

# Clarity of Vision

10/15/17

1 Corinthians 13:12 (NLT) Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.

I remember as a child that Dad would say a phrase that I thought was funny as a kid: “I see,” said the blind man as he ran into a wall.

Clarity often comes from experience; we discover the proper way through doing it wrong. Yet there are times when this is the only way to learn. We can read, we can watch, we can listen, but until we ‘do’ we don’t really understand...there is no clarity.

There is a saying that has been attributed to Confucius, or Sir Richard Burton, or maybe a Chinese Proverb, or a Persian proverb...obviously we don’t know where it came from, but it goes like this: He who knows not and knows not he knows not: he is a fool - shun him. He who knows not and knows he knows not: he is simple - teach him. He who knows and knows not he knows: he is asleep - wake him. He who knows and knows he knows: he is wise - follow him.

Clarity has many definitions, and I want to look at clarity today from the narrow perspective of knowing that we know; the doubt and confusion are gone. We are doing what we know to be right.

Buddha said, and it may not have been Buddha... “He who knows but does not do, does not know.” In other words, there is no clarity.

Similarly, James 4:17 tells us: Anyone who knows the right thing to do, but does not do it, is sinning.

In short, there is no clarity. It doesn't matter if we are a fool, or are simple, or are asleep...where there is no clarity, there is no wisdom.

Sinning is erred thinking, it is not being Holy. Holiness is expressing the dynamic fullness of goodness, beauty, peace, justice, joy, and love in our lives. It is not just reading about those qualities or praying about those qualities or meditating on those qualities or affirming those qualities. Reading, praying, meditating, and affirming help prepare us to express those qualities in our life – those activities help us to “do holy”, to be holy – to do what we know is right, to act from and express clarity. Sinning then, is acting and thinking in a way that reflects spiritual obscurity.

To be holy, to act holy, is our calling from God, which to my mind means that we are being called to clarity; we are being called to see clearly, to have a clear vision of what we know is right to do, and then do it.

When we open our eyes to the guidance of the inner Christ we see clearly. Even though this is available at any moment, we tend to muddy our vision with fear and doubt and egoistic tendencies. Our Bible verse tells us that now we see things imperfectly, but when we allow Spirit to guide us, we see things clearly.

Proverbs 2:3-6 gives us a clue to developing clarity: <sup>3</sup> *indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding,* <sup>4</sup> *and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure,* <sup>5</sup> *then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.* <sup>6</sup> *For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.*

When we ask for God's clarity and wisdom and get out of our own way, the path becomes clear, self-evident, and the skies open. Our vision of the world, and of the dreams God has placed in our hearts, is distinct.

There was a miracle that Christ performed in Mark 8:22-26. We are told that some people brought a blind man to Jesus. Jesus spit on the man's eyes and laid his hands on him and asked, "Do you see anything?" The man said that he could see men, but they look like trees walking.

Christ was trying to make a point for us. We can have eyes but still not see. Without the Christ vision and love expressing through us, we know some stuff, but there is no clarity; there is no action based upon our holiness. Cloudy spiritual vision affects all of us to some degree. Many of us still see through a glass darkly and blink

through a fog. Then the Christ laid his hands on the man's eyes a second time, and total clarity was restored.

We are engaged in a journey of spiritual growth, transformation, and evolution. With the help of God we are transcending who we were while including all that we were. There will be times in our evolution where the 'old us' peeks out and makes its presence felt. It is not that we have regressed to what we were.

No, it is that we are developing clarity through our challenges. The 'old us' teaches us what does not work, what is counter-productive, and we learn from it. Sometimes we need refreshers to help reestablish ourselves along our way.

We are being called to holiness and clarity, and although we can fight it and cling to our grease-smudged dark glasses – we are making progress.

Psalm 119:18 says: *Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions.* Quite a simple but profound prayer. There will be times of absolute brilliance and clarity along our spiritual journey, when we see exactly as God wants us to see. We will have removed the plank from our eye and are able to help our neighbor with the speck in their eye.

And at other times we will see 'trees walking'; unclear visions of mists and white-outs.

I believe our calling from God is towards clarity, and I also believe God's Will for us is clarity – to do what we know is right. In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, we are told this: *Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

The Will of God for us is to rejoice always – to be filled with God's joy, which is part of being holy. Then, we are to pray continually. This is how we stay consciously connected with God, which is the only way that we can see things clearly. And finally, we are told to give thanks in all circumstances.

All three of these activities, to rejoice, to pray, and to give thanks are to be done at all times, under all circumstances, always, and continually. I cannot help but believe that these activities are a reflection of God's clarity within our hearts and minds, and I must conclude that, as mysterious as God's Will is for us, part of it is for clarity. God's calling for us, as well as God's Will for us is to think and know and do what is right.

As we seek greater clarity in our lives, and try to express the Christ more and more greatly, a couple of common questions that will always arise are, "What is God's plan for me? How do I make critical decisions in my life?"

It is fairly simple to understand that our calling from God is clarity, and His Will for us is more of the same, so how do we apply this to know what to do next?

This is less obvious, as it is different for each of us. God will use us, guide us, and teach us individually. The decisions or solutions we are considering will strike us as consistent with doing what is right; they will attune to our uniquely individual spiritual gifts, our heart, our abilities, our personality, and our experiences. This will usually occur as a feeling; over-thinking can lead to dismissing a challenge because we consider ourselves unqualified.

“God, I don’t have the ability to do this.” “Patrick, you can’t see that ability in yourself yet, but it is there. That is why I am presenting this to you, so that you can see more clearly.”

“God, I am not outgoing enough to do what You are asking.”  
“Patrick, I am not looking for someone outgoing or restrained; I am looking for you and your unique gifts.”

Our fears, doubts, and thoughts of lack can keep us spiritually ‘asleep’; they can stymie our clarity on an issue and prevent us from serving God effectively. We are much more capable than we give ourselves credit for; we just get in our own way.

Just as we allow clutter to accumulate in a drawer or closet, sometimes we allow old feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes to clutter up our hearts and minds. Some of them may still be useful, but some of them are long past their expiration date. Christ guides us in releasing the old so that we can receive the new. Christ is simply trying to surgically remove the cataracts of fear and doubt from the lenses of our heart’s eyes.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God,” says Psalm 51:10, “and renew and right spirit within me.” Help me release my old thoughts of lack, unworthiness, fear, and disease, my God, and fill me again with the clarity of joy, peace, love, and abundance.

When we clean a window, or a mirror, or our glasses, we are amazed at how clearly we can see and a sense of relief and contentment fills us.

As a child, when we heard something go bump in the night we were afraid. Then someone turned on the light, and we saw there was nothing to fear. As adults, we may have situations that bring up fear. But just as when we were children, most of our fears are imaginary and never come to pass.

Bringing light to a situation always brings more clarity for me, especially as my eyes age. I need more light to read, to see, to distinguish details. I always have a flashlight close by at home.

2 Samuel 22:29 teaches: *O LORD, you are my lamp. The LORD lights up my darkness.* When we are experiencing anxiety or fear, we can invite the light of God within us to fill our mind and permeate our surroundings. As we allow this light to shine through our sparkling clean window it chases away the darkness, erasing fearful images as it illuminates every situation; we are at peace.

In the light of God, we are protected from impulsively reacting to false perceptions based on fear. We remember there is nothing but love here. When God is our vision, when we allow Spirit to

illuminate our way, we have a clear vision of what is true; then we are poised and calm.

My prayer is that we allow the Christ to clear away the fog of negativity, uncertainty, and self-doubt from our perspective and awareness so that we can know God's clarity and peace in every situation. I pray that daily we relax into the presence of God in prayer, releasing fears and doubts, so that we make decisions more easily and confidently. I pray that we maintain a clear vision and allow God's good plans to unfold for us.

Let us pray....