the book onto the best-seller lists that will encourage Thomas Nelson to market the book more aggressively and publish even more of our materials, thereby widening this window of opportunity for God's message.

#3. Share the book. Tell others what this message has done for you and encourage them to read it. If you can, give one or even 10 away and encourage your friends to read it and pass it on. If you can afford 100 or 1,000, even better.

#4. Buy the *Escape to God* DVD and present it as a seminar at your local church or community hall to encourage others to catch the vision and share the book.

#5. Pray that God will use this opportunity to open more chances to reach His people.

Fifteen years ago, when God first called me to minister the gospel to the hearts of His people, I asked that I might be privileged to touch the lives of 1,000 people for God. In time, that goal was reached. Then I desired to touch 10,000 people for God, and God granted that. When God asked me to start writing for Him, I asked that I might reach 100,000 with His saving message. He has granted that as well.

With this new opportunity, I am asking God that ***you and I together*** might touch the lives of ***a million*** people with the hope of the gospel. Are you with me? Will you join me? Let's be laborers together with God for the salvation of His people.

Opportunities—golden moments of time that present themselves to us, pause momentarily, and then potentially slip into eternity. Let's not allow this one to slip away. Let us make the most of it for God and His people. Let us step together through this golden window of opportunity!

**Power for Living**

Are you  
making  
the most of  
yours?



*Power to become the sons of God. —John 1:12*

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