

Eternity Daily Bible Study

(A ministry of Eternity Christian Fellowship)

Walking In The Spirit - 43

Studies in this series can also be found online at www.globalchristians.org/walkspirit/

Topic: Spiritual Senses – Sight 2

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In the last study we saw that the spiritual sense of sight enables the Christian to be perceptive of spiritual realities and truth and to discern good from evil. The pure in heart behold God (Matthew 5:8) and as they do so they are transformed from glory to glory by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17). This leads Paul to pray for the Ephesian Christians:

Ephesians 1:17-20 MKJV *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, (18) the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, (19) and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us, the ones believing according to the working of His mighty strength (20) which He worked in Christ in raising Him from the dead, and He seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,*

Now what does Paul mean when he is praying for the 'eyes of their understanding to be enlightened'? The Ephesians are already Christians - so Paul is not just talking about conversion (though that could also be included). Paul is praying for a growth in spiritual understanding by people who are already believers.

Contrary to popular wisdom our minds are not perfect receptacles of knowledge. They are fallen, darkened and in need of redemption (Romans 8:7, Colossians 1:21, Ephesians 4:17) . Many highly intelligent people have tried to study Scripture and come away baffled because the unenlightened natural mind cannot comprehend the things of God:

1 Corinthians 2:14 MKJV *(14) But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

Something amazing has to happen if we are to ever be able to grasp spiritual truth! We need to be 'enlightened in our understanding' - even long after we become believers, and this process is called the renewing of the mind (Romans 12:1,2; Ephesians 4:23).

Our mental faculties are renewed as we deliberately admit the Holy Spirit to them. Consecration and devotion lead to renewing of the mind. We need to be 'living sacrifices' devoting time to prayer and meditation and setting our minds on things above. The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace but the mind set on the flesh is death (Romans 8:4-6).

It is not just a matter of knowing more Greek and Hebrew and having better bible knowledge, there needs to be a deliberate opening of the inner mind to God or else it will all just turn into dry scholasticism and arguing over theological sub-points. Paul tells us that the 'eyes of our understanding' are opened by the Holy Spirit who gifts us with a 'spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him'. So the spiritual gift of sight is related to the gaining of wisdom, revelation and knowledge in the inner portion of a person. The spiritual gift of sight leads to those 'Aha moments' when we exclaim "I see that! I understand that now!" - particularly with regard to Christ and to things of God. The spiritual gift of sight makes the Bible into a living book for the believer.

The word for 'understanding' is the GK. Word "dianoias" . This word means 'deep thoughts' or 'imaginings' or can even indicate the spiritual part of one's inner being. It is when the deepest part of us comes into possession of the Truth.

Paul mentions three things that are the direct result of this being spiritually enlightened by the Holy Spirit and they are:

- a) Knowing the hope of His calling
- b) Knowing the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints
- c) Knowing the surpassing greatness of His power towards us who believe

You will not learn the hope of God's calling on your life without the Holy Spirit showing it to you! And you cannot behold the benefits or glory of being a Christian unless they are revealed to you from Heaven! And only God can speak quietly to your spirit to show you the greatness of His power and all that He wants to do on your behalf!

On the other hand if the Christian life seems to be hopeless, unprofitable, inglorious, and powerless it is because you have been listening far too much to the spirit of this world and far too little to the Spirit of God! The eyes of your understanding need to be enlightened!

Enlightenment is what happens when you light the lamp, or flick on the switch, or open the shutters, blinds or curtains and finally let light into the room. It is also what happens when dawn comes and ends the dark night. Thus there are two kinds of enlightenment – an external one where God shines light in like the dawn, and an internal one where we finally open the shutters of our previously darkened minds. There is a place for us exercising our will. Which is precisely the point of the commands about living in the light:

Ephesians 5:8-14 ISV *For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light. (9) For the fruit of the light consists of every form of goodness, righteousness, and truth. (10) Determine what pleases the Lord, (11) and have nothing to do with the unfruitful works of darkness. Instead, expose them for what they are. (12) For it is shameful even to mention what is done by people in secret. (13) But everything that is exposed to the light becomes visible, (14) for everything that is visible is light. That is why it says, "Wake up, O sleeper! Arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you."*

1 John 1:7 ISV *But if we keep living in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

The spiritual sense of sight is an essential prerequisite to 'living in the light' – that is living an obedient Christian life that is on track with God.

Just to clarify – while some of these terms may sound rather "New Age" it is because they have borrowed Christian vocabulary and not the other way around. I am not advocating New Age mysticism, or hallucinatory ecstatic states, or initiation ceremonies or 'the third eye' or seeing auras around people. I am saying that we need to develop our spiritual sensitivity, our ability to 'see' spiritual truth, and that this is related to the gaining of wisdom, revelation and knowledge through the direct personal ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The spiritual sense of sight is not independent of the Scriptures. Rather our spiritual sense of sight works together with our bible study in order to enable us to behold wonderful truths out of God's Law:

Psalms 119:18-19 MKJV *Open my eyes, so that I may behold wonderful things out of Your Law. (19) I am a stranger in the earth; do not hide Your Commandments from me.*

When the spiritual sense of sight is absent the Bible is a 'closed book' even to the religious leaders of the day:

Isaiah 29:9-14 MKJV *Stand still and wonder! Blind your eyes and be blind! They are drunk, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. (10) For Jehovah has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes; He has covered the prophets and your heads, the seers. (11) And the vision of all has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed, which they give to one who knows books saying, Please read this; and he says, I cannot, for it is sealed. (12) And the book is delivered to him who does not know books, saying, Please read this; and he says, I do not know books. ... For the wisdom of their wise ones shall perish, and the understanding of their intelligent ones shall be hidden.*

Paul knew that the Ephesians needed both the Scriptures and also the spiritual eyes to understand them. Every Christian needs wisdom, revelation and knowledge. Every Christian needs to know Jesus more deeply. Every Christian needs the Holy Spirit to make the Scriptures come alive to them. Every Christian needs the eyes of their understanding to be enlightened.

Blessings,

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