

2-2011

2011 February Newsletter

Nancy Rockey

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/life-renewal>

 Part of the [Counseling Commons](#)

Can You See?

Only three letters to the word “see,” but the meanings are many. There are even categories of similarities with words in each category, such as: Understand, Meet, Establish, Consider It, Consult, observe, Imagine, Ensure and Escort. So are we asking if you can understand, if you can consider it or imagine it or are we asking if you have sight, vision, or do your eyes work?

Just a few weeks ago, I visited my ophthalmologist in Arizona, the physician my mother went to for years to monitor her glaucoma and the one we have seen on a yearly basis for eye check-ups. Blindness from glaucoma is in my family and Ron’s father had the proverbial “coke bottom” glasses. Because we hope to maintain vision, we have been careful to monitor changes in vision, and because we do computer work for hours at a time, keeping vision sharp is important. Dr. Jacobson told me that I had a cataract on my left eye, and that if I was to have an implant of a new lens in Phoenix, I would have to be there for three weeks. I made an appointment for November, but as time passed, my vision decreased. Headaches began to set in when I spent more than an hour at the computer – not good! My eye watered a lot, and being out in the sunshine was a near impossibility, even wearing sunglasses.

This reminded me of a fellow who attended a seminar a long time ago, and opted to go through the recovery program. As time passed during the program, he made this statement: “Once I was blind, but now I see.” Amazing! He had never lost the function of his eyes, so what was he saying? Let’s refer back to some of the synonyms for the word “see.” Could he have meant “Once I didn’t understand but now I do?” Or perhaps, “Once I didn’t ‘consider it’, but having now considered it, I can see/understand.” Or maybe even – “There was a time when I couldn’t even imagine it, but now it is clear to me!” You see, this man had physical 20/20 vision, but he was blind in his understanding. He knew that he was abusive to his wife and to his daughters, but he had no clue why, and quite frankly, he thought that he had every right to be that way. There was however, something in him that didn’t feel quite right after he had been mean to his family. Somehow he convinced himself that he had the right to be difficult, even so, guilt bugged him.

There is an entire chapter in the Bible devoted to this issue of sight vs. blindness. It’s the story of a man who was blind from birth. Jesus had spotted him as He walked along with His disciples. They asked Jesus who had sinned, the man or his parents, that he was born blind. Jesus answered that neither had sinned, but that the man was born blind so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. After Jesus responded this, He spit on the ground, made some mud and put it on the man’s eyes. Then Jesus instructed the man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. Having followed Jesus’ instructions, the man went home seeing.

Of course, the story doesn't end here because the Pharisees, who were forever endeavoring to trap Jesus, questioned the healing and the one who had done it. They accused Jesus of being a sinner because the healing had been performed on the Sabbath, and to them, the letter of the law was more important than the loving spirit of the law. And so the Pharisees summoned the man's parents and questioned if the man had really been born blind. Having been assured that blindness was from birth, the Pharisees questioned who had opened the eyes of their son. The parents, fearful of reprisals from the Pharisees responded: "He is of age. Ask him."

Again the son was summoned and the Pharisees questioned him, accusing Jesus of being a sinner. The man responded, "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out (of the temple).

When Jesus heard that the man had been thrown out of the temple, he looked for the man, and asked him if he believed in the Son of Man. "Who is he, sir? Tell me so that I may believe in him."

Jesus answered, "You have now seen Him; in fact, He is the one speaking to you." Then the man said, "Lord, I believe."

But the Pharisees who were with Jesus weren't done yet. "What? Are we blind too?"

Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."

Interesting isn't it, that those who were most religious in Jesus' day, and even those who claim to be so religious today, are accused of being guilty. Jesus was speaking here in this story not just of physical blindness but of spiritual blindness. Spirituality is about relationships, with God and with others; perhaps especially those others with whom we live. Religiousness is about right vs. wrong. When one claims to be right, they inadvertently or deliberately choose to make the other person wrong, diminishing relationship.

Many times in Scripture, especially in words spoken by Isaiah, the prophet, God's people are chided for their lack of eyesight, for their love of the darkness rather than the light, for their spiritual blindness. That blindness causes us to behave in ways that are contrary to the ways of God; to the teachings of Jesus. We harden our hearts, so that the heart's spiritual purpose – LOVE – cannot be distributed with every physical beat.

Read the words of Jesus found in the passages of Matthew 13: 13-15. If you read beyond those verses to verse 23, you will comprehend even more what Jesus was saying.

In Luke 4: 18 Jesus spells out His ministry as appointed to Him by the Spirit of the Lord: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind . . .”

Just what did Jesus mean was the purpose of “recovery of sight to the blind?” Was his work to unlock all the prisons in the then known world letting criminals go free? And was His other purpose to make mud out of His spit and dirt, and to put the paste on every blind person’s eyes? We think NOT. Jesus’ purpose was to unlock the deadbolt on people’s hearts. His purpose was to reconnect the love of the heart with the survival purpose of the brain, so that every human alive could be a life-giving blessing to everyone we meet.

How did we get so locked up? We did because our enemy’s plan and purpose is to hurt us so badly, that the life-giving blood of Christ’s sacrifice cannot get to our heart, supplying it with love. That deficit causes the heart to harden. God’s plan, on the other hand, is to undo the sclerosing damage to our hearts, caused by wounds received, so that life-giving healing can return to our eyes of understanding. When we finally look/see in the mirror at ourselves, we can “consider it, establish it, imagine it and understand.” As we do, our feelings, our thoughts, our behaviors, our relationships, the whole tenor of our lives transform. We become ambassadors for good, for God, and we can proclaim – I once was blind, but now I see!

My vision was foggy because of cataracts (the Lens of the eye become cloudy) and it usually happens as you age, and yup, I’m there. It is so amazing that in a 15 minute procedure, the eye’s lens can be removed and a new one placed in the eye – wide awake, made blind in that eye to prepare for the surgery (and that’s a bit shocking!) and painless. Post-op there may be a slight amount of discomfort, but vision is restored, and that’s what matters! The process of softening the heart takes longer than 15 minutes, and that’s a good thing. If it happened that fast, the shock would be too great, and we’d be overwhelmed. We cannot guarantee that it’s painless, because facing ourselves, acknowledging our behaviors as a result of our wounds received and choosing a road less travelled is work and sometimes work causes us discomfort, but is it ever worth the ache!

Know what? The Great Physician guided the talented fingers of my surgeon, replacing what was damaged with new. My job was to notice and acknowledge my problem and seek help. Jesus healed the man who was physically blind, but the blind man’s responsibility was to wash off the mud, ultimately restoring his sight. Jesus provides the power for our healing, but our job is to wash off the mud of our wounds, so that we can “see – understand, imagine, and consider.”