

Column

A great quote comes from Mississippi newspaperman and catfish farmer Robert Hederman III. “The best lesson I learned in college was that opportunities are without borders.”

‘Opportunities without borders’, what a delightful phrase! Hederman is right. Opportunities lie all round us. No one, rich or poor, is bereft of them. Even so, they must be actively sought and taken advantage of. Most of the time they don’t just drop from heaven into our laps, though on occasion that does happen.

Like the talents or coins given to the men in the parable Jesus told in Matthew 25:14-30, opportunities are gifts from a good and generous God. Not to look for or take advantage of them when found is therefore an offense not just against ourselves but the Giver.

The opportunities that come most immediate to mind are those relating to job or career. Sometimes people settle for second best in this area out of inertia or fear.

When I was a child, my mother had a friend whose letters and post cards were always filled with gloom. Many of these began with the words “No good news here.” The tragedy of the situation was that there was nothing tying her to the location where she lived or the job about which she so complained. When opportunities did come her way, she failed to follow up on them or flatly refused to consider them . . . or at least it so appeared.

Surely a happy medium exists between following Shakespeare’s axiom of “bearing the ills we have rather than flying to others we know not of” and the opening of our eyes to new possibilities. Daring to do something new, without a doubt, involves risks. Even so, some risks are worth taking. Wise counsel in this regard can be found in Proverbs 3:6,7:

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

In addition to opportunities for paid employment, there are opportunities for service through volunteering. From time to time I hear people who retire to North Georgia say, “There is not much to do up here.” My answer is:

Open your eyes. As in most areas, opportunities for service abound. Some of the happiest people I know are retired people who give selflessly of their time

working in thrift shops, at the local community theatre and around the local church. Often, new friendships are formed and a new purpose in life is found.

Opportunities relating to the mind should likewise not be overlooked or passed by. One is never too young or too old to learn. At the church I serve, classes on a variety of topics are offered throughout the year. Similar opportunities are available elsewhere. Availing oneself of them makes for a richer, fuller and more productive life.

Truly, opportunities are without borders. They come in many shapes and sizes and can be found in every venue of life. Get on board. Don't get left behind!

DIRECT us, O Lord, in all our doings, with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy Name, and finally, by thy mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (The Book of Common Prayer)

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