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But, What if You Just Can't See It?

Matthew 7:4: (NASB) *Or how can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye, and behold, the log is in your own eye?*

Sometimes no matter how hard we try, there are just some things in life that we are not capable of seeing. Whether our blind spots are caused by personal prejudice, experience, ignorance, our personality type, or the circles with which we associate, we all fall into the trap of blind spots. So, if having blind spots is the disease, what is the cure? While we are not in a position of being able to fix such issues, we are certainly in a position to focus on the godly, scriptural principles that *can* fix such issues! So, what's better than that?

How do we begin to understand blind spots? Let's start by looking at someone who didn't have any and see what he said about them - Jesus! Jesus readily acknowledged the existence and danger of blind spots, as taught in the context of today's theme Scripture. **Matthew 7:1-5:** (NASB)

Verse 1: The warning - *Do not judge so that you will not be judged.*

Verse 2: The consequences - *For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.*

Verse 3: The sin of faultfinding - the "observation stage" - why are we even looking? *Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Jesus used an exaggerated picture to make a point.*

Verse 4: The sin of faultfinding - the "communication stage" - why are we even speaking? *Or how can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye, and behold, the log is in your own eye?*

Verse 5: The sin of faultfinding - the "revealing stage" - we have become hypocrites! *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.*

Jesus is telling us blind spots are not seeing reality as reality but as a distorted picture that has its *basis* in reality.

What can we use to help us take the distortion out of our picture? **Philippians 2:3-5:** Don't be self-centered; act out of humility.

We will examine just three areas where blind spots can be cultivated today:

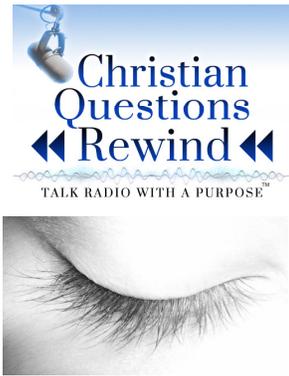
1. *Jealousy/what we feel* Example: Cain
2. *Our own nature, drives and passions/who we are* Example: King David
3. *Culture and the expression of values and differences/what we stand for*
Example: The early church

Cain: Revealing the blind spot of jealousy

Proverbs 27:4: (NKJV) *Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent, but who is able to stand before jealousy?*

Two brothers - same God, different vocations and different approaches: **Genesis 4:2-8:** Neither brother is inherently wrong in how they live, but God is asking for sacrifices to show their devotion to Him. Cain's sacrifice was not acceptable. Now what happens? God intervenes to straighten out the matter. **We can see the resentment and lack of humility rising within Cain as a test is put before him:** *⁶The LORD said to Cain, why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? ⁷If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.*

God let Cain know he could still do well - there was no reason to be angry. There was a solution to find what would work. God left a wide open door for Cain to walk through and be acceptable. What is wrong with vegetables? Nothing, but they were not an acceptable sacrifice; the lamb was. It would point to Jesus later in time, so the picture was in place. Because Cain and Abel were the offspring of those who cast the world of mankind into sin and death, God was looking for the sacrifice as a picture of what would be acceptable to bring them all back to favor. Paraphrasing God's conversation with Cain: "You've seen what works. You brought the wrong thing. No problem. Go do what is right and you will be accepted." God gave him a chance, but Cain was way too jealous.





The opportunity to be pleasing to God was present and simply needed to be grasped! What did Cain do? ⁸*Cain said to his brother Abel, let us go out to the field. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him.*

Cain's reality was that Abel was better, had shown him up before God and had to be removed! The *true* reality was he simply needed a different sacrifice - the beam vs. the speck! He saw Abel as the enemy rather than Cain's offering of the wrong sacrifice.

Proverbs 14:29-30 Song of Solomon 8:6: So, where did the blind spot of jealousy lead Cain?

Genesis 4:9-16: (NRSV) ⁹*Then the LORD said to Cain, where is your brother Abel? He said, I do not know; am I my brother's keeper? Now Cain lies to God! Yikes! He is getting further and further away from innocence and the consequences are getting deeper.* ¹⁰*And the LORD said, what have you done? Listen; your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground!* ¹¹*And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.* ¹²*When you till the ground, it will no longer yield to you its strength; you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth. Cain lost his livelihood and one of the great passions of his life. His blind spot would not allow him to see that God showed him a different way.* ¹³*Cain said to the LORD, my punishment is greater than I can bear!* ¹⁴*Today you have driven me away from the soil, and I shall be hidden from your face; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who meets me may kill me. Cain became hidden from God and a fugitive from society! Jealousy makes us see things incorrectly, say the wrong things and do the wrong things. Therefore we lose sight of the actual reality.* ¹⁵*Then the LORD said to him, not so! Whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance. And the LORD put a mark on Cain, so that no one who came upon him would kill him.* ¹⁶*Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. Cain's jealous rage literally marked him for life! Jealousy is about as blind and destructive of an emotion as there can be.*

James 3:14,16: How do we cope with such bitterness? We need help! Galatians 6:1-3: We do not want to get trapped in someone else's blind spot. We may not end up being jealous, but we could end up with spiritual pride. Those who lend a hand should do so with deep humility and a God-fearing approach.

Sometimes what we do and how we do it can be a blind spot in our lives, for we wrap our identity up in these things. When faced with the reality of a course that simply needs altering, we can choose to alter our *path* or alter *reality*. Cain altered his reality. We must be shown a new way and then we must choose. God opened the door for Cain to see a different way, but he rejected God's offer and chose his own way. That is the power of jealousy. We cannot force people to change, but we can give them the opportunity.

King David: Revealing the blind spots of our own nature, drives and passions

Romans 8:5: Sometimes we as Christians can have blind spots when we set our minds on things of the flesh instead of things of the Spirit.

2 Samuel 11:2-5: (NASB) ²*Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance. (He saw!)* ³*So David sent and inquired (He inquired!) about the woman. And one said, is this not Bathsheba... the wife of Uriah the Hittite? (He desired!)* ⁴*David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her... (He acted!)* ⁵*The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, I am pregnant. (Now the consequences!)*

This was wrong on soooo many levels! The blind spot of David was the depth of his fleshly passions. David was a man after God's own heart because of his depth of passion for God - his depth of passion was his greatest asset AND his greatest liability. From here King David tries to cover his sin. When that doesn't work, he arranges for the death of her husband. The blind spot of our unchecked desire can lead us down a path of complete destruction! David has Uriah killed in battle.

Sight and light are sent in the form of Nathan: 2 Samuel 12:1-7: Nathan comes to David with a made up story and asks the King for his judgment. **David reacts with indignation at this injustice that happened in his kingdom!** ⁵*Then David's anger burned greatly against the man,*



and he said to Nathan, as the LORD lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die. ⁶He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion. David essentially proclaims his own judgment without realizing it. **Blind spot revealed!** ⁷Nathan then said to David, you are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel, It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul...

Nathan reveals this to be a parable and not a real event. Can you imagine the tension of this moment? Nathan has to proclaim the powerful king is a devious sinner before God. What does King David need? Enlightenment and repentance! Nathan convicted David by David's own words and reaction with a story involving a much lesser sin.

Once the blind spot is revealed, it can then be thoroughly disclosed: 2 Samuel 12:9-14: Psalm 51 is about David's sins, written some years after this event. Did he write it down in a private journal? No. Let's read the biblical introduction: *For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.*

This was put to music and sung before all of Israel! That shows his great depth of repentance. He committed a sin in secret, God exposed that sin and the pain and suffering brought by his blind spot was shared with the nation. The words of his pain are given to the choir director for all to hear.

David, now seeing the blind spot and its dire consequences, boldly shows his weakness and God's strength to all of Israel! First, the comparison: Psalms 51:1-6:(NASB) ¹Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your loving-kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. ²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. ³For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. **Second, God's worthy justice:** ⁴Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge... **Third, the transformation of a blind spot to wisdom:** ...⁶Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.

Sometimes what we see and desire can be blind spots in our lives. Because we see and desire, it does not occur to us the "seeing" is actually blindness and the desiring is the burying of reality in a twisted grave of deceit. It is only by the firm word of truth that we can begin to see and change our direction in repentance. It is easy to see what we think are blind spots in others, but we need to focus on ourselves. When our blind spots are revealed to us, may we have the heart of David to turn around and honor the Lord.

The Early Church: Revealing the potential blind spots of our cultures and values

Philippians 2:3-4: Sometimes we think that the early church had everything made to order - there were Apostles, miracles and those who had directly walked with Jesus.

Yet, the issues of cultures and the expression of Christian values were constant and difficult to an extreme: Acts 15:1-2: This was a major issue dealing with the cultural differences between the Jewish and Gentile heritages, and their coming together under Christianity. **Long before there were denominations, there were the Jewish and Gentile Christians, each seeing their "brand" of following Christ as the better way:** Galatians 2:11-14: The result was a choosing of sides and the spiritual bruising of those who knew better! ¹⁴*But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, if you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?*

Do we have the strength to boldly (and humbly!) stand for that which is true in the midst of confusion?

John 8:31-32: Does this mean the truth will make us free from our blind spots? Only if those blind spots are revealed and we act accordingly. Inherently we need help.

How do we scripturally deal with the powerful influences of differing cultures and values? We suggest five principles to deal with differences within our fellowship. Romans 14:4-8: (NKJV) ⁴*Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls...First principle: We all answer to God, first and foremost! ...Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. Second principle: God can lift one to faithfulness in spite of their weaknesses!* ⁵*One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every*



day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. **Third principle: Teach what you believe to be truth and honor the conviction of those who differ.** Warning! Sometimes we confuse "conviction" with "convenience." Let us here discern the difference between a spiritual, scripturally-based conviction and a carnally-minded, spiritually lazy position. We are to be pushing a higher standard for ourselves. **Carnal-mindedness = death Spirit-mindedness = life and peace** ⁶He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. ⁷For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. **Fourth principle: Appreciate the spiritual zeal of those with whom we disagree!** ⁸For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. **Fifth principle: Find the unity in the body that is Christ's!**

1 Corinthians 8:1-2: Knowledge has to work in the context of Christian love in order for it to be spiritually effective. Difference in culture and expression of values are some of the most difficult blind spots, as they center on tradition and history and not merely us. Here, the combination of experience, observation and counsel will help us to see what has previously been invisible. It becomes very emotional: "This is the way we have always done it." We need to compare our traditions against the higher scriptural standards.

The core value to help melt blind spots within our Christian fellowship: **Galatians 3:26-29:** Remember, sometimes what we stand for can be a blind spot in our lives. This is truly devious, for that which we stand for is what many others have stood for, yet in the light of the truth of the Gospel, it may be revealed as merely tradition, or worse, it may be revealed as a blatant deception. It is only the wisdom of Scripture that can change our warped reality to the straight line of truth. In the history of Christianity, there were many places of massive blind spots where the Christian "church" misrepresented the true call of Christ with tradition and not truth.

Blind spots that deceive: **2 Corinthians 4:3-4:** Satan is responsible for a lot of the blind spots relating to the true value of Christianity. **1 Timothy 4:1-3:** It was prophesied that the blind spots of worldly thinking would permeate the world of Christian thinking. This happened with the Scribes and Pharisees who started making their own rules. In many cases, Christianity has added on as well. We need to go back to the pure word of the Gospel to see if the things we always believed in are truly part of the Gospel. Satan is hard at work keeping as many blind as he possibly can! **Ephesians 6:10-12:** What better way to be protected from the damage of our earthly blind spots than to be armed with the armor of God! We cannot let our guard down.

We must learn to "see" the enemy with spiritual eyes. Our beliefs must line up with God's qualities as shown through Jesus and living a sacrificial life as Jesus did. We give up our will in exchange for God's will. That is what Jesus and the Apostles taught us to focus on to avoid our own blind spots.

Finally, here is what we know: **1 John 5:19-21:** So many blind spots involve our worship of the created and not the Creator. **Here is what will happen with all blind spots caused by the darkness of Satan's world:** **Isaiah 60:2-3:** According to prophecy, the deep darkness of the blindness Satan put upon the world is destined to come to an end. Eventually, these nations will fully see the goodness and greatness of God Almighty. Imagine the people of our world now who look upon God with great disdain because they do not understand Him or do not believe in Him. Imagine the wonderment when they not only see how great and powerful He is but how His plan of salvation encompasses all of them. His plan of resurrection holds them accountable for their blind spots but will grant them all an opportunity for life!

Blind spots exist. Most of the time we are not going to be able to figure them out on our own. We need God and fellowship of like precious faith to see them, understand them and choose to walk away from them into the bright light of the Gospel.

*So, what if you just can't see it?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*