

New Opportunities, New Realities

Ready:

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you."

-Jeremiah 29:11-12

Set

As the coach of a college fall sport, for me, this time of year is a time of looking forward and planning ahead. We've finished reflecting on the past season, we've completed our exit interviews and we've laid out the plans for spring training. Now our attention turns to filling open positions with future recruits and envisioning what the future team will look like. Veterans return from Christmas break ready to embrace the challenge of becoming smarter, better and stronger. New recruits sign on with the hopes of becoming an important part of the future of the program.

In every new season, we are presented with new opportunities, new challenges, new relationships and new realities.

New Opportunities: If a star player is graduating from the program, there is an opportunity for someone else to step up, for an incoming player to make an impact, for a veteran to become the new go-to player. If the team failed to overcome a particular opponent in the previous season, there is a coming opportunity to win the "unwinnable" game. If there was a particular goal that was unattainable, the team can set a higher standard. New opportunities abound for every new team.

New Challenges: A new season means new questions to answer: "Will we be as competitive as we were last season? Will we be able to execute as effectively? What will be our new struggles?"

New Relationships: With a new season comes new personnel changes. Who will become the new team leader? Who will take on roles such as "stabilizer" and "encourager"? How will the new players fit into the system? Will all the players connect, or will there be friction?

New Realities: What are the unforeseen changes that will alter the makeup of the team? Will this be a championship team, or a team that doesn't handle failure well? What external influences will change the nature of the team?

Every team faces these issues, as does every individual. In sports, we build on the hope of a better season and a better year ahead. In life, we must do the same, depending on our Lord

to see us through each new day.

In Genesis 8 and 9, Noah faced such challenges when God opened the door of the ark. He and his family had the opportunity to begin anew, to launch into a new world as they stepped off the ark onto dry land. However, there were new relationships that faced them. For the first time, God authorized that humans could eat meat; but with this new condition, God gave the animal kingdom fear and terror regarding humans. What a change in relationships! This new condition would drastically change the realities of daily life for Noah's family.

If you know the story, Noah and his family did not last long before sin started to show its ugly head. However, at the end of chapter 8, God made a promise that I believe helped the family continue forward. He said, from that time forth, the days, the seasons and the years would not end. In other words, even if you should falter, the sun will rise again. That promise ties directly to Romans 8:28: ". . .all things work together for good, to those who love the Lord."

As we begin a new year, each of us will be presented with new opportunities and challenges. They will be accompanied by new relationships and realities which will change our horizons. Go forth and face those challenges with the knowledge that God is in control. He is going before you, He has your back. In fact, He will see you through!

Go

1. What new opportunities are ahead of you?
2. How will you face those opportunities and new realities?
3. Lay your plans before the Lord, and let Him lead you forth!

Workout

Genesis 8-9

Bible Reference:

Romans 8



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