

Rev. T. Jefferson Rogers Jr.
Righteous Living
Matthew 6:22-24

Matthew 5:20 For *I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

The Pharisees and scribes had a problem with their eyesight—their eyesight was not spiritual it was unhealthy with the disease of double-vision. They were guilty of trying to focus on God and the world at the same time. Focusing on God and world is double-vision (spiritual diplopia).

Double vision occurs when the eyes look in separate directions at the same time.

The Pharisees and scribes looked with double interest upon both God and the world. In other words, they claimed to see God and the world at the same time. The truth is no one can look in two directions at the same time and see the object of focus clearly. Double vision is blurred vision, distorted vision, imprecise vision. Spiritually, double vision causes double-mindedness and double-mindedness causes instability, unsteadiness, and wavering in all ways of life. James 1:8 says, “*A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.*”

God does not permit double vision. God does not allow us to serve Him and the world.

Jesus continues His teaching on investment of the heart and singleness in sight. Matthew 6:19-21, concerns giving your heart to God. Jesus said, “*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*” The heart invested in the accumulation of earthly things is foolish because all earthly things will eventually be taken from you. Life is more than material accumulation. Jesus teaches us to invest our heart in the God of heaven.

Spiritual Eyesight (Matthew 6:22-24)

Speaking allegorically, Jesus is talking about the significance of spiritual eyesight. Jesus said *the light of the body is the eye* (6:22a). The word **light** is *lookh'-nos* which means a lamp or candle, that is placed on a stand or candlestick. Some commentaries note that the ancients believed that light entered a person through the eyes, the windows of the body. Without eyes the body cannot receive light. Without eyes to receive light the body has no sense of direction. The light is likened to an eye which shows the body which way to move or turn. The body metaphorically represents the whole person.

Jesus said “eye” not eyes. Eye is singular. Jesus stresses the necessity of a single eye for righteous living. A single eye has one focus. You cannot look at two or three things at the same time with one eye. You can only see one thing at a time with one eye.

Jesus said, *if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light* (6:22b). If the eye is single the whole body benefited. In other words, the eye determines the condition of the body and the course of the body (direction in which the body goes). When the body receives through the single eye a clear vision, the inner man is full of light. In other words, because the eye is not trying to look in several directions at the same time the body is not confused in function.

Eye is single means that it sees nothing with a double or confused vision.

There are three things I believe the single eye denotes— singleness of purpose, simplicity of intention, and purity of affection.

1. Singleness of purpose: being undivided in purpose. Christians should live with singleness of purpose. Singleness of purpose for Christian believers is to seek God's kingdom and His righteousness. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, ***“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*** Our purpose is not to seek after cloths, food, and shelter. What really matters in life is the will of God.
2. Simplicity of intention: Simplicity means single, without ulterior motive, pure, sincere, and decided. *Vincent's Word Studies* (vol. 3, p. 346), defines it as “single-hearted loyalty.” It is the opposite of deceit, guile, error, and wandering.
3. Priority of affection: Undivided affection. We are to love God more than we love anybody and anything else. Who or what do you love the most? What you love the most is what you invest in the most.

Matthew 10:37 ***He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.***

Matthew 22:37 ***Jesus said unto him, Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.***

Single eye vision allows you see life, things, and people the way God wants you to see them.

In contrast, Jesus said, ***But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness*** (6:23). Here the word **evil** means **“divided”** or **“unhealthy.”** If your eye be evil, your being, you as a person will be full of darkness. Darkness signifies a lack of spiritual discernment. It means that your spiritual discernment is gone and your union with God is destroyed. When a person's soul is full of darkness he/she doesn't see things and people like God sees them.

People with dark souls are materialistic, selfish, hateful, bitter, mean, and greedy. People with dark souls use people to gain things instead of using things to gain people. Dark soul people are self-interested. Dark soul people want everything for themselves and nothing for other people. They hate people and hate to see others prosper. They have a sour disposition about life.

Jesus said the ***darkness is great for those whose focus is on this world rather than God.*** If you don't set your eye (affections) upon God, the time comes quickly when you won't be able to see spiritual things.

Jesus said in John 3:19-21, ***“This is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.***

But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:14, ***“The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”***

People with evil eyes cannot live with God.

Jesus concludes this section about heart investment: No man can serve two masters (6:24a). Jesus said in verse 24 ***No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other: or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other, you cannot serve God and mammon.*** The word hate has the same sense here as it has many places of Scripture; it merely signifies to love less.

Examples:

Jacob loved Rachel but hated Leah; he loved Leah much less than he loved Rachel. God said Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated; God loved the prosperity of Esau less than He loved the prosperity of Jacob.

In this life you have only two choices. If you have bad spiritual eyesight, you will choose to live for yourself, accumulating all you can. The darkness in which you live is great because you are blind to spiritual reality.

Good Spiritual eyesight chooses to focus on living for God. He will not accept part-time devotion because you cannot serve God and mammon. Consequently, it's all or nothing:

Prayer for spiritual eyesight: **Psalm 119:18** says, ***“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of the law.”***