

DO WE PRAY AND SEE BY FAITH? (DO WE SEE VICTORY OR DEFEAT?)

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One of the most important questions a true Christian could ask themselves, is “Am I *seeing in faith?*”

The real point we want to consider and the question to confirm in our mind is, how are we actually seeing ourselves? How do we really see our condition to be physically? Or how do we see our heart's spiritual condition (in light of circumstances we need to deal with?) Are we following God's plan with our finances and do we see ourselves where God's Word and Promises say we have a Scriptural right to be financially? Are we following God's plan for meeting other family members in God's way, and seeing ‘peaceful conditions’ in our home in the way God's Word tells us that it can be? (Luke 10:6) “And if there is a lover of peace there, your peace shall rest upon it.”

Are we *seeing* by faith the answers to the prayers we have placed before God, or do we only see what the devil wants us to see? Are we passively accepting what he pictures to our mind? If so, and we are seeing defeat everywhere, that is just the way it will be for us. If we are looking in the wrong direction for things we need for ourselves and our family, then everything will be wrong.

What we truly believe in our heart is the issue we are talking about. If we really believe that God will provide the things we need or open the way for us to do the things we wish to do (all within His Will), He will provide for or enable it to be that way. (Prov.10:24), “The wicked man's fears will all come true, and so will the good man's hopes.” Also (Prov.23:7) “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.” So, are we *seeing* in faith? Or are we doubting God's Word? That is the all-important question to ask ourselves.

Apostle Paul told the Corinthians they must examine themselves on this one vital point, (2 Cor.13:5) “Test yourselves to discover whether you are true believers: put your own selves under examination. Or do you not know that Jesus Christ is within you unless you are insincere?”

When people of the nation of Israel were insincere and were back-sliding from the faith, God questioned the prophet, “Amos, What seest thou?” (Amos 8:2). The prophet could see God's wrath coming on the Israelites, who had been deceived by the devil to *place their trust* in other persons or things instead of in the living God.

They were not seeing themselves where God's Word said they should be, so they were accepting fears from the devil, and were trusting in the ‘arm of flesh’ to get what they needed. All those other ‘places of trust’ or false resting places, proved to be Idols to the Israelites, which effectually came between them and their faith in God, and they drew His wrath on themselves.

(Quite opposite to their forefather Abraham, who believed God's words, and so, was able to obey Him. Abraham obeyed God because he believed Him and did not doubt, and he gave up those things he had been trusting in (false resting places as ‘Idols’) and left his home and earthly possessions (taking only what he and his household could carry). He left while not knowing where his new home would be, only to travel “to a land that I will show you” (as God had told Him. (Gen.12:1).

Abraham continued believing God's words to him when in Canaan “the land that God showed” him, so he was enabled to obey God's instruction, and his faith (and trust) in God, was “counted to him for righteousness” (Gen.15:6). He was indeed *seeing himself* (in faith), the way God said that he should see himself (and the way we should see ourselves). “But the righteous will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.” But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.” (Heb.10:38-39)

However, because of the Israelites' lack of faith, they also could not obey God's command to ‘have no idols in their life’. Their disobedience and unfaithfulness (as they resorted to self-efforts) brought on themselves

'the wrath of God' and caused Him to forsake them. That also effectually shut out any understanding of God's Word and hindered His power from working for them. Having lost understanding of God's Word, the Israelites lost all faith in God as well, so He could not help them because of their unbelief.

They were indeed living in fear, striving in the flesh, groping to make ends meet, and using deceitful ways to cheat their customers as brought out (Amos 8:5-6) "When will the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?, skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat."

Then, came the LORD's wrath, (vs.7), "The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, 'Surely I will never forget any of their works.'" (And vs.11-12) "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the Words of the LORD. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the LORD and shall not find it." Because they were using deceit, deception, and dishonest scales to seek riches, instead of trusting on God.

The Israelites' stubborn self-will and unwillingness to repent, eventually led them astray and right out of God's Will. When they lost His Spirit, they also lost all understanding of His Word. God said to the prophet (Isaiah 5:12-13) "but they have no regard for the deeds of the LORD, no respect for the work of his hands. Therefore, my people will go into exile for lack of understanding;" (also Isaiah 6:9-10) He said, "Go and tell this people: 'Be ever-hearing, but never understanding; be ever-seeing, but never perceiving.' Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes."

To lose the Holy Spirit, and so, all understanding of God's Word (which will lead a person to Eternal Life), is a steep price to pay because of our own stubborn self-will to get things via our own plans and efforts, instead of in God's way.

God promises to provide for us, and to be our Comforter all seasons of the year.

(Heb.13:5) "I will never, never forsake you" (He said). So when we pray for divine healing and comfort of body, or comfortable weather, or comfort and peace in our home, and, then we grumble and complain about those same things that we just prayed for, and we turn to our own plans or means for comfort and peace, instead of claiming God's promise to comfort us, then we are not believing nor seeing in faith (so, what is the use of our praying?)

We may ask ourselves, "What seest Thou" (as God asked, Amos 8:2). *Are we seeing ourselves in victory or defeat? If we see victory, we will have victory; if we see defeat, we will have defeat, if we see God winning our battle, it will be so.* (Again, Prov.23:7) "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he."

Instead of praying for something and then grumbling and complaining about the circumstance we have already prayed for, we should be praying in faith, seeing ourselves in victory (not defeat), and claiming our comfort and victory from God, who gives all comfort. When we take our stand of faith on God's promise to comfort us, we have every scriptural right to be comforted by God, instead of relying on our own way or means to provide our comfort. We all can prove it for ourselves.

We want to take heed to the words of God, our Creator (who spoke to us through His Son and the prophets before Him, (Amos 4:13) "He who 'forms the mountains', 'creates the wind'." And he 'controls the rains' (Amos 4:7) "I also withheld rain from you, when the harvest was still three months away. I sent rain on one town but withheld it from another. One field had rain; another had none and dried up."

We should follow apostle Paul's example (2 Cor.1:3) "Heartfelt thanks be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ-the Father who is full of compassion and the God who gives all comfort", (We want to 'give thanks' even before we see our deliverance, and in all circumstances and seasons).

God's Word says a certain thing is true after we pray, but Satan's object is to convince us that it is not true. (Prov.4:20-22) "My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are LIFE to those who find them, and health to a man's

whole body.” (We must see our healing by faith), for as we think in our mind and heart, so will it be. (That is the Truth God wants us to understand from His Word.)

That vitally important ‘understanding of God’s Word’ is what the Israelites lost, because of their lack of faith, and not seeing victory for themselves. It led them to trust in the ‘arm of flesh’ instead of ‘trust on God’. They could no longer see themselves where God’s Word said they could or would be, if they would just believe Him, so, as result, they turned to their own self-efforts to provide and comfort, and neither could they obey God after they lost His Spirit.

Again, quite a contrast to their forefather Abraham, who believed and obeyed God, and his faith was “counted unto him as righteousness.” God did not have to ask Abraham, “What seest thou?”, for Abraham believed and saw himself where God’s Word said he would be, so he received God’s comfort and was inspired to obey Him in everything (even to the point of being willing to sacrifice his son.) God rewarded Abraham for his faithfulness, for he was counted as ‘righteous in God’s sight’ (and he is in Heaven to this day). He received Eternal life!!

God had also shown the Israelite’s ancestors many miracles, while they were still in bondage in the land of Egypt. He even parted the Red Sea before their eyes so they could escape the Pharaoh’s army, and He brought water from the rocks in the desert to quench their thirst.

But they still would not believe God’s promises, so, they could not obey the instructions He gave them through Moses, because they lacked in faith. Instead, they grumbled and complained against Moses in their unbelief (which was really grumbling and complaining against God’s Word). It effectively kept that whole generation of Israelites from entering the Promised land of Canaan and from enjoying God’s rest.

(Heb.3:16-19), “For who were they that heard, and yet provoked God? Was it not the whole of the people who had come out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses? And with whom was God so greatly grieved for forty years? Was it not with those who had sinned? And to whom did He swear that they should not be admitted

to His rest, if it was not to those who were disobedient? And so, we see that it was owing to lack of faith that they could not be admitted.”

That is what God told them, when He spoke to them again, through the prophet Isaiah, (many years after their forefathers had wandered through the desert). (Isaiah 42:20), “You have seen many things, but have paid no attention; your ears are open, but you hear nothing.”

Then He gave a solemn warning for everyone in generations to follow, (vs.23-24) “Which of you will listen to this or pay close attention in time to come? Who handed Jacob over to become loot, and Israel to the plunderers? Was it not the LORD, against whom we have sinned? For they would not follow his ways; (and) they did not obey his law.”

The Israelites, because of their self-will and lack of trust in God, had grieved God and lost the Holy Spirit. So, they also lost the understanding of His Word.

Paul brought out that same principle of Truth (Cor.2:14) “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

The Israelites lack of understanding led to their unbelief in God’s Promises. They disobeyed God and placed their trust in human plans (or idols) instead of depending on the living God to comfort and provide for them, and they were unwilling to repent. The prophet Jonah however (after learning the same lesson not to follow the will of the self-life), was inspired to repent and to testify, (Jonah 2:8) “Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs. But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the LORD.” (After his repenting, Jonah was then seeing in faith.)

Again, that all-important question for every true Christian, “What Seest Thou?”!! Are we seeing in Faith? Or are we in unbelief, seeing things the way the devil wants us to see things, (not seeing our healing from oppression by faith, nor seeing our needs being provided by God, and as a result, turning to our own plans or efforts as the Israelites did on many occasions

(which was recorded for us to learn lessons of faith and trust from their experiences.)

When we look to someone else or some human plan to provide for us (or our families), we are shutting out the mercy and grace of God, by allowing someone or something to come between us and our place of trust in God. When we turn our trust toward someone else (it could be an employer, a relative, a friend), or some other man-made plan for ourselves and our families, we are (as the late Pastor said), "ignoring what the Blood of Christ provided for us, and throwing God's overtures of mercy to the winds."

The Israelites were ignoring God's promises given through the prophet (Isaiah 55:1) "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk, without money and without cost."

Those Promises should mean the same to us today and should be as valuable to us as they should have been to those Israelites. Again, it is Satan's business to convince us that God's Promises are not true, but God's Word says they are true when we pray and believe in real faith.

However, the Israelites were not taking a stand on God's Word given through Moses and the prophets, and they were not believing in His Promises. Rather, they were taking matters in their own hands, instead of waiting on God through believing His Promises.

It is the same with us today; are we SEEING in faith, or have we accepted the devil's lies, and are doubting God's promises and then in fear of not getting what we need or want, do we then turn to our own plans or efforts? (Gal.3:3 admonishes), "Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?"

To love and obey Jesus Christ, is to trust and believe in Him and not trust on our own self efforts (or on someone else instead of Him). To believe in His Son is the only requirement God puts on us, to receive His free 'gift of salvation'.

The inspired writer to the Hebrews advises us not to resort to human efforts (or man-made plans), rather, he encourages us to be faithful to the very end, (Heb.3:13-14) "On the contrary encourage one another, day after

day, so long as Today lasts, so that not one of you may be hardened through the deceitful character of sin. For we have all alike, become sharers with Christ, if we really hold our first confidence firm to the End;"

We can believe 'the Promises' in God's Word and enjoy the same results as the man did whom Jesus spoke to (Matt.8) "Sir," replied the Captain, "I am not a fit person to receive you under my roof: merely say the Word, and my servant will be cured." Jesus said to the Captain (vs 13) "Go, and just as you have believed, so be it for you." And the servant recovered precisely at that time." The man was Seeing in Faith and his prayer was answered. **We can all have that same answer to our prayers of faith today.**

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Main points of, Are We Seeing in Faith?

1. The message theme is, how are we seeing ourselves? Are we believing God's Word and seeing the answer to our prayer, or do we accept what the devil pictures to our mind, and so accept defeat?
2. We are told to test and examine ourselves by asking that most profound question, "Am I a true believer?" (2 Cor. 13:5).
3. "Am I relying on 'false places of trust', or am I believing in God's promises to provide for our finances, our health of body, peace in my home, and to be freed from attitudes of the self-life, or self-efforts to control loved ones or coworkers?"
4. If one does not believe God's promises, they then lose understanding of God's Word, and because of one's 'lack of faith', they cannot obey His Word. (Isaiah 5:12-13) & (Heb. 3:16-19) is mentioned.

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