

When it the topic of spiritual blindness comes up, probably the first passage of Scripture that comes to mind is Elisha and his servant, from 2 Kings 6, where God opens the eyes of the servant so he can see the horses and chariots of fire that surround Elisha, keeping him safe from the army of the king of Syria. Very few people are given that kind of glimpse into the spiritual realm, but the topic of spiritual blindness has a lot of other applications as well. Seeing things the way God sees them has a lot of benefits, and there are a lot of ways we can be spiritually blind that aren't immediately obvious. I wanted to take a look today at some of the ways we can be spiritually blind, what it means to have spiritual sight, and what we can do about it.

So how are ways that we're blind? This is a pretty broad topic, but I came up with 9 ways that we can show lack of spiritual sight.

- 1. Not seeing things God is doing
 - Becoming so focused on either the world or what the enemy is doing that we're distracted from what God is doing
 - Sometimes this extends to not noticing something God does in front of us, or not giving credit where it is due Him - such as Thankfulness and worship
- 2. Not seeing how God sees us
 - We are called children of God, priests, friends of God, etc. Satan lies to us and calls us other things, but none of these things that he calls us are true. Not having an accurate picture of ourselves can prevent us from being effective.
- 3. Not seeing how God sees others
 - This is a big one, because other believers are *a*lso children of God, priests, friends of God, etc.
 - Without spiritual sight, we can see someone in church as unkempt based on their physical appearance, with all their foibles and personality quirks, marred by whatever gossip we've heard about them. We may never even realize that we're looking at a mighty warrior, a powerful saint, a glowing reflection of God's image.
 - As for nonbelievers; they're lost, in need of a shepherd, but still created in the image of God. And God still loves them to the exact same extent that He loves us. We can become confused and treat them incorrectly if we don't see them how God does.

- 4. The fourth way in which we can be blind is by not believing what you see
 - The very first lie that Satan told Eve was to call into question what she had heard God tell Adam; something she knew with certainty. Genesis 3:1 says – “Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You^a shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” – which is a misleading question, but she knew what God said! And her response showed that she did know, but Satan started making her a little shaky on the details. And this is one of the things Satan does; he tries to call into question the things that God has said or done, by questioning our memory of it. But what God has said is certain, and we can stand by what we know is true.
- 5. Seeing things unclearly
 - 1 Corinthians 13:12 says “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.”
 - Mirrors back during that time were typically made out of a polished piece of metal, so they weren’t as pristine and reflective as the ones we have now. Imagine looking at your face in the back of an old metal spoon. It’ll look distorted, dim, incorrect. Our view of the spiritual world can similarly be faint, distorted, dim, or incorrect.
- 6. Having a blind spot/obstruction
 - You can test this right now; your vision is sharper for whatever you’re looking directly at. Our eyes have a more dense concentration of rods and cones near the center of our vision, so looking at something directly lets you see it the most clearly.
 - I had an episode like this recently. I think I looked at a bright light too closely, and it gave me a temporary blind spot pretty close to my center of vision in one eye. I was trying to build this Lego set, and I just felt like I couldn’t see any pieces at all, like I could look right at a piece and it would blink out of existence. It made it basically impossible to do something as simple as finding Lego pieces. It made it excruciating. But that’s how spiritual blind spots work. Just one little spot in our spiritual vision that we can’t see can cause us to completely lose focus or totally lose track of reality.

- Matthew 7:3-4 puts it this way: “Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye?”
- I don't know about you, but I feel like I have spiritual logs in my eyes sometimes. And it's a huge hindrance.
- 7. Forgetting what you've seen
 - James 1:23-24 says “For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.”
 - I can't tell you how many times I've done this, both physically and spiritually. I get some kind of spiritual insight into how God sees me, just a brief glance for the tiniest second, then it's gone. I lose grasp of it so quickly, and it's so hard to get back. I think God gives us the tiniest of glimpses into spiritual realities, like rays of sunshine coming through the clouds, and we really should hold onto them.
- 8. Focusing on the wrong thing
 - Have you ever had a parent complain about you reading too much? Or looking at your phone too much? Or maybe you're a parent yourself and you've said things like this before. What do they say? “You're looking at that too close, you're gonna strain your eyes and you'll need glasses later.”
 - Well, when we stare at the world in front of us for too long, we become spiritually nearsighted, and we'll only see a blurry mess when we stop looking up close and we try to look up and look at spiritual things.
 - Satan loves distracting us. He openly flaunts what he's doing in the physical world. But with spiritual sight we can see that the battle is already won. The world has already been saved by the Savior of all. The feeble skirmishes that Satan wages are pathetic squirmings against a giant war where the outcome has already been decided and victory has already been won.
 - Romans 8:37-39 puts it this way: “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything

else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- Satan hates being reminded of this, by the way. It annoys him to no end when you remind him of it.
- 9th and perhaps most importantly is that we often don't even realize that we're blind at all.

One of the problems that God had with the Laodicean church, and there were a lot of problems, was that their entire church didn't even realize that they were spiritually blind: Rev 3:17-18 - “For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.”

Why would anyone buy salve to anoint our eyes when they think they can see without it? The Laodicean church had deluded themselves into thinking they were fine and weren't blind at all. In what ways do we do that as well?

What consequences are there to being blind?

- In Matthew 15:14 Jesus says of the Pharisees - “Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.” Jesus warns here about the dangers of spiritual blindness; it's not just that you make mistakes because you cannot see, you also cause irreparable damage to those around you.
- In Matthew 23, where Jesus gives seven woes to the Pharisees, he calls them blind 5 times: He calls them “blind guides” twice, “blind men” once, “blind fools” once, and “blind Pharisee” once. One of these warnings also pertains to the impact they'll have on others. Matthew 23:15 - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.” This is a warning; they're so blind that they're dragging other people to hell along with them.
- There are other strict warnings about leading others astray - Matthew 18:6 says “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.” That should be sobering

for any Christian, because we're the priests of the earth that God has put here. If we can't see spiritually, how can we lead others to Christ?

Similarly, there are blessings for spiritual sight:

- Matthew 16:13-19 - Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This is a lot of blessings for Peter simply saying that he thought Jesus was the messiah, Son of God. And Peter wasn't the one who saw Jesus first; Jesus called out to him in Matthew 4:18-20: "as Jesus was walking beside the sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed Him."
- Peter was given just enough sight to see Jesus for who He was, and Peter chose to follow.

What other people in the Bible realized that they were blind?

One such group can be found in Matthew 15: 29-30 "And great crowds came to him (Jesus), bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them,"

Jesus healed physical blindness, but as with a lot of His miracles, it was an indicator of spiritual healings that were happening too. We see that as it continued in verse 31 - "so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel."

They glorified God because their spiritual blindness had been cured. They didn't glorify man; they understood where the true healing came from, and praised the Author of healing. If you've been cured of spiritual blindness, your response will be the same.

So how do we allow our eyes to be opened? It's not purely passive on our part.

- One way is by self-reflection. I'm not talking about some kind of mumbo-jumbo from a self-help book; this is spiritual in nature. In Matthew 7:5 when Jesus is talking about having a log in your eye, He says this: "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." We should be taking logs out of our own eyes. The apostle Paul also says in 2 Corinthians 13:5 "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?" This isn't about questioning our faith, it's self-diagnosis. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 says this: "For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ." I don't know about you, but I have a lot of thoughts. Taking every one of them captive sounds like a daunting task.
- A second way is by diagnosis. Chances are you've seen something like this before in a car. There's a "Check Engine" light that comes on when something goes wrong. Well, how does the car know that something went wrong? There's all kinds of diagnostic sensors and computers and software whose express purpose is to watch out for things that can go wrong. If you plug a reader device into a port under your dashboard, you can read these individual codes to see what exactly happened. We have a similar system for our spiritual walk. The indwelling Holy Spirit will report to us when there are faults in our spiritual engine. When the Spirit gives you an error code, don't keep driving, hoping it goes away!
- A third way we can have our eyes opened is by crying out for help from God - Matthew 20:29-34 says: ²⁹ And as they went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him (meaning Jesus). ³⁰ And behold, there were two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, "Lord, [\[e\]](#) have mercy on us, Son of David!" ³¹ The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the more, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" ³² And stopping, Jesus called

them and said, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³³ They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." ³⁴ And Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him." – The passage here calls the crowd of people following Jesus "Great". I don't know how big this means, but maybe it was hundreds or even thousands of people. This was a little bit before Jesus fed the five thousand, so there were quite possibly a lot of people there. The crowd told the blind men to be quiet. In response, they shouted louder. They weren't concerned about what people would say or do to them, they cried out for help and they ultimately received it.

So what is spiritual blindness? It's something that keeps us from seeing spiritual things correctly. Maybe it prevents us from seeing things God is doing. Maybe it causes us to not see ourselves how God sees us. Maybe it causes us to not see others how God sees them. Maybe it simply prevents us from believing what we see, whether that be truths God has revealed to us or things we've heard or seen physically. Maybe it causes us to see things unclearly, where we don't have a fine grasp of what God is trying to show us. Maybe we just have a spiritual blind spot, where we can't see something right in front of us that should be obvious. Maybe we've forgotten things we've seen clearly in the past. Maybe we're spiritually nearsighted, where we've spent so long focusing on the wrong things that we can't see more than a muddy mess when we try to look at spiritual things. Or maybe we don't even realize that we're blind at all.

Being spiritually blind also isn't a vacuum. God has placed us here to lead others to Him, and if we're blind guides, we can cause untold destruction. But if we show spiritual sight, God blesses us, and He also blesses others around us, as we worship him for the sight He's blessed us with.

Spiritual sight also doesn't happen without effort on our part. We need to investigate ourselves, to make sure we don't have logs in our eyes preventing us from seeing properly. We need to listen to the Holy Spirit as He directs us, pointing out things that we should be aware of. And we should always remember to cry out for help when we need it, for God to shine His light upon us and drive the darkness away.

Let's pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for Your great grace you've given us. Thank You for the miracles You have worked in our lives, for turning our spiritual

darkness to light and for giving us Your Spirit to give us the sight we need. Please help us to be good stewards of the leadership position You've placed us into in this blind world, so we lead others along the right path. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

You are dismissed.