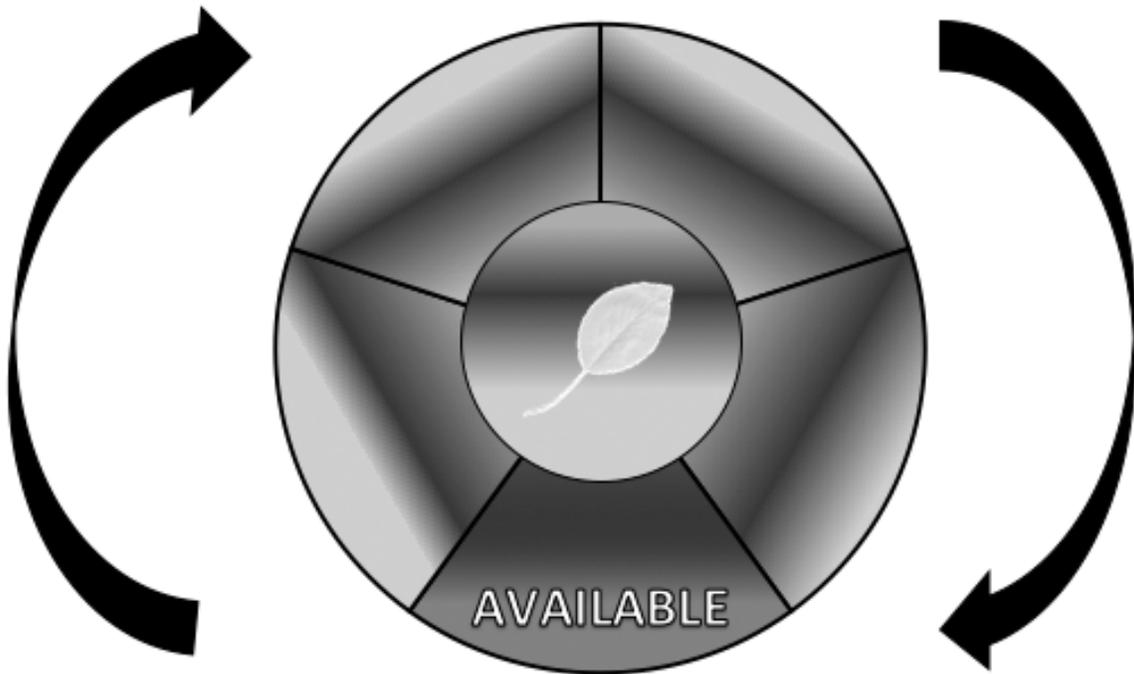


5. We will be **AVAILABLE** - as God calls us to serve



“Being Available” simply means being open to new ways and new people through which God leads us. He often leads us in ways we might never have dreamt.

This is true of my life. God arranged it. He arranged it through friendships. I went to Taylor University because of an older brother. God led me to Dallas Seminary through a missionary I met while serving in Haiti on a summer mission project. I met my wife in Dallas through a blind date set up by a close friend. I was introduced to a ministry to Christian physicians and dentists in a Sunday School class my wife and I were attending. God works through “random” events. I am where I am today because of people I’ve met and experiences I have had that have changed me and even the course of my life. I didn’t plan it that way. God led me through all the above, and He keeps leading me now in the same ways. I believe the key is being available to the leadership of God in life.

Consider some basic scriptures.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart
And do not lead on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3.5,6).*

*Now the LORD said to Abram,
Go forth from your country,
And from your relatives
And from your father's house,
To the land which I will show you;
And I will make you a great nation,
And I will bless you,
And make your name great;
And so you shall be a blessing (Genesis 12.1-2).*

In what ways was Abram available?

Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance. The LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed (Deuteronomy 31.6-8).

In what ways was Joshua available?

*Your eyes have seen my unformed substance;
And in Your book were all written
The days that were ordained for me,
When as yet there was not one of them (Psalm 139.16).*

In what ways am I available to do what God ordained for me in these aging years?

You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. This I command you, that you love one another (John 15.16-17).

Am I available to love those God sends my way?

Think of several biblical examples of how God often works through happenstance, random, and/or unplanned events in life.

Luke 2.1-7 – the birth of Jesus and the census from Rome. Joseph and Mary were available to serve God, to give birth to the Son of God in Bethlehem, and to serve as his parents. They were available.

Luke 10.30-37 – The story of the Good Samaritan (v.31 – *“and by chance a priest...”*). The priest and the Levite were not available (why?), but the good Samaritan was available to take care of the wounded man. He wasn’t planning or anticipating this event in his day, was he? He was simply available.

2 Kings 5.1-5 – the little captive servant girl and Naaman’s leprosy. The little servant girl was available to be the voice of God to her mistress for Naaman’s healing..

John 9. 1-5 – the man born blind. The same might possibly be said for all Jesus’ miracles. Jesus happened to be there – He was available and those He touched and healed were available.

Romans 8.14 – *those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God* (the Spirit has a plan). Am I available to the Spirit for His purposes today?

Consider the story of John Stuart Gilbert in [From Eden to Paradise](#).



John Gilbert was diagnosed with Duchenne’s Muscular Dystrophy at the age of 5. When he was about 8, he was the poster child for muscular dystrophy and attended a fundraiser/auction for MD in Sacramento. The fund raiser was sponsored by the NFL and therefore oriented to athletic objects. Though he was wheelchair bound, John actually raised his hand to bid on a basketball autographed by every player of the Sacramento Kings. He says that he never felt so many G forces as when his mother pushed his hand back down as they had no money for an object like this. For some unexplainable reason, the bidding on the basketball continued to rise. Finally, the auctioneer said “Sold,” and he looked at a gentleman

across of the room to come and receive his purchase. The businessman came to receive the ball, but he did not return to his seat. Rather, he turned and walked across the room to where John was in his wheelchair, and he gave him the ball. This man noticed John’s desire and gave of himself and his resources to meet John’s need. He was available. (From Eden to Paradise: Something Stronger Than Time, An Autobiography by John Stuart Gilbert, A Father’s Reflections by Bruce Stuart Gilbert, Xulon Press, 2012, pp. 77-79).

This story is etched in my mind forever. Here was a man who happened to see a need and he gave himself to give the basketball to John. He was **available** for a greater cause that particular day.

It seems to me that this is the way God works. He places opportunities before us, and we can say yes or no to the opportunity before us. What opportunities surround us today? How might God want to use them in our lives today? We’ll never know unless we say “Yes”.

As I think back across my own life, it seems to me as though all of my life has simply been saying “Yes” to opportunities and the people God has placed before me.

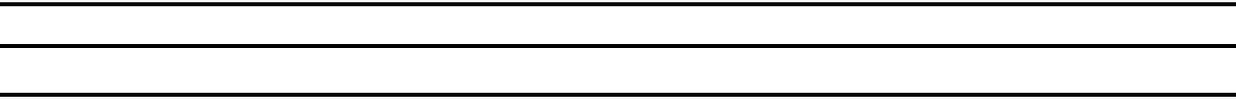
That is the challenge to each of us as we age. Will we be the kinds of men and women who will simply say “Yes” to the opportunities God keeps placing before us in our aging years?

We may call it serendipity – God calls it sovereignty, and He shapes our lives through His plans for us (Proverbs 3.5,6).

God will do the same through our aging years if we are alert to Him. He will do that today if we are alert.

Consider how Jesus illustrates this great truth through Luke’s witness. *“He went about doing good”* (Acts 10.38). Jesus was always available for the people His Father brought into His life. Should it be any different for you and me?

Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith (Galatians 6.9-10).



Let's think together again on our white board about what it means to be available and then think again about barriers that prevent us from being available.

Being Available	Barriers

Conversations Together on “Being Available”

- It's a way of seeing
- Being positive
- Pray to be available
- It's about an attitude
- Be willing to listen – focus on others
- Leave your comfort zone to follow God/others
- Take a risk – be willing to sacrifice
- Beyond my personal plans and self-goals
- Will this get in the way? Of what?
- Availability – the fruit of the Spirit
- Abiding in the vine
- You cannot be in a hurry
- It's encouraging
- Mark 10.45; 2nd great commandment
- Availability opens doors for God to work
- Availability to share the Gospel – seek the lost

Barriers to Being Available

- Fear
- Unwillingness to yield - stubbornness
- Time – hurriedness
- Procrastination
- Lack of awareness
- Unforgiveness/bitterness
- Lack of curiosity, lack of grace
- Lack of teachability – set in our ways, lack of vision

Assignment: What action steps might you consider taking in being available to God's purpose in your life at this season?

**One final important question: How does Satan work to keep us from BEING AVAILABLE?
Remember, he will do whatever he can do to keep us from being available to the work of God in our lives.**
