

January 2021
Theme: Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus (20/20 Vision)
“Who Will You See?”

Summary: Have you reached the age where your eyes do not focus clearly? Writer Danny Gasperson explores the phenomenon of needing eyeglasses to see clearly, and he compares this physical trait with spiritual needs. He writes, “Poor vision in any capacity is frustrating, limiting and can even be dangerous.”

Scripture: Mark 8

Songs: Chorus: “Open My Eyes, Lord, I Want To See Jesus” (Divine Hymns/YouTube); “When We See Christ” *Rejoice*, page 674; “Face to Face” *Rejoice*, page 671; “Then I Met the Master” (Gaither/YouTube).

Suggestions and Helps

Promotional Helps

Resources: Poster and invitation are available at <http://www.wnac.org/treasure/programhelps>

Compose an eye chart as an invitation poster. “Is UR spiritual vision 2020? See U at WAC!” Add location, date, and time information and post on social media and/or church bulletin boards or electronic news.

Presentation Ideas

Ice Breaker: Obtain a collection of eyeglasses, real or make believe. Ladies can pose in their favorite pairs at a photo op booth. Enjoy solo and group pictures. Remind everyone to *Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus*.

Presentation: Pray to know the best way to approach your group in presenting this study. When it is time to present the program, quietly turn off the lights in the room. Let the clamor die down, and then flip the lights back on with the phrase, “Let there be light!” Give everyone a sheet of newspaper. Ask them to hold the paper where they can read the fine print. Take a quick picture of all the different arms’ lengths needed for proper adjustment of the papers.

Discuss thoroughly the three lessons pointed out in the program: God cares about the physical, God’s desire is for a deeper healing, and God expects a result of new vision.

Testimony: Give your own testimony on how Jesus saved you from darkness and brought you into His perfect light. Don’t dwell on prior sins. The emphasis should be on seeing Jesus.

Breakout Groups: Breakout groups may explore the “perfect” illustrations in Scripture and share with the larger group to encourage us to drill down for deeper insights into how each event concerns the here and now and how each event reflects the time to come when we will see perfectly in that celestial city.

1. When God said, "Let there be light," there was light.
2. When the Lord told Moses to strike the rock in the wilderness, water came forth.
3. When Jesus said to the storm, "Peace, be still," the winds died, and the waves calmed.
4. When Jesus called to Lazarus, "Come forth," Lazarus revived and responded.

Study

Give a summary of Fannie Crosby's autobiography of being blinded as a baby and giving her life in writing over 8,000 gospel songs. The first face Fannie saw clearly is the face of Jesus. Fannie J. Crosby: An Autobiography is about \$9 from Christianbook.com.

Missions

Connect with a church planter and ask them how your women's group can help their city "see" their new church. Becoming known and reaching out to those who do "see" a new church, is long, difficult work. Volunteer to help in any way you can.

Service

Collect used eyeglasses and purchase new reading glasses at various strength levels. Donate the glasses to groups who utilize them in helping others see better. Contact the Lions Club and The Hanna Project to learn their current requirements and date needed.

Also, a large or giant print (yet lighter weight) Bible can be such a blessing to those who cannot read regular print. Be ever aware of someone struggling to read. Bible on CD blesses hearts as well. While younger people enjoy the Bible available on their phones, a personal phone can be difficult to navigate when eyesight is dim.

Prayer

Close with this prayer: "Open My Eyes Lord, I Want to See Jesus" in melody or speaking.

Refreshments

Compose a "Sand and Sea" refreshment of blueberry punch and tapioca pudding. Branch out with the theme.

Extra

Have someone read the poem "The Crystal Sea" by Mary Altgilbers while orchestral music suggesting water plays in the background.

the Crystal Sea
I want to step onto the Crystal Sea
Will my faith be enough to walk on water or will you carry me
When I stand in the presence of the heavenly host
I will reach out to You first and foremost

I come to you and approach your throne
Asking forgiveness, for this I must do on my own

Loosened are the shackles to all my sin
I will not allow shadows of doubt to creep in

All the weights and burdens that dragged me down
Are gone when I chose to wear the pure white gown
I want to look the other way when my view is obscured by deceit
I want to close my ears to the corruption and depravity

Protect me from the infernal region
Keep me close in your beautiful creation
You gave me all hope when your Spirit filled me
And now I am enveloped by your mercy

I am free from grief and fears
Free from fighting back the tears
The clarity of Your Holiness flows through me
When I see you across the Crystal Sea

When I stand at the waters edge as your bride
My faith will sustain me until I reach the other side
Washed by the blood, drenched with the Everlasting
As I walk on water a new life beginning

By Mary Altgilbers

February 2020

Theme: Keep Our Eyes on Jesus (20/20 Vision)

“Be Thou My Vision”

Summary: Author Emily Faison states, “Again and again, Scripture reminds us, in both Old Testament and New, to set our sights above. We know the world we are living in now is temporary, and only a shadow of things to come. When things get to be too much for us to bear—whether in our personal lives or in the state of the world around us—we can take comfort fixing our eyes above.” This sentence summarizes the “2020 Vision” program, which encourages us to “lift our eyes to get a shift in perspective.”

Scriptures: Hebrews 12:1-2; Psalms 121; Colossians 3:2-3; Isaiah 1:17, 58:6; Zachariah 7:9-10; Matthew 25:35; Hebrews 13:1-3

Songs: Begin the program by singing “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus” *Rejoice*, page 258 as an opening prayer, and sing “Be Thou My Vision” *Rejoice* page 23 as a closing prayer.

Suggestions and Helps

Promotional Helps

Resources: Poster and invitation are available at <http://www.wnac.org/treasure/programhelps>

Publicity: Make a decorative display of vision items, such as eyeglasses, magnifying glass, telescope, sunglasses, binoculars, etc. Include a stand-up sign invitation to “Come and see WAC with 2020 vision, date, time and location.”

Presentation Ideas

Ice Breaker: Give everyone three minutes to compile a list of words that include the word “eye.” For instance, eyeball, eyebrow, eyecup, eyed, eyedropper, eyeglass, eyehole, eyelash, eyelet, eyelid, eyeliner, eyepiece, eyeshade, eyeshot, eyesight, eyesore, eyetooth, eyewash, eyewitness, etc. Give the one who has the most eye-popping words a prize of eye shadow or fun eyeglasses.

Presentation: Pray to know the best way to approach your group in presenting this study. Psalms 121 naturally lends itself to a choral reading. Divide the ladies into two sides of the room. Group 1 begins with Group 2 echoing the following line:

Psalms 121

Group 1: I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

Group 2: My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

Group 1: He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Group 2: Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

Group 1: The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

Group 2: The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

Group 1: The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

Group 2: The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth,

Groups 1 and 2: and even for evermore.

For the section emphasizing Hebrews 12:1-2, show several beautiful and/or ominous cloudscape pictures. We can often imagine various creatures and structures in the clouds, some of which encourage us and some of which make us pause. But “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses” causes us to run a better race for the Lord. Knowing our relatives, friends and especially our Savior reside in heaven and apparently observe our race should result in our striving to ever look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our race for inspiration and example.

Testimony: Assign a couple of women for testimonies regarding their relatives, friends, and mentors which now reside in heaven. Their stories should be of the examples set while the saints were on earth, and of how those memories can inspire us to keep writing a true and faithful life story dedicated to Jesus.

Breakout Groups: Breakout groups could discuss “What are practical ways you can ‘see’ the world around you with God’s vision? Expand outward to your community, region, and the world.”

1. Start close to home.
2. Expand to your church.
3. Go to the ends of the world.

Bring back further discussion and summaries to the entire group.

Study

Commit to setting aside time to study these verses personally. “Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.” (Zechariah 7:9-10). Pray for guidance in executing the leading of the Lord in practical ways.

Missions

Psalms 121 would be a beautiful song when presented in American Sign Language. Ask someone in your circle of acquaintances to open the session by signing the Psalm. Or, if you do not know someone who can do this, check out instructions for American Sign Language and have a how-to session with this picturesque Psalm. Use video to minister to those who do use American Sign Language as well as a publicity method for WAC meeting.

Service

Ever go to the mall to shop just to be accosted by a team wanting to clean your glasses? And, of course, it is not a “free” service. They want to sell you cleaner for your eyewear. Turn this idea into an idea for service. At the end of a church service closest to the next WAC meeting, really offer a “free” eyewear gentle cleaning and/or a car windshield cleaning. Accept no tips but offer a tip instead—a business card for WAC which includes next meeting date and time.

Prayer

The author of our lesson explains, “The act of asking for God’s vision to replace our own places God at the center of that prayer, *decentering* ourselves.” Begin prayer time with this prayer first. Then in the moments of quiet, prayer requests can be mentioned as they are being prayed for. Go straight to the Lord, and then agree in prayer.

Refreshments

Since potatoes have “eyes,” how about a baked potato bar, potato soup, potato salad, French fries, etc. The humble potato is pretty much a versatile vegetable; so, go as plain or fancy as you prefer.

Extra

February is Welch College Giving month.

Prepare for IM’s WMO offering on April 25. Look for more information at iminc.org

Meditate on this poem “The Telescope” by Mary Altgibers as you lift your eyes unto the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

The Telescope

When you set your gaze to the night sky
taken in by the vast cosmos
One cannot even fathom the spatial realms of glory
and yet our God is Bigger

We stand in awe as if we have never seen such beauty
glittering galaxies and the flicker of distant stars
always shining whether we see with open eyes or shut
and yet we lack faith in our God the Creator

Some will take this all in and deny God
Some will believe without a doubt
He is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent
He is the One true God

Technology has brought us closer to viewing the celestial horizon
and its spectacular displays of color and light
always changing and never repeated
and yet our God never changes

The haloed moon casts a glow on the weary planet
and its shadows put the mind to rest.
The restless soul tries to slumber
and yet our God brings us Peace

We see the distant as never-ending
but our lives eventually cease to exist
this planet deteriorates and decays
and yet our God is Eternal

We wonder and delight in the mystery
as we lay blanketed by the stellar universe
so we ask how did this all come to existence
and our faith is ignited by our God the Creator

By Mary Altgilbers

March 2021
Theme: Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus (20/20 Vision)
“Cloudy Vision”

Summary: Writer Ana Batts explains that cataracts “develop over the course of many years, incrementally clouding the lens of the eye at such a pace that the person with the cataracts doesn’t notice the change until their vision has been seriously impaired.” Similarly, she compares the spiritual eyesight to physical and shows how both sometimes need surgical repair before we are aware of the extent of the impairment.

Scriptures: James 1:22-25; Psalms 141:3; Psalms 121:1-2

Songs: “Open My Eyes That I May See” *Rejoice*, page 460; “Can the World See Jesus In You” (Heaven Bound/YouTube).

Suggestions and Helps

Promotional Helps

Resources: Poster and invitation are available at <http://www.wnac.org/treasure/programhelps>

Publicity: Make a 3-D poster to emphasize distorted vision. Take a cheap pair of reading glasses and adhere blurry lenses (wavy lines drawn with a marker) behind the frames. Then attach the glasses to a poster or bulletin board with WAC location, date, and time information in distorted (but readable) font. Try Chiller font or a similar disproportionate font to print the question “Can You See Clearly?” and other info. Cut rectangles, triangles, or circles of data to place on display board.

Ice breaker: The pre- and post-op treatments for cataract surgery involve eye drops, multiple vials of drops in various dosages throughout the day. Prepare cards with spiritual eye drops from Scripture recommended for each day of the week. Distribute with instructions to read and check off the assignment daily for clearer spiritual sight.

Spiritual Eye Drops

<u>Prescribed Scripture</u>	<u>Day 1</u>	<u>Day 2</u>	<u>Day 3</u>	<u>Day 4</u>	<u>Day 5</u>	<u>Day 6</u>	<u>Day 7</u>
Luke 6:41-42	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Psalms 33:18	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Psalms 121:1-2	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Isaiah 64:4	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Presentation Ideas

Always pray to know the best way to approach your group in presenting this study. This lesson is a comparison between physical and spiritual eyesight, but it is about eyesight which has

gradually become cloudy and needs surgery for the “eye” to continue functioning. Following that comparison, consult your eye doctor for information on cataract surgery. Request enough literature for each person in your group. Or if you don’t have access to professionally produced materials, print your own from online sources. On the literature, write notations in appropriate locations to make the spiritual applications. Or simply highlight in bold color the points of physical eye care that coincide with the spiritual eye care. Use the literature as an outline and/or a place for listeners to take notes. The point is for the listener to have a physical reminder of spiritual lessons to be learned. Each person needs to “see” the spiritual need.

Testimony: If someone in your group has had cataract surgery, ask her to share a testimony of being unable to see clearly, and then the joy of having sharper eyesight after two short surgeries. How does today’s experience of needing cataract surgery compare with Biblical examples of needing the healing touch of the Great Physician? Discuss who brings about the healing today from the lens replacement?

Breakout Groups: Breakout groups could discuss the Symptom checks listed by the author:

1. “Are there parts of scripture that you know, but are not obeying?”
2. “Are the words of your mouth honoring to God? Are you ‘bridling the tongue’ at home, church, work, or social media?”
3. “Has a loss of spiritual focus caused you to minister only to the familiar? How much time do you spend with those who have real physical needs who can offer nothing in return, i.e., widows and orphans? How often do you minister to spiritual orphans? Are you discipling those that have no spiritual guidance?”

Further discussion and summaries brought back to the entire group could include an overall discussion of sincerity, honesty and genuine love in our worship and relationships.

Study

Visit the International Missions (iminc.org) website or directory. Are you familiar with each of the countries where we support workers? How about a refresher emphasis on the actual facts, such as population, location, and culture of the areas we are trying to reach for Christ? A deep study will help you pray more efficiently and effectively.

Missions

You be the missionary. Encourage all attendees to be “intentional” missionaries wherever they are. Use Ana’s suggestions for making plans to build relationships with those who have spiritual needs. Join a class of interest to you offered by a community college if available. Perhaps a sports team or other group with similar interests will give you time to meet and encourage others. If nothing includes your interests, then start your own group and advertise for like-minded learners on community media. But the ultimate goal is to be able to share Jesus. Don’t get distracted. Pray and watch, and God will arrange the moments of opportunity.

Service

Be alert. Offer chauffer services to those who may have difficulty seeing. Especially think of those who need rides to church and WAC activities. Cataracts and other eye difficulties are inconvenient and frustrating when it comes to driving, and they can be downright dangerous. Also, during the lead up to eye surgery and during recovery, affected individuals need transportation to and from doctor appointments frequently. Think dilated eyes and respond accordingly.

Prayer

Pray Psalm 141 as a close.

LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee. Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties. Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities. When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet. Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth. But mine eyes are unto thee, O GOD the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute. Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape. Amen

Refreshments

How about “heavenly” dishes for refreshments? “Heavenly Hash” is a quick, easy, and scrumptious dessert.

Fold the following into a large carton of Cool Whip:

1 can crushed pineapple, drained

1 cup pecan halves (or pieces)

1 cup caramel ice cream topping

½ cup maraschino cherries, drained and cut in half

Refrigerate before serving in decorative glass bowl or individual dessert glassware.

In a punch bowl mix one quart of pink (dawn) or orange (sunset) sherbet with 1-liter ginger ale for a heavenly cloud to quench the thirst.

Extra

Prepare for IM’s WMO offering. Find more information at iminc.org

Poem “The Heavens Declare” by Mary Altgilbers

The Heavens Declare

In the celebration of dawn
the heavens declare His Majesty

Amazing beauty revealed
by the radiance of the first light

With tear-filled eyes
my heart overwhelmed

Azure and lavender blends
with fiery crimson

Saturating the realms
the sky is set afire

Changing the hues of darkness
to a glimpse of glory

In the peaceful splendor
of His Cathedral

Triumph is declared
and I worship Him

Awesome is He
By Mary Altgilbers