

2nd Opinion: Opportunity knocks. But is it of the Lord?

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“Have I got a deal for you!” says the fellow selling swampland in Florida.

“Come to work for us, and we’ll double your salary!” declares the man whose business is about to go under.

When opportunity knocks, how can one tell if it is “of the Lord”? Can a Christian know with confidence that a door springing open truly is a blessing from God? Or is it temptation from the enemy?



Rich Mussler God promised if you diligently seek wisdom from above, you will find it. Determining God’s will and then acting upon it is the essence of godly wisdom. Unfortunately, when an opportunity presents itself, many Christians choose this tactic: Act first. Pray later.

You know a litmus test is a quick way to determine the chemical acidity of any given substance. Interestingly, God has provided several litmus tests that can help you determine if any given opportunity is truly “of the Lord.”

When I was younger, I had an opportunity to interview for employment with a cigarette manufacturer that needed a representative in the region where I lived. I didn’t smoke, but I needed the job badly and was delighted when they called to request an interview.

During the interview, God brought to mind this passage from 1 Corinthians 6: “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit? You have been bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body.” I stopped to explain my situation to the two gentlemen interviewing me. They looked positively stunned as I excused myself and left. Later, God brought to me an even better employment opportunity.

God’s litmus tests

I didn’t realize it at the time, but I was implementing the foremost of God’s litmus tests. If an opportunity is contrary in any way to principles found in God’s revealed will, the Holy Bible, it is nothing our heavenly Father wants his children involved in. If you know your Bible, this is an easy test to employ.

A second litmus test for determining the spiritual worthiness of an opportunity is to talk it over with godly men and women. Proverbs 15:22 tells us, “Without consultation plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed.” All around you are people who have spiritual insight God has granted them—don’t be so foolish as to act without first consulting mature Christians about your plans.

Another excellent litmus test is the difficulty or challenge level you will face in getting an opportunity accomplished. If it’s a slam dunk, something you can do all on your own without the Lord’s help, it is not likely an undertaking you should involve yourself in. If it’s “all downhill from here,” you’re probably going the wrong direction. It is unique to our God that he prefers to accomplish his will using our weaknesses rather than our strengths. Said another way, an opportunity that is difficult, challenging and filled with potential adversity may be your greatest chance to bring glory to God.

When we can’t do it on our own

You see, it is when you cannot do it on your own that you must depend upon the Lord. And that is when God gets the glory—as it should be. If an opportunity merely showcases your talents and skills, you may look great. But ask yourself, is that your purpose? God’s work isn’t meant to puff your ego. When things are impossible for you to accomplish, God shows up. Jesus emphasized this point (and not vice versa): “with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). If you find you have no need for the Lord’s help, perhaps it’s because you aren’t doing the Lord’s work.

A true opportunity from the Lord will always increase your faith—not weaken it. Likely, it will stretch you spiritually and tax you physically and emotionally. Even so, you will find great joy in doing God’s work.

One final litmus test that never fails to help clarify whether an opportunity is truly of God is this: Does it violate the golden standard established by our Lord for treating other humans? As you undertake this opportunity, will you be “doing to others as you would have them to do to you”? If not, this is no opportunity from God. Satan is behind it. God won’t send you on a mission that doesn’t in some way bless, encourage or uplift others.

When doors swing open too easily

You should also beware of false litmus tests. For example, contrary to popular thinking, a door that springs open when you push on it not guaranteed to lead to Jesus. Often, the reverse is true—when doors swing open too easily, it’s time to be extra cautious. Satan may be propping it open for you. On the other hand, resistance is no indicator one shouldn’t press onward. Jesus said, “Faith can remove mountains” (Matthew 21:21). That implies while doing God’s work you may face serious opposition. Always expect the devil to do what he can to keep you from accomplishing the Lord’s purposes.

And remember this axiom: Fools rush in. When opportunity knocks, the

world would have you believe you are foolish to hesitate, but just the opposite is true. Folly is a playground littered with those who have taken hasty action. If you act first and pray later, you are no different than nonbelievers who do not know how to pray nor to whom we pray. What value is your relationship with the Lord Jesus if you don't check with him about the things you intend to do? Always, it is easier to avoid a mess than to get yourself out of one, especially when buried up to your neck.

Yes, most definitely, God wants you to take advantage of your opportunities. But do so only after applying the litmus tests he has provided. Take the time necessary to determine if that door opening before you is one Jesus wants you to pass through. If it is, go forth boldly. If the opportunity is of the Lord, you will find great reward and much joy as you "press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

Rich Mussler is the author of [Bad Christian: What God Taught Me](#) and a frequent contributor to the Baptist Standard. He attends [First Baptist Church in Lewisville](#).