

Spiritual Insight

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Proverbs 9:6 Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of insight.”

I want to talk about insight today. The Bible makes references to insight, as well as wisdom and understanding, which are the results of insight. Insight is the capacity to gain an accurate and deep intuitive understanding of a person, thing, or situation. It is our ability to intuitively comprehend the inner nature of things; the reason behind the reason, the meaning beyond the obvious.

Most of us utilize ‘outsight’ to live our lives. There’s no such word as ‘outsight’, but if there is an insight, why not an ‘outsight’? We use our eyes to look ‘out there’ to determine the meaning of what is going on in the world around us. We watch and listen to others and use that information for the ways in which to live our lives.

But as the Bible says in Ezekiel 12:2, My people “have eyes to see but do not see, and ears to hear but do not hear”. We’ve heard that old adage, “We can’t see the forest for the trees.” We look, but do not understand or comprehend what it is we are seeing.

Insight is that “ah-ha,” experience when the true meaning flashes upon our minds. When we achieve an insight, we are seeing into the truth of the matter, person, or situation; we are not just seeing part of what is there, but we see it all and how it all fits.

The Bible uses the word, “Behold” in order to describe an intense inner seeing and understanding that transcends the mere physical process of light entering our eyeballs. This is a new kind of seeing, it is the second sight as it has been called, the proof of the truth.

Although ‘second-sight’ is shrouded in mystery and mysticism, it is really just an intuitive gathering of the information that we have before us; it is our rational thinking with some whispering from Spirit to get our own perceptions and judgments out of the way.

In Mark 8:22-26 we read of the miracle where Christ heals a blind man and asks him, “Do you see anything?” The man responds, “I see men as trees walking.” The Greek word for that ‘outsight’, as I put it, the way we all normally see, is *blepo*, which means “I see.”

Jesus touched his eyes again and he could see clearly. The Greek verb used to describe this second type of seeing is *ene-blepen*, which translates to he ‘in-saw’. The blind man now not only had sight, but he had insight. Seeing without insight is to see without understanding or discernment. That is how most of us see things when we feel fear and stress as we look at today’s social, political, financial, and global situations, as well as our own personal challenges. We are using ‘outsight’, not insight.

It is our thoughts, our perceptions, our ‘outsight’, that creates our stress, and not actually what is happening out there. Sometimes reducing stress is as simple as changing our focus from what is not working to what is working; from what we have struggles with to what is going easily in our lives.

As Mary and I were watching the Olympics, a couple of the commentators said that the advice they would give to this one skater who had difficulties in a program would be to forget that program and not dwell on it at all. Just look forward with confidence to the next opportunity.

We create our reality with our thoughts, so when we consistently brood over challenges and negative occurrences, we can be sure that more are coming. When we focus on joy, peace, and love – that is what shows up for us. Thoughts create feelings, and we are more than our thoughts. We create our own reality with divine natures of our minds, consciousness, thoughts, and feelings; each is actively involved with every insight we are gifted with.

One reason that it is difficult to release negative thoughts, is that we believe them. If we believe we are unsuccessful, we will live up to that thought-feeling. On the other hand, when something can be shown to us that it is false, we release that belief. So when we can shift our thought-feelings from something that we hold as ‘true’ to seeing it as false, that is a moment of insight.

Psychologist Andrew Bernstein’s book, *The Myth of Stress*, shares a simple, yet difficult exercise, that can help us release the stress around our beliefs. It is difficult because we don’t like to let go of our sacred, comfortable, familiar prejudices and gripes.

He calls it Activinsight. There are various steps involved but this is the short version. Take whatever thought you have that is driving you nuts and causing stress, such as “People shouldn’t cut you off on the freeway;” something that gets your blood boiling.

Then the process begins by adding this to the front of our statement: “In reality.” Then to the end, add the words, “at this time,”. Then make the statement negative. “Should not” becomes ‘should’; “should “becomes “should not”. In my example, my statement of “People shouldn’t cut you off on the freeway,” becomes, “In reality, people should cut you off on the freeway at this time.”

Now that sound ridiculous, and it should because the whole purpose of Activinsight is to unsettle the foundations of our belief and force us to see it from a new perspective. When someone slaps you on the left cheek, turn your right cheek to him. Yes, we are talking about a change of perspective. As our perspective shifts, the stress that accompanies that perspective is lessened, because it is our perspective that causes our stress.

But now comes the hard part – we need to justify that statement and find proof. Crazy, right? But then we need to consider this: did that thoughtlessness just materialize today when they cut us off, or did it develop over time? We would have to concede that it is probably something that has grown over the years, perhaps even from childhood.

So that is part of why in reality that they should cut us off on the freeway, because that is what they have learned from childhood and has been reinforced over time.

Emphasis is placed on the words, “at this time.” We are not proving it is acceptable behavior or something that should be go on

forever. We are just arguing that ‘at this time’ because of various reasons, ‘they should cut us off on the freeway.’

Then we come up with as many justifications as we can, such as: They were taught this behavior subconsciously by their parents. They probably saw this behavior modeled. They were taught that “time was money”, and that time was valuable, so they needed to get there before you did. In reality, people should cut us off on the freeway because society emphasizes the importance of being first, being an aggressive achiever, and making your way in life.

We think about as many reasons as we can why the negative of our original statement is true. Somewhere along this process we gain an insight; a realization occurs. We begin to understand why some people in reality, should cut us off on the freeway at this time: this is where they are in their understanding of themselves and their consciousness. This is as far as their awareness of who they truly are can take them.

Perhaps we cannot make any changes to the situation, but we can at least gain an insight into their motivation. We can also make a commitment to make other choices in our own lives: to demonstrate consideration and compassion to others, and to teach our children to be considerate. Our life strategies and actions from this point forward are a result of understanding and love, not anger; from insight, not fear or revenge.

Philippians 1:9 teaches: “This is my prayer, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight.”

Today's Bible verse teaches us that when we leave our simple ways, we will live; we are to walk in the way of insight. Our simple ways are the ways that seem natural; they are our human ways without the aid of our spiritual natures. Our simple way is to use 'outsight', and judge things without love, compassion, or insight.

When we walk with insight, we see things clearly. We see things within a context that is greater than our limited human vision. Through 'in-seeing' we understand that people are not doing things 'to us', they are doing things for themselves. Through insight, we see that 'in reality' people are doing the best they can with the tools, knowledge, and awareness that they have at this time. We do not have to be stressed or fearful and can make other choices. With insight we are capable of becoming more aware and more educated than what we see 'out there'. We can choose love and compassion over hatred and bigotry; harmony and inclusiveness over divisiveness and chaos. As we walk in the way of insight we can build bridges that connect people, ideas, and circumstances instead of constructing barriers.

It is my prayer that we take the time to move inward to the power, peace, joy, and love of God. It is there that we can recognize the ideas and perspectives we cling to that cause us fear and stress. I pray that we will release those beliefs as love proves them false and become aware that nothing in this world can separate us from the peace and joy that is ours. I pray that with the help of God, we rise above all earthly disturbances and move forward in the love of Christ, protected and powerful.

Let us pray....