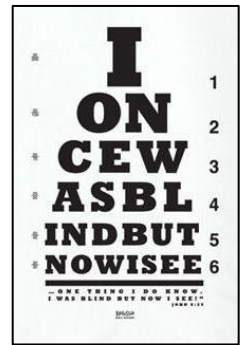




Spiritual Blindness

Everybody's Got it!



Eye Exam #10

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not careless about His promises; [He promised that He would provide deliverance from the penalty of sin]. He is patiently trying to keep His promise to all of us; He is not delayed; He is not late; He is patiently waiting for each of us to stop in our tracks, turn from our own efforts, and accept God as the answer.

SAME OLD SAME OLD

From age 5-11, I had a hunger for religious things; I am not sure that I was looking for God then. I went to church alone; I read the Bible I was given; I memorized Bible verses; I tried really hard to be good; I took stuff back that I had stolen from others; I begged God at night to forgive me for lying; sometimes, I didn't eat dessert (my choice) because I was guilty; sometimes, I sat by my Dad for no reason in the living room because I felt mad at him but knew it was wrong; I washed the car for no reason; I volunteered to mow the lawn (I did a good job). I had anger & guilt but I did not know the answer. I kept trying and trying.

1. Climb into this kid's head. What was he trying to do? _____
2. How do you know whether something will work or not work in your life? How do you decide whether it's good or bad? _____
3. Choose the correct definitions for the word **"try"**?

<input type="checkbox"/> An attempt at something	<input type="checkbox"/> It runs in the family	<input type="checkbox"/> A trial run
<input type="checkbox"/> An act of desperation	<input type="checkbox"/> I don't care	<input type="checkbox"/> It remains to be seen
<input type="checkbox"/> I saw him do it.	<input type="checkbox"/> Everybody's doing it.	<input type="checkbox"/> I'll just follow.
<input type="checkbox"/> Right/wrong doesn't matter	<input type="checkbox"/> That's the way it's done	<input type="checkbox"/> "Whatever"
4. Y N Kids just follow **the family way**, at least for a while.
5. Y N People will walk **the path of least resistance** most of the time.
6. Y N Couldn't this be "a spiritual blindness"?
7. Y N Don't we need some light to see the correct path?

SOMETHING HAPPENED

When I was 11 years old, I saw an ad that the Billy Graham was coming to town. It seemed a little scary but I thought he might have something to say that would interrupt my wandering life. I was so desperate that I convinced a friend to go with me plus I got his father to drive us. All I remember are the words, "You were born a sinner; that sin had to be paid for; you can't pay it but Jesus has." Before that moment I was religious but was also "spiritually blind". I could not see clearly anything that God wanted for me. God shined a little light my way; no, I saw no lights flashing. I went down to the field & prayed "Lord, You are my Savior; You are my answer; come in and run my life." I got "spiritual sight" that night; I became a Christian.

"Spiritual blindness" = I cannot find the path; it's too dark; I am wandering out in the world's boonies.

"The path" = God's way (path) had been provided. The problem is not the path; we just can't see it.

"The Light" = God steps in front of me with some light & then waits for me to choose; I said "yes".

"The Rest of the Story" = I can see the path; God is up ahead; today, God starts fine-tuning my life.

SOMETHING HAPPENED TO SAUL TOO

- ** He knew a lot of the Holy Scriptures (Old Testament) by memory & he often read & studied it).
- ** He went at least weekly to the local synagogue for worship & to be reminded of his Jewish faith.
- ** He probably travelled to Jerusalem three times a year for the religious feasts & ceremonies.
- ** He attended one of the finest Jewish seminaries in the then known world in Jerusalem.
- ** From ages 17-30, he continued to study the Scriptures, the Jewish ways plus started a secular career.
- ** He probably became a "Pharisee" = a person who aggressively protected the existing Jewish religious system.
- ** When Saul was ages 23-26 years in Jerusalem, Jesus was ministering all over, including Jerusalem.
- ** When Jesus died on the cross in Jerusalem, Saul was probably living there at age 26.
- ** Saul saw firsthand the religious turmoil in Israel when Jesus appeared on the scene.
- ** What were the Jewish leaders & Pharisees fighting for? To run the Jewish religious system NOT ACCORDING TO THE WRITTEN SCRIPTURES BUT AFTER THE "ORAL OPINIONS FROM THE LEADERS."

1. What would Saul have been thinking during this period of time, especially if he had heard Jesus in person? He was starting to question his personal faith?
 He was getting harder & more angry in defense of his personal faith?
 Other thoughts: _____

Acts 8:1	Saul was consenting to the execution of Stephen.
Acts 8:2	Great persecution arose the church (believers) in Jerusalem and just about all over.
Acts 8:3	Saul tortured the believers, arrested them, and dragged them to prison.
Acts 8:4	Believers were preaching everywhere.
Acts 9:1-2	Saul was still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, and began a trip to Syria to hunt down believers & drag them back to Jerusalem.

2. What kind of attitude did Saul have during this violent period of time?

3. Why do you think that Saul was acting this way? Choose a few.
 He hated believers. He was afraid he was losing the battle.
 He wanted to gain brownie points with the Jewish leaders with his success.

Acts 9:3	As Saul journeyed to Syria, a light shined around him from heaven.
Acts 9:4	Saul fell to the ground, and heard a voice, "Saul, Saul, why are you fighting against Me"?
Acts 9:5	Saul said, "Who are You, Lord?"
Acts 9:6	So while astonished & trembling, Saul said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?"
Acts 9:8	When Saul arose from the ground, he opened his eyes but saw nothing (blind).

4. Right in the middle of Saul doing bad stuff, what happened?

5. What happened first? He heard a voice He saw a light
6. Obviously, this scene is more dramatic than how most people find the Lord, but what did the bright light accomplish? _____
7. What did the voice accomplish? _____
8. Y N Did Saul know before this episode that he was spiritually blind & fighting against God.
9. Y N Isn't it true that Saul was fighting against the same God as the one he learned about in seminary, but he didn't know it?
10. Y N When Saul "opened his eyes and saw nothing" (physical blindness), isn't that an amazing picture of "spiritual blindness"?
11. What did Saul call God two times during this scene on the road? _____

PAUL JOURNEY FROM "SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS" TO "SPIRITUAL SIGHT"

Spiritual Blindness - We are lost - An unbeliever

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God shines the Light - We need to make a decision - God found us

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Spiritual Sight - We say "yes" to the Light - A believer now

Acts 9:11	God told Ananias, "Ariseinquire at the home of Judas for Saul of Tarsus; behold, he is praying."
Acts 9:12	Saul is expecting you; he wants to receive his sight.
Acts 9:15	The Lord said to Ananias, "Saul is a chosen vessel of mine; I have a purpose for him; go to him."
Acts 9:17	Ananias said, "Brother Saul, Jesus has sent me to that you may receive your sight & be filled with the Holy Spirit."

1. Y N Saul became a believer that day.
2. Y N Have you had your "day"? Are you a Christian today for sure?

So far in our studies, the subject of "spiritual blindness" seems to be either total blindness or partial blindness. It appears that a person starts out (at birth) totally spiritually blind (an unbeliever). After the unbeliever becomes a believer (accepts Christ as Personal Savior), that total blindness will change to either average spiritual eyesight or eyesight requiring corrective lenses.

3. Y N Do believers with "average spiritual eyesight" live a perfect life?
4. Y N Are believers who need "corrective lenses" not as valuable to God?
5. Y N Does any believer have perfect spiritual vision (perfect connection with God)?
6. Y N Isn't it possible that all believers need "corrective lenses" sometimes?

Romans 7:18-20 And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.^[a] I want to do what is right, but I can't. ¹⁹ I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. ²⁰ But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. [Paul was a believer.]

Galatians 5:19-20 The works (behaviors) of the flesh (my old nature) are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, Sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, etc.

Ephesians 4:22-32 22 Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

When we become a Christian, the old nature (the spiritually blind person) is forgiven, and is given the daily power (light) to work toward pleasing God. The devil will try to bring us down; the Holy Spirit will guide and empower us each day (each step).

7. What are your thoughts? _____

