

## Be Thou My Vision

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart  
naught be all else to me, save that thou art  
thou my best thought by day or by night  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word  
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord  
thou my great Father, I thy true son  
thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one

Be thou my battle shield, sword for my fight  
be thou my dignity, thou my delight  
thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tower  
raise thou me heav'n-ward, O Power of my power

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise  
thou mine inheritance, now and always  
thou and thou only, first in my heart  
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art

High King of heaven, my victory won  
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav'n's Sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall  
still be my vision, O Ruler of all



# Cloudy Vision

This year we celebrated our 7th anniversary of a beautiful Batts' family tradition. Summer eye exams. Yes, six kids' eye exams in one day. (I am sure our eye doctor loves that!) We have this fabulous tradition because our children's hail from a long line of glasses wearers. Their genes hold all the vision challenges, near-sighted, far-sighted, astigmatism, cataracts, and more. I can look at their eyes all day long and never know what is going on with their vision. I need a doctor to examine their eyes and tell me what I cannot see. They need a doctor to heal their vision.

As true as that is of my children's physical bodies, it is even more true of our spiritual selves. In John 8, Jesus heals a man born physically blind. This account of physical healing also reveals the reality of humanity's spiritual blindness and the healing that is available. This chapter shows three different types of spiritual blindness that can occur in each of our lives.

## Inherited Blindness—The Blindness of Adam's Race

In John 9:1-7 we see that Jesus heals the man's physical blindness. However, this man wasn't only born physically blind, he was also born spiritually blind. As a member of humanity, from the line of Adam, this man and all humans are born into spiritual darkness. In John 9:35-41, Jesus shows he is not only concerned with this man's physical healing but his spiritual healing as well.

"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, 'Dost thou believe on the Son of God?' He answered and said, 'Who is

he, Lord, that I might believe on him?' And Jesus said unto him, 'Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.' And he said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped him. And Jesus said, 'For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind'" (John 9:35-39).

This man who was born blind was healed spiritually by placing his trust in Jesus. "Lord, I believe" is the step of faith that all must take to be free of spiritual blindness.

**Application:** Have I taken this step of faith to heal my spiritual blindness? Have I placed my faith in Christ above all else?

## Willful Blindness

The second type of spiritual blindness is the blindness of the Jews and the Pharisees. It is willful blindness. Three times they hear about the healing work of Jesus, but they have hardened hearts toward him. Each time they choose to continue to walk in blindness.

1. *Personal Traditions*—The first time they question the man born blind, they discount the healing work of Christ. He didn't measure up to their man-made traditions and standards. "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day". (John 9:16) They allowed their self-imposed rules of the Sabbath to be a stumbling block to their belief in Christ.

2. *Prejudice*—After the Pharisees had questioned the man Jesus healed, the Jews continued by questioning his parents. Scripture says the parents knew the Jews had already decided that if someone confessed Jesus was the Christ, they would be excluded from

the synagogue (John 9:22). They were not truly interested in hearing truth. They had set their hearts against Christ and all who followed Him. Their prejudice prevented them from hearing truth and being healed from their spiritual blindness.

3. *Pride*—Finally, we see for the third time they choose to remain blind. This time it is pride they chose over healing. The Jews again question the man Jesus healed. After he answered their questions a second time, the Jews reviled Him, saying, "Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is" (John 9:28-29).

They chose to place their faith in the exclusivity of their heritage and their perceived knowledge rather than humbly turning to faith in Christ. In the end, it is their pride that kept them from recognizing their need for healing.

**Application:** Do I allow my convictions to take precedent over what Scripture teaches? Does tradition take an unhealthy priority in my life? Do I refuse to listen to the word of God and change my long-held beliefs in light of its truth? Do I allow my pride to stand in the way of true repentance?

## Partial Blindness—Cataracts

Found at the beginning of John 9 is the final type of blindness. It would be more precise to call this vision issue a blind spot, or a cataract. A cataract is a cloudy spot in the lens of the eye that prevents you from focusing or seeing clearly. This is the vi-

*Correct vision should motivate us to show grace to everyone around us.*

sion issue of the disciples. They had a blind spot when viewing the suffering around them.

“And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, ‘Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?’ Jesus answered, ‘Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day:

the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world’” (John 9:1-5).

Here we see the disciples asking Jesus about the man born blind. They assumed someone had sinned which caused the man to be born blind. Jesus answered them, correcting their wrong assumptions and setting an example of compassion toward the blind man. The disciples’ vision of the world and those in it, what we might call their world-view, had been shaped by their personal history and heritage. They needed it to be corrected to see the world through the eyes of Christ.

If I am completely transparent, it is not inherited blindness or willful blindness that is the greatest vision issue most of us face. Rather, it is the cataracts of our hearts that blur our ability to see the world the way God sees the world. Jesus acted in compassion toward both the blind man and the blind disciples and was able to correct both the spiritual and physical blindness through one action.

There are two main areas where blind spots can become a spiritual issue in the life of the disciple.

1. *Things we don’t know.* We cannot see the world through the eyes of Jesus if we don’t know Jesus or His teachings. The Bible is the greatest revelation of who He is. The quickest way to adjust your vision of the world around you is to know Him more. Spending time reading Scripture, praying, and practicing the spiritual disciplines is essential in clearing our vision. The importance of spending time with Christ cannot be overstated.

2. *Things we don’t do.* If you are familiar with Scripture and have been in the faith for a long time, this can be the biggest challenge to having a healthy spiritual vision. We can become so familiar with what Scripture says that we become blind to the fact we aren’t acting on it.

James 1:22-27 says “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into

the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

James reminds us it is not enough to simply know what Scripture says. The Jews and the Pharisees in John 9 knew the Scripture in a way few ever will. The disciples walked with Christ, yet they failed to understand how to view the suffering of those around them.

Our knowledge of Christ and our relationship with Him should affect our hearts, how we speak, and how we behave. It should cause us to act with compassion toward those suffering from spiritual blindness and those dealing with the painful reality of living in a fallen world. Correct vision should motivate us to show grace to everyone around us.

**Application:** Am I spending time in the Word? Do I study what the Bible says within its context, with a willingness to be corrected by what it teaches? Am I acting on all that I know is right in

Scripture? Am I consistently practicing the spiritual disciplines? Do I feel compassion or condemnation toward those suffering around me? Am I seeing the world through the eyes of Christ?

This year, as our eye doctor handed over the six prescriptions for glasses for my kids, she mentioned there was some exciting research for children with a genetic predisposition to myopia and cataracts. Studies suggest taking regular doses of Vitamin D helps reduce their risk of developing these conditions later in life. She also mentioned that the best way to get Vitamin D was for them to spend time daily in the sun. Likewise, Jesus is the spiritual light of the world. The best way to prevent issues with our spiritual vision is to spend daily time with Him. ■

**About the Writer:** Ana Batts is wife to Craig and homeschooling mama to five daughters and one son. Craig and Ana have served [Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church](#) for 7 years and have been in full time Christian ministry for over 16 years. Ana works with the FWB Women's Ministries Shine! team investing in the young women of our denomination.



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**VISION** by Elizabeth Hodges

For those of us who wear corrective lenses, we are very conscious of blurry, cloudy, or distorted vision. When any symptom occurs, we make an appointment to see our optometrist or ophthalmologist. We desire to see clearly, not to struggle to read or drive at night. We are protecting our focus.

Are we as conscious of our drifting from a singular focus on God? Do we prioritize our time with Him daily? Do we allow the "cares of this life" to encroach and diminish the very life of our relationship with Him? Or do we allow Satan to cause us to doubt the promises of God? Do we recognize his attacks, or are we deceived like Eve?

Each of us is building our legacy of faith one day at a time. Will we leave footsteps that lead our children, grandchildren, and friends to the cross? Or will they see that the "cares of this world" were more important to us? Do they observe a life poured out in service to God? A life of contentment?

Jesus' command in the Sermon on the Mount is evident. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Paul instructed Timothy, "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Timothy 6:6-8).

Are we protecting our spiritual focus? Paul admonishes the Colossians (and us) to "set [our] affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2). Together, as Free Will Baptist women, let's "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). ■