

## Sight

Joe Slater

A couple of decades ago I awakened from a catnap one evening to find that I couldn't see out of my right eye. It's hard to describe, but I saw blood and what seemed to be the inside of my eyeball! I foolishly did nothing, thinking, "It will be better in the morning." It wasn't.

I had Marietta call our eye doctor, who told me to come in immediately. By the time I got there, things had cleared up for the most part. The doctor couldn't tell what was wrong but made an immediate appointment for me with a retina specialist. The specialist dilated my eye and then took about five seconds to say, "I see, and I know what happened." A tiny piece of plaque or blood clot had lodged in a blood vessel in my retina, knocking out my vision. It either dissolved or pushed on through. About 95% of my vision returned, though I have a shadow in front of my field of vision in that eye; it's especially evident at night but doesn't really affect me. The specialist shook his finger in my face and said rather sternly, "I want you to take a full aspirin – not a baby aspirin but a full aspirin – every day for the rest of your life!" I replied, "Yes, sir!"

I suppose I've always valued my sight, but I'm more keenly aware of it now. Of surpassing importance, though, is seeing (comprehending, accepting) the truth. The Pharisees were blind; worse yet, they were leading others who were also blind (Matthew 15:14). They thought their spiritual vision was 20:20, but they stubbornly refused to see the truth of Christ and His word. They would not obey the orders of the great physician who came to give them sight.

How's your spiritual vision? Do you comprehend and accept the truth of God's word?

## Fruit Inspectors

**"You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes* nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit"** (Matthew 7:16, 17).

"Don't judge me" seems to be a common mantra today. One cannot even offer constructive criticism without being blasted with this diatribe. We can be sure there has been plenty of unfair judgment of people, and judgment made in anger, malice, and hypocrisy. "How dare you pass judgment of me, you hypocrite!" This is pretty much what Paul said to the Jews in Rome who were judging Gentiles. *"Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things"* (Romans 2:1).

Did not Jesus tell us to judge righteously? *"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment"* (John 7:24). Our hearts must be right, and our actions true.

Jesus said that we are not to cast our pearls before swine or to give what is holy to the dogs (Matthew 7:6). Then, later in the chapter he warned of false prophets and said, *"By their fruits you shall know them."* How is this possible without some form of judgment? When we go shopping for fruit, we become fruit inspectors. We want to select the best and refuse the bad. We cannot know the bad from the good unless we have a standard, and that standard is the word of God. With it we can discern what is good or evil (Hebrews 5:14).

We are responsible to warn others of the dangers of unforgiven sin. But we must speak the words in love, says Paul.

Be good fruit inspectors.

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)

## THE UNSEEN HAND

**"I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well."** - Psalm 139:14

As we navigate each day, we often overlook the subtle yet profound changes within us. Consider the precision with which our Creator has designed our daily physiological transformations:

- ✓ Hair grows about 0.017 inches daily—a testament to life's constant renewal.
- ✓ Nails lengthen by approximately 0.1 mm, subtly underscoring the ongoing support structures of life.
- ✓ Millions of skin cells renew, regularly refreshing our appearance and protective barriers.
- ✓ Bones continually remodel themselves, adapting to the stresses we face.
- ✓ Our brains adjust through neuroplasticity, enhancing our capacity to think and learn.

These scientifically measurable changes, mostly beyond our conscious control, invite deep reflection on our self-awareness and reliance on a higher power:

How can I know myself when I change daily without realizing it?

How do I recognize the Creator's hand in the automatic processes of my body?

How can I strive to be good without divine guidance directing these unconscious processes that sustain my life?

Recognizing our dependence on Christ, through whom all things were made, is not a sign of weakness but a recognition of the intricate design and purpose He has instilled within us. It humbles us to accept that to understand and grow genuinely, we need to connect with the One who knows us thoroughly.

--Robert Kargbo (Middleton, WI)