



Topic: Through the Lens I See... (The Power of Perception)

For as he thinks within himself, so is he. He will grudgingly say, "Go ahead and eat all you want," but in his heart he resents the fact that he has to pay for your meal.

~Proverbs 23:7 (TPT)~

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INTRODUCTION

This evening we begin our study on one of the most powerful aspects of the human mind... **"Perception"**. The way in which you and I view things makes the world of difference in how we react and respond to things happening in and around us. Whether we utilize or employ it or not, you and I were born with the power to determine our view of things. In other words, we have the power of mind or perception to see the glass as half full or half empty; we have the power of mind to determine how we allow things to affect us. See perception says: **No one can make us angry without our permission; no one has the right nor power to determine whether we are angry, sad or even happy.** Anytime we believe that someone or something has made us angry, sad or disgruntled, we give our power away; we send the message that other people can control our feelings and ultimately our behavior. Take note...whomever we put in charge of our feelings, we put in charge of us. We give up our authority, responsibility and respect and when we do, this leaves us feeling powerless and vulnerable. Our mood and temperament now rest in the hands of someone else and not in our own rightful hands.

OUR STUDY

History on how we arrived at this Bible Study lesson. The Holy Spirit engaged me in a conversation several months ago about how we see ourselves in the light of our circumstances, situations and experiences. As the Holy Spirit began to give revelation of this, I found myself visualizing the various types of optical lenses which then led to me exploring what they are. In my study, I identified six types of optical lenses.

- 1. Single Vision Lenses.** Single vision lenses have the same prescription power across the entire lens. They are designed to help people who require correction of farsightedness, nearsightedness, or astigmatism. Single vision lenses have a single optical prescription correction that distributes focus evenly over the entire surface areas of the lens. Most people that wear glasses usually get this type.
- 2. Bifocal Lenses.** Bifocals are made up of two lenses to correct both near and far-sighted vision. Bifocals have a visible dividing line between the two. The upper section (above the dividing line) allows for distance vision and the lower section (below the dividing line) aids in close up focus. The results, if looked through properly, is vision clarity at both distance and near with one pair of glasses.
- 3. Trifocals Lenses.** Trifocal lenses have a special lens that provides vision correction in three different ranges of vision: near, intermediate and distance. Trifocal lenses have lines on them that

delineate the corrective area on the lens for each range of vision. Because of these lines, vision can be blurred between each focal range.

4. **Progressive Lenses.** Progressive lenses, an increasingly popular choice over bifocal and trifocals now days, are lenses that correct vision at near, middle and far distance with no “transition zone” or visible divide. Progressive Lenses, also known as Multifocal Lenses, let you see comfortably at different distance. They allow you to see close, near or far without changing your glasses. Progressive lenses are typically worn by people affected by “**presbyopia**”, a normal age change in which the crystalline lens of your eye loses its elasticity and flexibility. This results in an inability to focus on close objects.
5. **Toric Lenses.** Toric lenses are a type of single-vision lens used to correct a more severe astigmatism by adding cylinder correction, an additional prescription power. With astigmatism, the lens of the eye or the cornea, which is the front surface of the eye has an irregular curve. This can change the way light passes, or refracts (*the bending of light rays as they pass through one object to another*), to your retina which can cause blurry, fuzzy or distorted vision. The special shape of the Toric lenses creates different refractive, or focusing powers that can help correct either a corneal (*when the cornea has mismatched curves*) or a lenticular (*when the front surface of the eye has a different curvature in one direction*) astigmatism.
6. **Prism Lenses.** Prism lenses are lens used to correct heterophoria, a vision disorder characterized by the eyes not looking in the same direction when at rest. This is characterized by someone who sees two separate images of one object. The term most people are familiar is “**double vision**”. Prism lenses, one of the most common methods for dealing with double vision, help align the two images so that only one image is seen.

With the help of the Spirit of God as my guide, I pray we are able to connect how we perceive things happening around and to us with the various types of lenses we have just shared. It is important for us to be looking at the world through the correct or proper type of lenses for the occasion. I would venture to say that there will be multiple times wherein it is necessary for us to switch lenses so we can, at all times, maintain a proper view or perception.

Our study text **Proverb 23:7** is taken from The Passion Translation or TPT and speaks to us of one who is double standard between what he says and how he truly feels. The text teaches that the man who says “go ahead and eat all you want” is really grudgingly resentful in his true feeling concerning how much he has to pay for your meal. The warning here is that some people do not say what they are thinking. Can we say this may be because some people do not view things in the light of truth; they view things through their own perception or view? Perhaps there is a fear within them that prevents them from speaking “their truth” as we call it these days. Just maybe the way they view their surrounding and what they may be experiencing hinders them from seeing truthfully and from speaking truthfully what they perhaps should.

If our vision is off skewed, if we are not seeing through proper lens, we risk the chance of making decisions or taking steps that could possibly create unnecessary involvement for ourselves. Looking through the correct lens at the appropriate time can be critical to our peace of mind and to our continued faith walk with the Lord.

Using our insight on the six types of lenses, let’s begin with the “**Prism**” lenses. When I thought of this type of lens, the Scripture that comes to mind is found in the book of James.

James 1:5-8 (TLB)

If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask him, and he will gladly tell you, for he is always ready to give a bountiful supply of wisdom to all who ask him; he will not resent it. But when you ask him, be sure that you really expect him to tell you, for a doubtful mind will be as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind; and every decision you then make will be uncertain, as you turn first this way and then that.

Reading this text from the King James Version, James 1:8 uses the phrase “double-minded” instead of doubtful-mind as it is read from The Living Bible. A person who is double-minded or who has a doubtful mind is like a person suffering from heterophoria vision where they see two separate images of one object. Heterophoria is a type of binocular vision disorder that occurs when the eyes are misaligned; this misalignment, which can be very small, leads to the straining and overuse of the eye muscles. Now, lets look at this from a deeper spiritual perspective. When our thoughts are misaligned or when we have allowed something foreign to the mind and will of God dictate or drive our thoughts, it will result in our inability to see things happening around or in or to us in the light of the plan of God for us. When one is suffering from heterophoria vision, it can in most cases be traced to what they have allowed their eyes or vision to present to them. The book of James speaks of the mind being unstable but the only way the mind can become unstable is by what the eyes or vision introduces to the mind. The mind will only perceive what the eyes tell it to perceive. This type of vision puts a strain on us maintaining a true faith in our relationship with our Savior which in some cases leaves us feeling spiritually disillusioned concerning the truth of things. In this case, we need to clothe our eyes with a good pair of prism lenses to correct or align the thoughts of our mind with the truth of God and His word concerning our situation or circumstance. Otherwise, will never come to know the truth of who God is and the power of God that lives within us. If we are not planted in our faith and belief that all we are or all we hope to be is in who or what Christ Jesus says we are, we will live life on rocky grounds always picking up the pieces of gravel of our life as it falls apart.

Now lets look at “**Toric**” lenses. Toric lenses are used to correct vision in those suffering from astigmatism. Astigmatism is a vision condition where because of the irregular curve of the front surface of the eye, it causes blurred or distorted vision, difficulty with night vision and often times the need to squint the eyes in an attempt to see clear. Notice the main cause of astigmatism is having an irregular curve of the front surface of the eye. Something that is irregular is out of balance in shape or arrangement; it is something that is contrary to the rules or to that which is normal or established. In a nutshell, when we lose our way in God or when we lose sight of who God is in our life, it leaves our spiritual life out of balance. This happens to the child of God when he or she chooses to view life’s experiences or life’s trials and tribulation through the lens of a personal attack against them. When we take things personal as though something or someone is out for our ill or for our downfall, our faith in God then becomes blurred or distorted. We now have crossed the line of seeing our trials, tribulations, or troubles as an avenue for us to gain a greater revelation of the power of God at work in the life of men.

1 Peter 4:12-14 (NLT)

Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trails you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world. If you are insulted because you bear the name of Christ, you will be blessed, for the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you.

The apostle Peter breaks down so clearly and explainable the reasons behind the fiery trails and the suffering of the child of God. If I am looking at the things that befall me through the proper lens or looking at them through the eyes of my faith in God, I will understand that what is happening to me is happening for the sole purpose of bringing me into the vision of the glory of God; bringing me to the place where the Spirit of God can rest upon me in a way that it will not otherwise.

This is what the apostle Paul had to come to understand in the book of 2 Corinthians. Paul tells us that he was confronted with a situation so devastating to him that it led him to the place of earnest prayer to Christ Jesus to have this thing removed.

2 Corinthians 12:8-9 (NKJV)

Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Earlier in this chapter, the apostle Paul shares a spiritual experience a man in Christ (the apostle is referring to himself) encountered that left him in the place of not knowing whether he was in the body or out of the body. Paul says that this man was caught up to the third heaven or Paradise where he heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Paul then tells us that lest he should be exalted above measure because of the abundance of revelations he has been blessed to experience, he was given a thorn in his flesh. Paul calls this thorn a “messenger of Satan” who was set in place to buffet or to inflict him.

Beloved, when we walk or live in accord with or in obedience to the will of God or the voice of God, we will come to the place of the revelation of the bright glory of God. We will be blessed by our Father God to come to deeper spiritual revelations of just who God is. The power of the Spirit of God, in this place, may rest heavy upon our life. God may, through us, reveal His virtuous glory to those around us. The Spirit of discernment may rest upon us in ways that we could never have imagined. Because, as the Bible says, the creature is subject to vanity, God may give Satan the permission to buffet us for the sole purpose of keeping us rooted and grounded in Him. If we do not understand God’s operation in this manner, we can develop spiritual astigmatism. If this happens, it is most critical that we clothe our eyes with a good pair of Toric lens so that our vision of the truth become clear.

Moving on to “**Progressive**” lenses. While almost anyone can wear progressive lenses, they are typically needed by people over the age of 40 who have presbyopia (*a blurring of the vision when doing closeup work like reading*). Activities that require a great level of detail vision at close distances naturally get more difficult as we age. Many people carry around several pair of glasses for different purpose, this can be annoying. The downside of progressive lenses is that number one (1), it can take time to get used to wearing progressive lenses, number two (2), some frames are unsuitable for progressive lenses, and three (3) progressive lenses can cost more than single-vision lenses. When we are too close to our situations, which can happen when we get too personally involved in the what’s and why’s of what is happening to us, the correct view of our situations become blurred; because we have let ourselves take things too personal, we have lost the clear view of the truth of what is truly going on around us. When we are in the heat of our trials and tribulations, we often times have trouble seeing the details clearly. If left here, we risk the possibility of getting “lost in the sauce” as they say; having difficulty accepting the things that are happening as part of God’s refinery plan in our life. We risk the possibility of being unsuitable for handling the situation correctly which then may cost us far more than God intended; our time in this place learning the objective of God for us being here becomes over-extended; our blurred vision of what is

happening may cost us sleepless nights and missed meals. If this happens, we must be open to receive honest feedback from those God has appointed as watchman on our walls. We must be willing to lean on others who have God in heart to pray and uphold us during these times.

The Bible tells us in Exodus of how Moses grew tired and weary in doing the will of the Lord and how those who also had a heart or understanding of the assignment upon Moses' life stepped in.

Exodus 17:12 (NLT)

Moses' arms soon became so tired he could no longer hold them up. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side of Moses, holding up his hands. So his hands held steady until sunset.

If we read up a few verses in Exodus chapter 17, we will see that the children of Israel were under attack by warriors of Amalek. Moses commanded Joshua to choose some men to go out and fight the army of Amalek. Moses told Joshua that he would stand at the top of the hill, holding the staff of God in his hand. As long as Moses held up the staff in his hand, the Israelites had the advantage. But whenever Moses dropped his hand, the Amalekites gained the advantage. As we continue to read the text, we see that Moses' arms soon became so tired that he could not hold them up. Seeing where Moses was and that if the children of Israel were to collectively win, it would take someone else stepping in to help Moses and thus change the narrative of the situations. It is so important when our vision is blurred, whether because we are too close to our situations or because we have let our vision cause us to become tired in our situation, we need those around us who are willing, in the Spirit of Christ, to assist us. We mustn't reject wise counsel or help from those who see farther and clearer than we may do at that time. This wise counsel serves as a pair of progressive lenses we are in much need of. Having progressive lenses allows us to see clearly those things at a distance while being able to focus on the closer details.

We now move on to **Bifocal** and **Trifocal** lenses. We will look at these two types of lenses together because they are similar in filling the need of those with both impaired near and far vision. The only difference between them is that trifocals have three distinct prescriptions on the lens whereas bifocals have only two prescriptions. Like progressive lenses, these lenses are also typically prescribed for individuals with presbyopia. Bifocal and trifocal lenses have a very distinct defining line that separates the viewing type needed for clarity in vision. Progressive lenses, on the other hand, have no distinct defining line. For this reason, some individuals would rather wear bifocal or trifocal lenses as their choice. When I consider this, it brings to mind how some people desire everything God has spoken to them or everything they are going through to be distinctly clear at the onset. In reality, this is not how it's always done. If this is called a walk of faith, and it is, there will be times in our walk where we simply may not see clearly where it is God is taking or leading us to. There may be times wherein we can't make head or tails as to the why's behind what we may have to endure. Sometimes the lines must be blurred; our vision of where our trial or situation is leading us mustn't be viewed clearly by us. Our faith is what needs to be clear; our trust in knowing that our heavenly Father knows what He is doing and where He is taking us must be what we hold on to when we can't clearly see our way. The writer King Solomon told us in Proverbs 3:5-6 that we are to trust in the Lord and never lean to our own understanding; in all our ways and in all we set ourselves to do, we are to acknowledge God and he will lead us through the straight paths. Leaning to our own way leads us down the path of wanting to see clearly or wanting to understand in depth why such and such is happening or why we have to go such and such way. Our own way is not standing in the place of faith and trust in the Lord in those times where our way ahead seems dark; wherein we have no line of sight to see what's ahead. Remember what the apostle Paul told the saints at Corinth...

2 Corinthians 5:7 (KJV)

For we walk by faith, not by sight:

Walking by faith, not by sight means that, even though we may not see God working right now, we trust and believe that he is preparing us for blessings and relief from what we are facing somewhere down the road.

It means that we keep rejoicing and praising Him through the hard times, knowing that God is still in control. It means we live content in the moment where we cannot see the outcome of things all while knowing that through God we shall be brought out of the thing.

Now, we come to the view we must all strive to make our home, **Single** lenses. Single vision lenses are designed to help people who require correction of farsightedness, nearsightedness, or astigmatism. These lenses have just a single optical prescription correction and they distribute focus evenly over the entire surface area of the lens. Most people that wear glasses usually get this type. When I think of the vision given by the use of single vision, it brings to mind how we are to be single in our view of God. Regardless of what we encounter; what we endure, our view must always be fixed on God and a trust in Him. A good example of a man who never wavered in his vision; who always saw things single in perspective of God is Joseph. His story is a beautiful illustration of a man who believed that all he experienced was for God's purpose. We are introduced to Joseph in Genesis chapter 37.

Genesis 37:3-4 (KJV)

Now Israel (Jacob) loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceable unto him.

Wow! Right off the back, we see Joseph put into a situation beyond his control; one in which he did nothing except be born. It was his father's good pleasure to love Joseph above his brethren; it was it father's will to place such a status-quo upon Joseph in which he identified by the making of a coat that designated Joseph apart from his brethren. Here is a young lad around the age of 17 years old thrust into a situation that opened the door for him to experience an experience that could have altered who he would become as an adult.

Notice how the Bible tells us that it was the father's love for Joseph that led Joseph into such trying and hard or we could say life threatening situations. Because we have the end of the story right at the beginning, we know that all this was done because God has a purpose for Joseph's life. Like Joseph, unfortunately, we can't always see the plan of God wrapped up in our times of suffering and going through at the time we are going through. When we read of the life of Joseph, while we see all that he encountered stemmed from the ill-hands of his ill-gotten brothers, we also see that all he encountered stemmed from the love of a father toward a son. Our Father God never takes us through anything that He doesn't have a purpose and a plan for. Our Father God loves us and has marked us, like Jacob did in making a colorful coat for Joseph, to be set apart from the masses. We must seek to be as Joseph; we must believe that God is yet in the midst of it all in spite of how difficult the road may be. By right, Joseph could have retaliated against his brothers; he could have ordered harm to come to them in repayment for the harm they laid in his path. Because Joseph held on to the correct perception, he never faltered nor lost his way in his belief that God was with him all the way.

Genesis 45:5 (KJV)

Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

This verse truly reveals the power of perception in operation according to the plan of God in our life. See, perception is having the state of being or process of becoming aware of something through the senses. When we are viewing our life through the single vision of God being in every phase of our life (meaning our faith is unwavering), we will be blessed with the spirit to discern or to sense that what we are encountering is by God's design and not by the hands of man even if it is man with whom God uses to fulfill his planned purpose. In all you and I experience we mustn't lose a single view of God. We must seek to walk in right relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ for in doing so, He will guide our view and make our way clear. The apostle Paul writes about this very thing in 2 Corinthians. He says Jesus is what lifts the veil off of our faces to see God's glory more clearly.

CONCLUSION

In closing, let us bear in mind that in perception there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. If we perceive our life as being in the hand of a loving God, we will see our life as good rather than as bad. This view of our life will not stem from what we are encountering; that doesn't matter in the big scheme of things. This view of our life is the direct result of our faith and belief in God and in who we are to God and in who God is to us. We believe God is able to keep what we have committed unto Him; our life. We believe that we are the apple of God's eye; the beat of His heart. We know that God is our all in all and without God in our life, we are nothing. Our faith in God is not moved nor dictated by the events of our life; our faith in God abides in the faithfulness of God toward His children. My brother and my sister, let us walk this walk with God looking unto Him and Him only; never letting our vision get distorted or cloudy. Remember, we have power over our mind; we determine how we see or what lens we are looking through. Our view is never the result of our outer events; it's always the result of an inner truth or belief.

God's peace and blessing be upon you...

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