

How's Your Vision?

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In my junior year of high school, I was sitting in math class near the back of the room and realized I was having trouble seeing what the teacher was writing on the board. I had to continue asking my friend Alex, who was sitting behind me, what was on the chalkboard. That was the clue that I needed to have my vision checked. Ever since, I've been wearing contacts, joining the 40% of Americans who wear corrective lenses due to nearsightedness.

Myopia prevents you from seeing things clearly in the distance. Everything is blurry. Some things can't even be seen. The only objects that are completely in focus are the objects that are close to you. Without correction, it can severely limit your abilities.

For the past 3 months, these articles have focused on the qualities Peter insists we are to grow in if we are to be assured of an abundant entrance into the kingdom (2 Pet. 1:5-11): excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. He says, "he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins" (2 Pet. 1:9). Spiritual myopia is debilitating, certainly more so than physical myopia, because without correction, it can prevent your entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

If we suffer from spiritual myopia (or shortsightedness, as Peter calls it), we're not growing spiritually, and we're viewing life from an earthly perspective. All we see are the things that are close to us, the things of the world. Instead of setting our minds on things above, we're setting our minds on things of the earth (Col. 3:2). Three things happen as a result. First, our time and effort will be spent on worldly pursuits instead of spiritual pursuits because that's the only thing that's in focus to us. Secondly, we lose sight of our purpose and even lose sight of and remembrance of what Jesus has done for us! What a sad situation to be in to be so focused on earthly things that we can't even remember what Jesus did for us! Finally, this will lead to us stumbling and falling (1:10). If our vision isn't corrected, we will remain in this state and not enter the kingdom!

Blinding our spiritual vision is something Satan is very good at. It's his mission to distract us, to deceive us about what's truly important and worthy of our time and effort. He tells us that our careers are what's most important. He tells us our sense of self-worth is tied to our careers. He tells us that our children need to be involved in numerous extracurricular activities, taking up what little time we have left after our work day is over. He tells us that the rest of our time should be spent relaxing and enjoying all the pleasures of this life. When Satan is effective at this, we're left with little time, money, and energy to spend on spiritual matters.

The reason Peter is insistent upon adding these qualities to our character is that it's the proper way to prevent being barren and unfruitful. It's the way to prevent an improper focus. It's what will keep us with our eye on the goal and keep our priorities in the right order. If we tune our eyes to those spiritual qualities and grow in each one, the chances that we'll lose sight of the bigger picture become much slimmer.

Focus on those things that are excellent and on being excellent in your service to God. Focus on the knowledge of God and his will, spending much time in his word and meditating upon his law. Focus on controlling your passions and desires and molding them to desires for what is righteous and holy. Focus on persevering through trials and difficulties, looking at the end goal. Focus on striving to be like God and emulating his character. Focus on being loving and kind to your brothers and sisters in Christ. Focus on showing the love of God to everyone, including your enemies.

How's your vision? Are you looking at the big picture? Are you able to see the things that really matter? Are you focusing on growing in these qualities? Getting your eyes checked frequently will allow you to take whatever corrective measures are needed. Are you doing the same with your spiritual eyes?