

Bringing Light to Our Blind Spots: What We Don't See and Why It Matters

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I. Introduction

*"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see" John Newton*

"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

It's a mistake to think the sight we receive at conversion automatically means we have sight in every area.

II. What is a Blind Spot?

A. A blind spot can be defined as "not knowing what I don't know."

"Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains.'" (John 9:41, ESV)

B. Having a blind spot is thinking we know something, but being wrong. It's thinking we're living a certain way, but being deceived. It's consistently giving in to a sin, but thinking it's not really a problem. Or maybe even thinking it's a strength.

C. There are a variety of blind spots.

1. Some blind spots are relatively inconsequential.
2. Some blind spots are one offs.
3. Some blind spots are habitual and can last for years.
4. Some blind spots are viewed as strengths.

III. Common Leadership Blind Spots

A. We don't think we have any blind spots.

"Better was a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who no longer knew how to take advice." (Ecclesiastes 4:13)

B. We think we're above the rules.

"The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves." (Luke 22:25–26)

- C. We think external activity equals internal maturity.

The Pharisees thought they had it all together, that they had arrived. Through their acquaintance with the Law they knew they were not perfect, but they did not understand how deeply infected they were with sin. So they adopted the external appearance of having dealt with sin though actually they had never faced the darkness of their hearts. (R. Kent Hughes, *John: That You May Believe*, p. 259)

- D. We think our blindness doesn't affect others.

- E. We think, "I'm the leader, so I must be right."

"It is not our littleness that hinders Christ; but our bigness. It is not our weakness that hinders Christ; it is our strength. It is not our darkness that hinders Christ; it is our supposed light that holds back his hand. It is easier to save us from our sins than from our righteousnesses. Our self-righteousness is that hideous boa-constrictor which seems to coil itself round and round our spirit, and to crush out of us all the life that would receive the gospel of the grace of God. He that thinks that he knows will never learn. He that is blind and thinks that he sees will remain contented in the darkness all his life long." (Charles Spurgeon, "Sight for Those Who See Not")

IV. Bringing Light to Our Blind Spots

- A. Fight the war against being "wise in your own eyes."

*"In those days there was no king in Israel. **Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**" Judges 17:6, 21:25*

***"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice."** Proverbs 12:15*

***"Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart."** Proverbs 21:2*

***"Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him."** Proverbs 26:12*

***"Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered."** Proverbs 28:26*

***"Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. **Never be wise in your own sight.**"** Romans 12:16*

- B. Ask people around you to help you see your blind spots.

"No worthy leader - whether the president of the United States or the general of an army - no worthy leader assumes that he has all the wisdom he needs." (John Piper, *Ask Pastor John*, p. 230)

1. Specific questions
2. General observations

3. Ask for input only after a meeting or conversation, but before.

"The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight." (Proverbs 4:7)

"If you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God." (Proverbs 2:3–5)

4. Let the person know you want their honest assessment, not what they think you want to hear.

"Whoever gives an honest answer kisses the lips." (Proverbs 24:26)

"How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver." (Proverbs 16:16)

C. Respond to the input of others humbly.

1. Express gratefulness

"Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it." (Psalm 141:5)

2. Ask questions

"A wicked man puts on a bold face, but the upright gives thought to his ways." Prov. 21:29

"An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge." (Proverbs 18:15)

"A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion." (Proverbs 18:2)

D. Acknowledge weakness

"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us." (2 Corinthians 4:7)

E. Where appropriate, confess sin.

"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth." (1 Corinthians 13:4–6)

F. Ask God to reveal your blind spots.

“Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.” (Psalm 19:12–13)

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” (Psalm 139:23–24)

G. Finally, constantly return to rest in the finished work of Christ.

1. Of all the blind spots we can have, the most important one to address is not living in the good of the gospel.

“For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.” (2 Peter 1:9)

2. Jesus has cleansed us from our former sins and they can no longer be held against us.

“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.” (Colossians 2:13–15)

“Christ died for our sins,” not for our virtues. It is not your efficiencies, but your deficiencies which entitle you to the Lord Jesus. It is not your wealth, but your want; it is not what you have, but what you have not; it is not what you can boast of, but what you mourn over, that qualifies you to receive the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. He came on purpose that those that see not might see. O blind eyes, I have good news for you. O souls that sit in darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death...I bring you glad tidings of exceeding joy— light for the blind, gladness for the despairing, grace for the guilty.” (Charles Spurgeon, *ibid.*)