

## Seeing Clearly

Suppose you had been born almost blind. You could see things in a dim and blurred fashion, but nothing was clear, and anything requiring good eyesight was beyond your ability.



Now suppose someone told you that, if you would undergo a very costly procedure that might also be quite painful, you would be able to see a lot better. Do you think you would want to risk going through that procedure? Or would you rather stay nearly blind?

In a spiritual sense, we are all born virtually blind. We are selfish, greedy, stubborn, lazy, rebellious; also bad-tempered, inconsiderate, critical, proud, and unforgiving. We want what we want when we want it, and nothing else is very important, especially the needs and desires of others.



We do have some inborn moral sense of right and wrong, which can usually be encouraged and strengthened if we have elders who are caring and wise. But this rudimentary sense of spiritual vision is too often stunted or even suppressed altogether by the lack of loving care, or even by evil intent.

As we go through life there are three forces that work separately or together against improving our spiritual vision. The Bible gives them names: the flesh, the world, and the devil.

"The flesh" is our carnal nature that asserts itself by wanting many things: food, fun, sex, money, power; also importance, admiration, victory, fame. The flesh makes us envious of others, eager to lift ourselves by putting others down. When we are totally self-indulgent, as most of us are at times, then we forget about or intentionally ignore questions of right and wrong. Our fleshly nature is the major cause of ongoing spiritual blindness.

We are born sinners. As David wrote:

*I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. (Psalm 51:5)*

We don't "grow out of" our sinful nature:

*[Jesus] said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." (Mark 7:20-23)*



"The world" works two ways to make our spiritual vision worse. First, there are its many attractions that are so desirable, and we naturally do desire them. Most of the world's good things are not evil in themselves, but we can make them evil by over-indulgence. Fulfilling desires can become obsessive, leading to addiction and making spiritual blindness just about complete.

The world's second attack on our spiritual vision comes from the problems we face. Sometimes these trials and difficulties result from our own ignorance or foolishness, but quite often they just happen because they're part of life. Either way, they often throw us into crisis mode as we try to find solutions. And, of course, we generally look to ourselves or the world for the solutions we need.



Finally there is "the devil." If the flesh and the world are succeeding in making us spiritually blind, then the devil doesn't need to do much, but if we show signs of wanting to see truth more clearly, he is quick to try to distract us with all sorts of ideas that appeal to our fleshly nature or our preference for the world's way, rather than God's way..

In his letter to the Ephesian Christians the Apostle Paul wrote:

*... you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air,*

*the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. (Ephesians 2:1-3)*

Again, writing to the Corinthian Christians:

*And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world [the devil] has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)*



The devil is quite content to see us go through life in a state of spiritual blindness. But that is not what we were created for. God has a better plan for each of us—he wants to open our spiritual eyes to see His glory, and the joy we can have if we will be guided by the Holy Spirit of God, rather than by the flesh, the world, and the devil.

Clarity of spiritual vision starts, of course, with Jesus. If He never came and died to take the punishment for our sins, we would be without hope. But He made it possible for us to be healed, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For

*[God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4)*

Of course, getting saved, accepting Christ, being born again—however you want to put it—that's only the beginning. We don't instantly see clearly all that God wants to show us. It's a process. We have to

*... work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in [us], both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Philippians 4:12-13)*

Improving our spiritual vision starts with coming to understand that we need to change, and being willing for God to change us.

*Do not [any longer] be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2)*

Just as there are three forces trying to blind us spiritually, so there are three helps that have been provided for us by God to help us see clearly: His Word, the Holy Spirit, and the church.

The Bible gives us very specific instructions, and by reading and understanding them we can get better at seeing God's truth:

*And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. (Luke 9:23)*



*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)*

The Holy Spirit has been sent to all believers by God for two main reasons: to show us that we are indeed sinners, in need of redemption, and to lead us to the knowledge of the truth.

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. (John 14:26)*

*You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ... all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (Romans 8:9,14)*

Our God-given means of seeking the Holy Spirit's help and guidance is through prayer.

Of course, when we get saved, and start to read God's word and pay attention to the leading of the Holy Spirit, the devil is going to react.

*Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)*

*Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. (Ephesians 6:11)*

And we have the church, by which I mean the testimony and encouragement of other Christians.

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:23-25)*

Brothers and sisters, go on with God,

*And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)*

The process may be painful, but it's very well worth it.

May we all see more and more clearly everything God wants to show us! God bless you —

**Brother Roland**

## Quotes from Smith Wigglesworth

Smith Wigglesworth was an important evangelist and faith healer in England in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Many of his observations were sharply spoken, but demonstrated the clarity of his spiritual vision. Here are some of them.

**On Faith:** "There is nothing impossible with God. All the impossibility is with us when we measure God by the limitations of our unbelief."

**On the Holy Spirit:** "The Spirit reveals, unfolds, takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us, and prepares us to be more than a match for Satanic forces."

**On Difficult Times:** "Great faith is the product of great fights. Great testimonies are the outcome of great tests. Great triumphs can only come out of great trials."

**On Doubt:** "The blood of Jesus Christ and His mighty name are an antidote to all the subtle seeds of unbelief that Satan would sow in your minds."

**On the Bigness of God:** "There is nothing small about our God, and when we understand God, we will find out that there ought not to be anything small about us. We must have an enlargement of our conception of God, then we will know that we have come to a place where all things are possible, for our God is an omnipotent God for impossible positions."

**On the Renewing of Our Minds:** "God wants to purify our minds until we can bear all things, believe all things, hope all things and endure all things. God dwells in you, but you cannot have this divine power until you live and walk in the Holy Ghost, until the power of the new life is greater than the old life."

**On an Eternal Perspective:** "Never listen to human plans. God can work mightily when you persist in believing Him in spite of discouragement from the human standpoint ... I am moved by what I believe. I know this: no man looks at the circumstances if he believes."

**On Spiritual Hunger:** "The secret of spiritual success is a hunger that persists ... It is an awful condition to be satisfied with one's spiritual attainments ... God was and is looking for hungry, thirsty people."

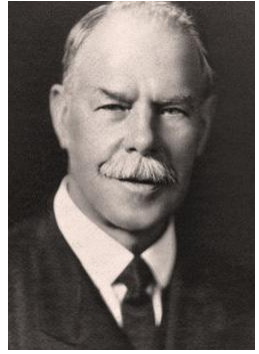
**On Reading Scripture:** "It is as we feed on the Word and meditate on the message it contains that the Spirit of God can vitalize that which we have received, and bring forth through us the word of knowledge that will be as full of power and life as when He, the Spirit of God, moved upon holy men of old and gave them these inspired Scriptures."

**On Waiting on God:** "These times of waiting on God for the fullness of the Spirit are times when He searches the heart and tests the mind."

**On Readiness:** "It is better to live ready than to get ready!"

**On Complaining:** "One half of the trouble in the assemblies is the people's murmuring over the conditions they are in. The Bible teaches us not to murmur. If you reach that standard, you will never murmur anymore. You will be above murmuring. You will be in the place where God is absolutely the exchanger of thought, the exchanger of actions and the exchanger of your inward purity. He will be purifying you all the time and lifting you higher, and you will know you are not of this world."

**On God's Strength:** "You must come to see how wonderful you are in God and how helpless you are in yourself."



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From time to time I get letters from inmates asking for Bible studies, Bibles, and other Christian materials. I don't have any, but I can refer you to a ministry that does have good Bible studies:

Mount Hope Prison Ministry, 25 Summit Ave, Hagerstown MD 21740

If you're an inmate and you need a Bible, your chaplain should be able to help you get one.

Comments and questions about the "Good News Guide" may be sent to  
Brother Roland, PO Box 14, Fayetteville PA 17222

# God's Love

As we grow in grace, we see more clearly and gain more appreciation of the extent and the beauty of God' love for us, his wayward and sinful human creatures..

## Puzzle:

L T H O S E W H O S P E A K T R U T H P F O C H Q P E E D S I X H  
E R M S V Q E Y E E Z O B X T R A D B C Y X O W X M C L O S S F Z  
A W P J C B N L R X L L X U E T H L C K F P M L D A Q X N E C P M  
R D L H B S O V Y T W R B V E T S R O A O T P N E D S W M E I N G  
S T R A E H R U O O T N I D E R U O P M O F A P Q H D J D S O Q D  
I D Q E P I S G C C S G Y K R M X W B G D U S B T G M F P I X L B  
E I X V S V T N L I L L E C Q Q W E D L O A S D Y L F S T R X A S  
L M T U L T R I N U D V Z X R I Y H A Y S L I V C F A A V A K B T  
P P N P R Y O N F G F S G I V E N T O A L L O F U S V N K H Y R E  
O Y L O T L E R W U I I L Q X E M T K X A S N P D L Q D R P T R A  
E O P D C R E O A P B I C I A R H Q N W H Z A Z A Q J Z O E I B D  
P P L J S E P M S T T Y R R C U J T S I J S T S H T M D H H T K F  
S Y L A H B Z Y R D I R E V E A L E D I N J E S U S G I U T H E A  
I Y O C W T K R K Q E O A L X M H U A A F D L U O X O N T Y U P S  
H Q A J R E E E A R E E N W O X W E P S K O T S R M C S R B H R T  
V Q B I Q M N V Y E T N D O J U M B H S W H S D D O O E Z D I V F  
S S E N S U O E T H G I R S E U S R U P O H W E N O C P F E Y F O  
W Y S X M Y C H R S M U E H U Y U N U A P H N D G O M A R T N G R  
P X P D D B Y S S P O C I L N O A X O X A E I Z N N I R T C S O E  
P E R F E C T E D I N U S A S W E O B E Y T R C M T E A Y E K N V  
S G B D P E L R L E R R E W T D Z T M P I L I F H I U B S L U V E  
C B S F N T N F I E B C J J C N D H H O Q L I F E W M L Z G N P R  
R M Y P I Q N D G N I G N A H C N U N G I Z U F A C U Y Z E Z L E  
K O H M L U E A L T K U U G M A D A A A I L Z S E F T O D N Z H M  
T E I F L B E I S E O P I V I F L Q T W P R K E P T U U C U V M Y  
U L B E O F R U W F S H N M J R W I T H O U T F A V O R I T I S M  
Z I B M C U J R O K N S L Y Q C O W D X S E A Q T R W S I M E M J  
U G N I T S A L R E V E O T G N I T S A L R E V E M O R F F I B Y

## Words:

### \* God's Love is

UNCONDITIONAL  
COMPASSIONATE  
MERCIFUL  
PERFECT  
FAITHFUL  
LIMITLESS  
ENDLESS  
ETERNAL  
STEADFAST FOREVER  
FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING  
UNCHANGING  
FRESH EVERY MORNING  
REVEALED IN JESUS  
NEGLECTED BY THE PHARISEES  
GIVEN TO ALL OF US  
WITHOUT FAVORITISM  
POURED INTO OUR HEARTS  
PERFECTED IN US AS WE OBEY  
INSEPARABLY OURS

### \* God's love brings

SALVATION  
RECONCILIATION  
RESTORATION  
RENEWAL  
PEACE  
LIFE  
JOY

### \* God Loves

OBEDIENCE  
ONE WHO PURSUES RIGHTEOUSNESS  
THOSE WHO SPEAK TRUTH  
RIGHTEOUS DEEDS  
A CHEERFUL GIVER  
JUSTICE  
MERCY  
HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL  
THE WORLD  
SINNERS  
YOU AND ME