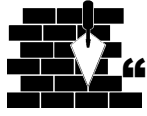


THE MAN BORN BLIND - “Seeing Clearly Takes More Than Eyes”



“Building Blocks”

1. **(Abiding Principle)** The two items mentioned in the final sentence of this Abiding Principle are *both* very important. We tend to talk and think of “seeing” *life* from God’s point of view, but often are very weak or negligent in thinking and talking about “seeing” *people* from God’s point of view. Consequently, “Christianity” degenerates into a religion of ideas and information under the umbrella of “worldview,” rather than unfolding as a faith characterized by mercy, compassion and justice.
2. **(Q4)** The two Greek verbs in verse 17 are significant. “Passed away” is a word that can refer to something “passing by,” or “perishing.” And Paul speaks of this action happening with certainty and finality; It *has happened*, period! The phrase “*behold all things have become new*” must be understood in contrast to the “old things.” The Greek word for “old” is *archaios*, which means “ancient,” not merely “old.” Paul here is *not* speaking of the believer going from “old” to “new.” He is referring to the believer’s *perspective* on Jesus. The same thing he was talking about in verse 16. The ancient perspective on Messiah (i.e. Christ) has changed for Paul and it needs to change for everyone else too. Also, the Greek verb Paul uses for “has come” is in the Perfect tense, meaning it has come to stay, permanently.
3. **(Q5 - Phil 1)** It is very important to see that the key thing that drives Paul’s decision-making processes now is the spiritual needs of others. He is willing to lay aside his own longings and personal comforts for the sake of their spiritual growth. Paul believes he lives for *them*, not for himself.
4. **(Q6a & b)** Have individual class members share their responses to this question. (there is not enough space in the book for an adequate answer to the first part.)
5. **(Q6a)** Probably the biggest thing here is that everything and everyone is seen in their relatedness to Messiah and the Gospel. This applies to unbelievers *and* believers. For unbelievers, it’s becoming part of the Kingdom and the process of sanctification. For believers, it’s assisting them in their own transformation. Christ and salvation (all of it) were the two driving and defining forces in Paul’s life and ministry.
6. **(Q10)** It is important to fully understand the completeness of this passage. God says that *by nature* we are thinking and living in a direction different from His own. But, he goes on to say that *His* “ways” and “thoughts” (i.e. perspective) are simply forever *out of reach* for us.
7. **(Q13)** The point here is that I possess the Spirit of God; the one who searches the mind of God. I also possess the Word of God in the form of the Scriptures. These two are indispensable components in the transformation of *my perspective*, (which is the subject of this particular chapter).



“Stumbling Stones”

1. **(Q3)** Sometimes we assume that the coldness of someone’s heart is merely the result of their own stubbornness. This verse tells us that there is more going on here than just a matter of someone’s will. Spiritual truth is made comprehensible by the Spirit of Truth. Unbelievers do not possess the Spirit, so the very Truth we are desperately trying to help them see seems like foolishness to them. Sharing *more of it* may not be a wise idea. In fact, in some cases, it might drive them further from it!
2. **(Q4)** We need to be careful that we don’t miss Paul’s real point in this passage. He is saying that since his own conversion he not only has a permanently altered perspective on Jesus, but this perspective on *Jesus* has changed the way he sees all people now. He cannot separate his view

of people in general with his new view of Messiah in particular. Paul now “sees” people as either “in Christ” or *not* “in Christ.” And, moving those *outside* Christ to being “in Christ” is his one holy passion of ministry.

3. **(Q5 - 1 Cor 9)** Paul was willing to compromise on *how* he lived out some of his convictions. This must not be misunderstood to be hypocrisy. Paul was always forthright about what truly mattered to him. “...I do it all for the sake of the Gospel...” (9:23). This is *not* accommodation to culture simply to “fit in.” Paul is merely adjusting his behavior to “get in” to culture with the goal of getting some people “out” of culture and “into” Christ.
4. **(Q11)** We need to exercise great care here. “Walking in wisdom” is *not* simply a Christian version of “common sense,” or “the school of hard knocks.” If it is true that God’s perspective on life is out of reach, we can only *stumble* onto it by accident apart from His revelation. Also, God’s “ways” do not always make “sense”! Following a “common sense” approach to life will often simply mean being moral and “good” but still world’s apart from the ways and thoughts of God.
5. **(Q12)** Although it is truth that the Holy Spirit illumines our minds to comprehend Scripture as individuals (cf. Jn 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 Jn 2:20, 27), that is *not* the point of this passage. The “we” statements in vv. 12-13 are references to Paul and the other apostles. This is a strong warning for us living in America who have exalted our private “right” to interpret the Bible for ourselves, often disregarding centuries of Christian teaching and interpretation on a passage.



“Going Deeper”

1. **(Q5 - 1 Cor 9)** Which of your own convictions are actually *preventing* you from taking the Gospel to those around you?
2. **(Q5 - 2 Cor 12)** How much is “weakness” a valued commodity in the American Church? How much do you truly value weakness in your own life?
What do you think it means to “make this one’s own”?
3. **(Q7)** How did you answer this question?
4. **(Q13a)** Do you think it is possible to truly be transformed apart from exposure to God’s Word? Explain.
5. **(Q14)** Have class members share their eulogy. (Use the project on the next page as an optional assignment, if you want.)

EULOGY

The purpose of this assignment is to force you to project yourself to the end of your life at a time when you tend to see yourself near the “beginning” of your life. A eulogy is the memorial message that is given or read at the funeral of the deceased person. It is normally read by someone who knew the deceased person well; often a surviving child or other family member.

Imagine that you live to the age of eighty and die on your birthday. Also imagine that you are able to become the person you dream of becoming and accomplish with your life all that really matters to you. This eulogy should be a summary of that life. Imagine that you are sitting in the back of the church while it is being read. What would you want to hear said about you that would represent who you were and what you did with your life. It might include family information, ministry accomplishments, vocational success, whatever you want to be remembered for.

EPITAPH

An epitaph is the short statement on a tombstone that seeks to summarize the deceased person’s life in a sentence. A casual observer should be able to discern something significant about you from the epitaph. Please use the drawing below for your epitaph and attach a separate sheet with your eulogy. Someone once said, *“You’re not ready to live your life until you know what you want written on your tombstone.”* This assignment is designed to move you closer in the direction of being ready to “live.”