

DO WE SEE BY FAITH, WHAT WE PRAYED— DECIDING LINE FOR VICTORY OR DEFEAT

(#S207R) S264R

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Reference verse: (2 Cor. 13:5)

"Are we seeing in faith?" Is One of the most profound questions a true Christian could ask themselves.

The real point we want to determine and the issue to confirm in our mind, is, how are we actually seeing ourselves. What do we actually see our condition to be, physically? Or how do we see our spiritual condition (in light of circumstances we are dealing with?)

Are we following God's financial plan and 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 (the way God's Word tells us 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 we are seeing defeat everywhere, that is just the way it will be. If we are looking in a wrong direction for things we need for ourselves and our families, everything will be wrong.

What we really 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 (within His Will), He will provide for or enable it to be so. (Proverbs 10:24), "The wicked man's fears will all come true, and so will the good man's hopes." And, (Proverbs 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.

The 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 the whole nation of Israel was insincere and they were backsliding 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 the living God.

They were not seeing themselves where God's Word said they should be, so they were accepting the fears of the devil and trusting in the

arm of flesh to get what they needed. Those many 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 was then able to obey Him. Abraham obeyed God because he believed and did not doubt, and he and gave up the things he had been trusting in (false resting places or 'idols') ... leaving his home and earthly possessions (only taking 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 Genesis 12:1).

Abraham continued to believe God's words to him in Canaan the land that God showed him, so he was able to obey God's instructions, and his faith (and trust) in God, "was counted to him for righteousness", (Genesis 15:6). He was seeing himself (in faith), the way God said that he should see himself.

"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." (Hebrews 10:38-39)

However, because of the Israelites lack of faith, neither could they obey God's command to have no idols in their life. Their disobedience and unfaithfulness (resorting to self efforts) brought on them the wrath of God and caused Him to forsake them. It also effectually shut out any understanding of God's Word and hindered His power from working for them. Having lost all 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, (which says) "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 right out of God's Will. When they lost the Spirit, they also lost all understanding of His Word. God said to 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 under-standing." (then 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 thus, all understanding of God's Word (which leads a person to Eternal Life) is a steep price to pay, because of our own stubborn self-will to get things by our own plans and efforts, instead of in God's way.

God promises to provide for us and to be our Comforter every season of the year. "I will never, never forsake you." (He said, Hebr.13:5). So when we pray for divine healing and comfort of body, or comfortable weather, or comfort and peace in our home,...and, then grumble and complain (about those same things that we just prayed for), and 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' ("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, Aseeing 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 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:) "He who 'forms the mountains', 'creates the wind'. And, he 'controls the rains' (vs.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 the 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 the deliverance, and in all circumstances and seasons).

God's Word says, a certain thing is 'true' after we pray, but it is Satan's business 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' that 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 be (or would be) if they would just believe Him, . . . so, as a result, they turned to their own self-efforts to provide and to comfort, and neither could they obey God after they lost His Spirit.

Again, this was 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.

(Hebr.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." (Unquote)

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

Paul brought out this same principle of Truth in his first letter to the Corinthians (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 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, in unbelief, are we seeing things the way the devil wants us to see things, ... (not seeing our healing from oppression by faith, or not 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, or a friend), or some other plan for ourselves and our families, ..we are (the late Pastor said), Aignoring 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 the 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 and 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 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 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, (Hebr.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:

1. The theme of the lesson is, how are we seeing ourselves? Are we believing God's Word and seeing the answer to our prayer, or are we accepting what the devil pictures to our mind, and accepting 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 finances, health of body, peace in my home, and to be freed from the self-life or self-efforts to control loved ones or coworkers?
4. If one does not believe God's promises, they lose understanding of God's Word, and for lack of faith, one cannot obey His Word. (Isaiah 5:12-13/ Hebrews 3:16-19)