



HOW CAN WE HAVE A HEALTHY VIEW OF DISABILITY?

The Sign of His Light

The
POINT >

Only through Jesus can we truly see.

› JOHN 9:1-11,30-33

¹As he was passing by, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

³"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," Jesus answered. "This came about so that God's works might be displayed in him. ⁴We must do the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

⁶After he said these things he spit on the ground, made some mud from the saliva, and spread the mud on his eyes. ⁷"Go," he told him, "wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means "Sent"). So he left, washed, and came back seeing.

⁸His neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar said, "Isn't this the one who used to sit begging?"

⁹Some said, "He's the one." Others were saying, "No, but he looks like him." He kept saying, "I'm the one."

¹⁰So they asked him, "Then how were your eyes opened?"

¹¹He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So when I went and washed I received my sight."

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³⁰"This is an amazing thing!" the man told them. "You don't know where he is from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does his will, he listens to him.

³²Throughout history no one has ever heard of someone opening the eyes of a person born blind. ³³If this man were not from God, he wouldn't be able to do anything."



FOR LEADERS

(15 minutes)

THE POINT // ONLY THROUGH JESUS CAN WE TRULY SEE.

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // GOD

God is loving and righteous, grieves the impact of sin on the world, and will one day make right all that sin has damaged.

Message to Leaders

God created people to experience His blessings and to experience a relationship with Him. Sin not only separates us from God but has also brought great brokenness into the lives of all people. Jesus restored the blind man's sight not only physically but also spiritually, and one day Jesus will restore all brokenness caused by sin's curse.

› Engage Option 1

Create a winding path on the floor from the back to the front of the room using tape. Direct three students to walk along the path, but they can only move when the lights are off. Turn the lights on for brief periods to allow them to see. If students are off the path when the lights are on, they have to return to the beginning. The student who gets to the end of the path first wins. Say, **"We are blinded by darkness when we walk on our own, but Jesus opens our eyes so we can see."**

› Engage Option 2

Place objects throughout the room that help with sight (glasses, binoculars, telescope, microscope, etc.). Say, **"The light of Jesus allows us to see God in the flesh as He reveals God's character to us."**

› Engage Option 3

Search the internet for "Fix Your Eyes on Jesus - Village Church." Play the video as you begin the session. Say, **"We may try to be a good person and stop sinning, but to know God we must fix our eyes on Jesus and place our faith in Him."**

LEADER PACK ELEMENTS

If you have the optional Leader Pack, consider the following:

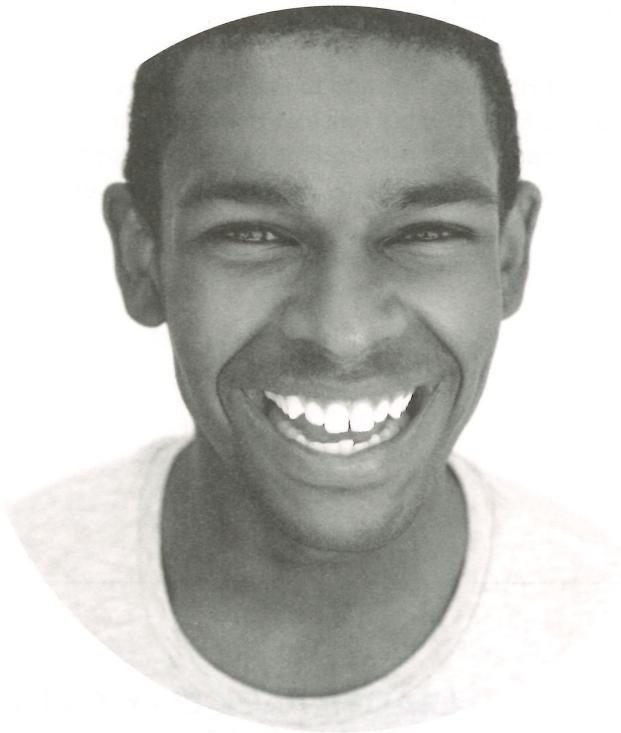
ITEM 6: Engage students in the session and introduce the main idea by displaying the **Charles Spurgeon Quote Poster**.

NOTE: Always make sure you preview any video clip you show students and ensure it is appropriate for your church and ministry.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

THE POINT // ONLY THROUGH JESUS CAN WE TRULY SEE.



THE SETTING

John 9 recounts the story of Jesus healing a man who had been blind from birth. After Jesus healed the blind man, the religious leaders tried to use the situation to build their case against Jesus. Jesus often performed miracles of restoring sight to the blind, and one of the reasons was to identify Himself with the prophecies about the Messiah (see Isaiah 29:18 and 35:5). Giving physical sight was a metaphor for the spiritual work Jesus would do in the lives of the people He encountered. Ultimately, Jesus desires to open the eyes of the spiritually blind to see the truth about God.

FACT:

Research shows that people who are blind experience vivid dreams. However, those who are blind, particularly those born blind, have dreams filled with sounds, smells, and tastes instead of sights.¹

Claude Monet was a French painter known for a style called impressionism. You may have seen some of his famous works, such as "Water Lilies" and "Houses of Parliament." In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Monet had a powerful influence on art, but what many people don't know is that Monet had a visual impairment that would eventually lead to blindness. We don't know the exact circumstances of his condition, but we do know that he didn't let it stop him. In fact, Monet continued to paint some of his most acclaimed works after losing his vision.

We generally see disabilities as limitations that keep us from experiencing life in the ways we want. However, there are some who choose to see disabilities as a way of gaining a unique view of the world that can even provide benefits.

In today's passage, we see a blind man who struggled not only with his disability, but with the way society viewed him. Jesus used this man's disability to point to an even more serious condition, the spiritual blindness of first-century society. The worst kind of blindness isn't physical but when people are unable to see the truth about Jesus.

IMPART (30 minutes)

THE POINT // ONLY THROUGH JESUS CAN WE TRULY SEE.

JOHN 9:1-5

As he was passing by, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” Jesus answered. “This came about so that God’s works might be displayed in him. We must do the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” JOHN 9:1-5

In the first century, social services did not exist yet to provide assistance to people with disabilities. The man in this story wasn't able to work because of his blindness, so he was forced to beg.

The disciples asked Jesus: “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (John 9:2). In other words, “Who's to blame for this man's disability?” From a first-century mindset, the Jewish people believed that any kind of disability was punishment for sin. Perhaps they were thinking of Scriptures that referenced how the curse of sin would be passed down to the next generation (Ex. 20:5; Deut. 28:15). Jesus made it clear, however, that this view wasn't true.

Today, many people still struggle with why God would allow some people to be born with physical issues. Here's the reality: because of sin's curse on creation, this world is broken and not what God intended according to His original design. Therefore, all people experience brokenness in different ways. Tragically, for some, the kinds of brokenness they experience cause desperate struggles. We need to understand that whenever people struggle, it grieves the heart of God.

Jesus immediately corrected the disciples' view about the blind man. His disability wasn't a result of sin but for the glory of God all along. This teaching can be hard to understand or accept, but it's essential in understanding the true nature of Jesus Christ and how His work points to who He is. The man's blindness caused real suffering, but the deeper blindness was the people's inability to see the truth about God.

Jesus told the disciples that as long as He remained in the world, “I am the light of the world” (v. 5). In John 8, as Jesus interacted with the Pharisees, they questioned His authority and divinity. They were blind to the truth about Jesus. In John 9, Jesus engaged with the disciples in a way that would help them to see the urgency for His light to shine in the world. The days were coming soon when Jesus would no longer remain in the world, and the disciples would then be responsible to reflect His light.

Today, our work as Jesus's followers is to reflect the light of Christ into the dark world. One way we do this is through showing compassion to our neighbors who experience deep suffering. A lesson we can learn from Jesus in this passage is when we see people with disabilities, we should be moved to compassion. As God's people, we have the answers to our neighbors' deepest spiritual needs, and we're also to minister in real ways to people's earthly sufferings.

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 46)

1 What did the disciples think caused the man's blindness?

2 When have you struggled to accept that life can be unfair?



THE POINT // ONLY THROUGH JESUS CAN WE TRULY SEE.

JOHN 9:6-11

After he said these things he spit on the ground, made some mud from the saliva, and spread the mud on his eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means "Sent"). So he left, washed, and came back seeing. His neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar said, "Isn't this the one who used to sit begging?" Some said, "He's the one." Others were saying, "No, but he looks like him." He kept saying, "I'm the one." So they asked him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So when I went and washed I received my sight." **JOHN 9:6-11**

The blind man's life had been defined by darkness. The very concept of light was foreign to him. But the One who created light was about to change all this. We see many times in the Gospels that Jesus has the power to accomplish amazing things simply by speaking. But with this blind man, Jesus chose a different course. Jesus mixed dirt with His own saliva and rubbed the mud on the man's eyes. Jesus then instructed the man to "wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means 'Sent') (John 9:7). Jesus's actions and words left such an impression that John wanted to remind readers of the meaning of the pool's name, pointing not only to a place, but to a purpose. Jesus had been sent to fulfill the purpose of the Father (John 8:42), specifically to open blind eyes.

The blind man's response showed his faith in Jesus. Spit and dirt were by no means a common way to heal blindness. Yet Jesus had rubbed mud on the man's eyes and told him to go wash—and the man did exactly as Jesus had instructed. True belief always results in obedience. And because the man did what Jesus said, he "came back seeing" (v. 6).

The blind man was transformed in such a way that people had a hard time recognizing him. Previously, he'd been a poor beggar. But now, he was restored in a way people struggled to grasp. As the blind man tried to convince people in the community that he was the one who used to sit begging, people wanted to know how his eyes were opened. The blind man's experience is likely familiar to many of us. If you've ever sung the hymn "Amazing Grace," you might know that the first verse ends with the words "was blind, but now I see." For those of us who know Jesus, we were once spiritually blind, but He opened our eyes to the truth. This knowledge is life changing, and our lives will look different now that we've been healed by Jesus. People wanted to know who had restored the blind man's sight, and when Jesus changes us, people will naturally want to know why.

The man had obeyed Jesus's command to wash. However, Jesus didn't simply leave the man to continue living however he pleased. Instead, Jesus's kindness was the motivator that caused the man to live for God from that point forward. His obedience was not just a one-time event but a whole lifestyle. Today, God is willing to open the eyes of anyone who is spiritually blind. We need simply to trust Jesus for salvation and we'll be healed. The natural overflow of true faith is always a life of obedience to God.

The natural overflow of true faith is always a life of obedience to God. #BSFLSigns

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 47)

- 3** Why was it important that the blind man obeyed Jesus's instructions?
- 4** Why did the crowd have a hard time recognizing the blind man?
- 5** How does your life look different after choosing to follow Jesus?

THE POINT // ONLY THROUGH JESUS CAN WE TRULY SEE.

JOHN 9:30-33

"This is an amazing thing!" the man told them. "You don't know where he is from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does his will, he listens to him. Throughout history no one has ever heard of someone opening the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he wouldn't be able to do anything." JOHN 9:30-33

The blind man receiving his sight was unexplainable for all who witnessed the transformation, and the Pharisees had questions. They brought the man's parents to testify whether he was genuinely blind or not. As the Pharisees got answers to their questions, they were left with even more uncertainty. The answers could have pointed them to Jesus, but they absolutely refused to consider this as the truth. Instead, they outrightly rejected the truth about Jesus and rejected anyone who followed Him. The Pharisees were confused on several levels. They didn't know:

- **Where Jesus was from:** For a man to be able to do this type of miracle was mind-boggling to the point that it caused division among them as to whether Jesus was connected to God or not.
- **How the miracle was performed:** Curing blindness is never reported in the Old Testament, so this type of healing was entirely out of the ordinary, even for miracles.
- **The nature of the One who performed the miracle:** They recognized that if this was a "true" miracle, it would only come from God and not just from a man. They just weren't willing to admit that someone other than themselves spoke for God.

There are some things in our lives that we don't understand. And honestly, we don't have to know. For instance, when you snap a photo on your smartphone then upload it to your social media account, chances are you don't have a clue about how this really works. And when it doesn't work, we become frustrated. Unfortunately, we see the same with how the Pharisees responded to the blind man receiving sight. Rather than accepting or even celebrating the miracle, they refused to acknowledge Jesus's power because it would have undermined their own authority. The better response to God working in ways we don't understand is simply to trust that He is in control and His wisdom and power are higher than ours.

To discredit the now-seeing man's authority, the Pharisees chose to persecute him. They pointed to his former sinful condition, claiming that he was in no position to teach them anything. Then they threw him out of the temple. Later, Jesus found the man and showed him the true nature of who He is.

We cannot understand all the details of how God's grace works. There's a certain mystery to the gospel that we can't fully grasp. However, through faith, we can understand that we're saved by God's grace, and God will save us in unfathomable ways if we trust in Christ. May we be more like the blind man who gained sight and not like the seeing Pharisees who were spiritually blind.

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 47)

6 When have you struggled to understand the ways God works?

7 Why is it important to trust God, even when you might not understand all the details?

8 How does your life show that you live by faith and not by sight?



LIVE IT OUT (10 minutes)

THE POINT // ONLY THROUGH JESUS CAN WE TRULY SEE.



GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY
& WORLD

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // GOD

God is loving and righteous, grieves the impact of sin on the world, and will one day make right all that sin has damaged.

God created people to experience His blessings and to experience a relationship with Him. Sin not only separates us from God but has also brought great brokenness into the lives of all people. Jesus restored the blind man's sight not only physically but also spiritually, and one day Jesus will restore all brokenness caused by sin's curse.

>CHRIST

Sight versus blindness isn't simply a matter of seeing what's around us in the world. Ultimately, it's about seeing spiritual truth.

9 When has God opened your eyes to see a spiritual truth you didn't previously understand?

10 This week, spend time reflecting on the story from John chapter 9. Ask God to open your eyes to the truth in a way you can apply it in your life.

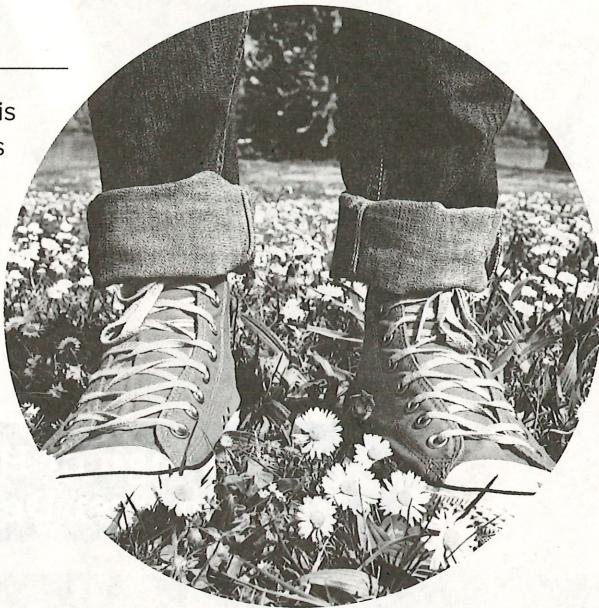
LIVE IT OUT

THE POINT // ONLY THROUGH JESUS CAN WE TRULY SEE.

>COMMUNITY

Who do you know in your church who has a disability or illness? This week, serve this person in a meaningful way to reflect the kindness and compassion of Jesus.

11 Whom will you serve and how will you meet this individual's needs?



>CULTURE

Before coming to faith, we simply don't see or understand spiritual truth. But for followers of Jesus, He has opened our eyes and allowed us to see the truth about Him.

12 How do you relate to the experience of the blind man?

13 Share your story this week with a non-believing friend.