



METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

MINISTRY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES Handout

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**I know your
deeds. See, I have
placed before you
an open door that
no one can shut. I
know that you
have little
strength, yet you
have kept my
word and have not
denied my name.**

Revelation 3:8



Welcome to the Metropolitan Community Church

Ministry of Biblical Study Classes

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Doors In The Bible: Understanding Closed And Open Doors

Destiny is a complicated topic. It can be up there with calling, purpose, and so much more. Many people don't like the thought that their path is already laid out for them and can quickly feel they have no say in their lives.

Others find comfort in the idea that God has a fixed plan and purpose for their lives, and they can simply live it. But are either of these points of view entirely accurate?

We've all heard (or used) the saying that when God closes a door, He opens another. I know I have, and while the principle behind it is true, it's an oversimplification.

Let's examine what the Bible says about doors, how God opens and closes doors, and what these doors mean for our lives and destinies.

Doors In The Bible

Doors are fascinating because they serve both practical and symbolic purposes.

Throughout the Bible, doors are often used as symbols for different things and concepts. Spiritually or prophetically, a door can mean many things, but in the Bible, it often represents a passage or a way through which to enter.

For example, Jesus is referred to as the door of the sheep in John 10:7, which means that he is the only way to enter into God's kingdom.

Similarly, in Revelation 3:20, God says to his people...

Behold, I stand at the door [of the church] and continually knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him (restore him), and he with Me.

This verse illustrates that if we are willing to invite God into our lives and open the door to our hearts, He will come in and fellowship with us.

In summary, the spiritual significance of a door in the Bible is that it represents an entryway to different things, whether it be God's kingdom, a relationship with Him, or entering into something new in your life.

Now, what about open and closed doors??

Contrary to popular belief, the saying that when God closes one door, He opens another is never actually found in the Bible. Shocking right?!

It sounds like something Solomon would have said in the Book of Proverbs, but he never did.

In fact, the saying likely stems from a famous quote by Alexander Graham Bell referring to how people overlook new opportunities because they missed old ones.

When one door closes another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us.

Alexander Graham Bell

But does the fact that those words aren't in the Bible change the truth behind the statement?

Absolutely not! The Bible contains many references confirming the statement's meaning, as we will soon see.

There are references to open and closed doors throughout the Bible, which are used in several contexts. For example:

- 1 Corinthians 16:8-9, Paul says, "But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries." This statement refers to a ministry opportunity Paul knew he had to take to further God's Kingdom.
- Revelation 3:7-8 says, "And to the angel of the church of Philadelphia write: 'the words of the Holy One, the true One, Who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens. I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut...'"

This chapter speaks of the opposition that the church in Philadelphia faced from people who said they were Jews but weren't. It speaks of oppression and resistance.

By saying that He gave them an open door, Jesus is saying He is providing them a solution and an escape from their circumstances because of their works and perseverance in the faith.

- Acts 14:27 says, "And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles." Once again, this verse tells how God opened the door to the missionaries to further His Kingdom.

Many other examples don't mention the word "door," but where we can see the principle at work. Let's look at a few of them in closer detail.

Open Doors In The Bible

We've already seen a few examples of open doors in the Bible. But how should a believer respond to an open door?

When God Opens A Door

Here are a few Biblical examples of how a believer should approach an open door:

- Expect Resistance.

I know you probably didn't want to read that. But the fact that God opens a door does not mean you won't meet with resistance and adversaries; it doesn't mean simply walking through the door with zero effort.

An open door requires courage and faith!

We can see that in 1 Corinthians 16:8-9 where Paul speaks about the open door with "many adversaries." And yet, he'd already decided to stay in Ephesus and pursue that open door despite the adversaries.

- Take Care How You Approach The Open Door.

1 Samuel 24 tells us how God gave David an open door. By this point, David had been anointed king for a long time but refused to dethrone Saul. This feeling of loyalty was one-sided, though, as Saul was actively trying to kill David.

On one of these missions, where Saul was chasing David, he went into a cave to relieve himself, and it just happened to be the same cave where David and his men were hiding.

God gave Saul's life to David on a silver platter. That door was as wide open as a door can be. Even David's men were encouraging him to take the king's life.

Yet David did not do so, choosing to cut off a piece of Saul's garment instead to prove that he could of taken his life but chose not too. This helped for a little while, but Saul was likely beyond help by this point.

The critical point is that David used the door that God had opened for him, but he did so carefully with wisdom– he was a man of principle who did not wish to harm God’s anointed, and Saul had also been anointed as king before.

So, when God opens a door, be sure to go through it prayerfully and humbly, asking God for guidance and protection about how He wants you to approach it.

Closed Doors In The Bible

One of the most famous scriptures about closed doors is Acts 16: 6-7. This scripture talks about Paul’s second missionary journey.

They passed through Phrygia and Galatia because the Holy Spirit stopped them from preaching the Gospel in Asia. Then they attempted to go into Bithynia, but again, the Holy Spirit forbade them.

They proceeded towards Troas, but then the Holy Spirit showed Paul a vision calling him to Macedonia.

So, in just a few verses, God closed two doors and opened another. But what does that mean for believers? How are we to approach a closed door?

When God Closes A Door

We don’t always know why God closes doors. He’s not in the habit of telling us every little thing that will happen; He expects faith and obedience because we trust Him.

However, when God closes a door, there are a few things we can (and should) do.

1. Persevere

A closed door is not always a “no” sometimes it can be a “not now.” The Holy Spirit stopped Paul from entering those places, but Paul went back there

later and preached with remarkable success. Even when it's a hard "no" from God, there's a good reason for that. So, don't give up. Persevere with your mission and do what God called you to do despite the closed door.

2. Look For Another Door

When God closed those doors for Paul, He opened another. It was a while later, so keep that in mind, but you can start looking and praying for another door immediately. God's timing isn't always our timing. This takes trust in the Lord as we wait on Him.

3. Don't Sit Around and Wait

Note that Paul and his team didn't wait and pray when God told them not to preach in Asia – they continued on their journey. They didn't stop and wait when God prevented them from going into Bithynia – they proceeded towards Troas, and only then did they see the door God had opened.

It's easy for us to get hung up on a closed door, especially if it's something we desire or hope for. But God knows what He is doing, and instead of having a pity party we should dust ourselves off and go forward.

Most military organizations have a principle called "commander's intent." When soldiers are out on the field, and something stops them from executing their planned strategy, they will try to contact their commander for new instructions, if possible.

However, if they cannot communicate with the commander for some reason, they are to proceed based on the commander's intent. They should know the mission's ultimate goal and adjust their strategy to continue executing it.

Jesus told us that we are to go into all the world and preach the gospel. Were Asia and Bithynia part of the world? Absolutely!

So, by going there, Paul was still following his Commander's orders, which he adjusted when he received new instructions.

As modern believers, we quickly see a closed door as fatal or as a sign to “wait for guidance.” God expects us to accept a closed door in faith but to keep persevering and pursuing His will until we find the next one He opens.

When God opens a door, it’s an opportunity for us to grow in life and ministry. When He closes one, we should accept that He knows better than we ever will.

It’s not always easy, though. Open doors require us to step out of our comfort zones and often come with resistance. Closed doors can make us lose hope and get negative.

However, we know that God stands outside of time and is the Author and Finisher of our faith. When we truly believe that about Him, we can also accept that He knows best, which will comfort us when faced with closed doors and encourage us in front of the open ones.

Ask God to open and close the doors in your life to take you on your best path!

I hope you have enjoyed this teaching on closed and open doors in the Bible and that it has give you some insight to the doors the Lord has placed in your life.

