

Will you answer God's call on your life to utilize the small opportunities?



THE SMALL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE WINDOW OF TIME

Internationals and especially Muslims are increasing in numbers, in both our country and local neighborhoods. We live in a unique window of time where small opportunities abound to present Jesus to a vast variety of people, nationalities, and religions. Many people are changing the country that they call home. Some of these people end up almost at our front door. Some of them are here because of turmoil in their homeland. Will we seize the moment to tell them about the Prince of Peace?

One day as I was sitting in a park in communion with the Lord, I noticed a group of people nearby playing soccer. It was very clear that they were not originally from this country. Almost immediately the thought ran through my head that I should go and befriend them. "Is this from you Lord?" I questioned. "Or is this just a thought of my own?" After a moment of pondering and praying I reached a conclusion. I decided that I would go and see if I could somehow approach them without being intrusive. It certainly does not hurt to try, I decided. As I circled around them I noticed that they were speaking Arabic. This of course confirmed my earlier speculations that they might be Muslims. (Most Arabic speaking people associate themselves with this religion.) "Now what do I do?" I thought.

It is always my desire to get into people's lives and draw them to Jesus without intruding and being insensitive. In most of the windows of opportunity that God has led me to, I have found

that sensitivity in relating to them goes a long way. Starting off on something that is relevant to their world view also does wonders. Of course it takes some strategy and forethought at times because it is important to stimulate their hearts and draw them simultaneously. One must always lift up the truth in a way that they can relate to.

Following some more praying and strategic planning I found a bench that was situated between them and the pavilion where their ladies were preparing supper. After seating myself, I continued my afternoon as previously planned. But I constantly kept an eye on them without appearing to be watching them. I assumed that they would pass by this bench on their way to their meal. And sure

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enough I was right! Just as they were about to pass by I popped the question, "Ahlan Wa Sahlan?"

"Ahlan Beek!" One man answered in surprise. This small greeting in their mother tongue opened up their hearts to me immediately. So after a few more exchanges of words, swapping contact

information, and inquiring about their former whereabouts, we parted ways.

As the day elapsed into the evening I terminated my activity for the day. On my way out of the park, I intentionally altered my route to my vehicle so I could bid Muhammed good-bye. Following the exchanges of farewells he empathically insisted that I call him so we could stay in contact. "Wow!" I thought, "This guy means it."

Shortly after this exciting episode, we invited Muhammad to our house for supper. While we were seated around the living room he informed us of the difficulties his wife has had with three consecutive miscarriages. They have been married for four years and have no children. (In Iraqi culture it is a disgrace not to have children). "Can we pray for you?" someone asked. "Yes, please do," he replied with feeling. So, of course, we took this small opportunity to beseech our Heavenly Father for mercy on this couple.

A week or two later found us seated in the living room again. The conversation soon turned to some

of the horror they experienced and witnessed while in Iraq. My mind turned to the Biblical description of Satan. He seeks to steal, kill, and destroy. As Muhammad expressed some of his thoughts and feelings concerning the turmoil in Iraq, the topic of peace came up. So I took the small opportunity to share with them how Jesus is the Prince of Peace. Also I implemented the moment by handing him a New Testament. "Thank-you!" he exclaimed with passion.

Did he accept the fact of Jesus being the Prince of Peace or the New Testament as the truth? I don't know. But I do know that the Truth was given and spoken in a graceful and sensitive manner. God said His word will not return void. All I was called to do was utilize the small window of opportunity in a moment of time. I do pray that God will draw this couple to Himself by His spirit. And I pray that a hunger for the Word will cause them to open it up and be convicted of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Also I long that the love of God will

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become personal to them. In societies of their origin love is rare. It seems that a revelation of Jesus' love is much more powerful in bringing these people to repentance than the judgmental aspect of God's character.

us with. I find time and time again that I need to take the opportunity while I have it. Although I make an effort to maintain contact with people who I meet, it does not always work out for some reason or another. For example: I tried to meet with the Saudis again following the time I shared my testimony with them, but it never worked out. And now I have no idea where they are. I only saw them once or twice. They might be back in their home country. But the impressions on their hearts could be deep. I pray that they become overwhelmed with hunger for the truth. And that they seek till they find. On another occasion a friend and I met an Indonesian at a store and shared a few nuggets of the Good News with the person. Later a friend and I went back to meet this person again only to be told that the person no longer works there. We were disappointed with that as we had no other way to contact this person. All I can say is: a small opportunity in the window of time.

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I still do have a lot of contact with Muhammad and I make an effort to point him to Jesus. One thing I have made an effort to do in my contact with Muslims is share with them what God has spoken to me in my personal time with the Lord. Testimonies have a tremendous effect. They also believe the word of an angel to be significant. I had the joy of sharing my testimony with an imam (Muslim religious leader) in a nearby city. I told him of how God spoke to me almost audibly prior to my conversion. Sometime later he introduced me to a few of his Saudi Arabian (Saudi Arabia is the strictest Muslim nation) friends. In the midst of our conversation the Imam said I should tell these Saudis about the time the angel spoke to me. Initially I was confused about what he was saying. But then it hit me that he might be talking of the time that God spoke to me. Assuming that that was what he was referring to, I testified of how I had found forgiveness of sins and peace with God. Following my story the one man commented on how I must have reached a degree of peace that he has not. There again, will this man follow Jesus? Well, I shared with him the goodness and truth of God with joy in my heart. This was a small opportunity in a window of time.

These small windows of opportunity are only two examples of many that God desires to bless

I do want to make it clear that I am not saying this is the only way to reach out. But rather it is a way. I believe long term contacts probably will be the most fruitful. But do not wait on that. Rather take the opportunities that you have. Some people, especially some internationals, are situated in such a way globally that it is hard to maintain contact. Nevertheless I do not want to take this too far, but I am pointing out that it is important to step through the door of opportunity while it is open. People reposition themselves, open the door of their heart momentarily or get wrapped up in some other things that supersede their desire for truth. And the window of opportunity closes.

In closing, will you answer God's call on your life to utilize the small opportunities in this small window called time? Whatever that may mean for your personal life? I do not know about you, but I thrill at the thought



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