

Seeing in the Spirit in Every Aspect of Life

For the first few years of my life, I didn't know I was seeing in the spirit. I also didn't realize I would spend a lifetime growing in this gift—or how God would use it to reveal Himself, opening the spiritual realm in supernatural power.

I saw angels every day, but they fit so well with everything else exciting and new in my ever-widening view of the world that I didn't know they were anything other than ordinary. They walked alongside people, whispering things in their ears, resting comforting hands on their shoulders, smiling at their jokes, weeping at their sorrows or waiting patiently for their services to be required.

I could tell they weren't people. Their clothes blew in wind I couldn't feel. They passed through solid walls and objects as if they weren't there. They could walk on the air as easily as solid ground. Their skin looked like it was made of sunshine. And at least half of them had wings. I could tell they weren't people, but there are a lot of things in the world other than people, and when you are young, you see things for the first time almost every day.

I saw demons, too. They looked scary, of course, but they almost never scared me. I guess that's not totally true. They did scare me, but in the same way that an angry man on the far side of the street was scary-scary, but at a distance.

I talked about the angels and demons I saw, which was usually dismissed as the product of an active imagination. As I grew older, gentle social pressures caused me to talk about them less and less. A 3-year-old describing a lady dressed in gold dancing on the ceiling will earn an indulgent smile, but even by five or six, the subtle pain of receiving an odd look from

a friend or family member was more than enough to stop my stories. I remember thinking it must be rude to talk about those kinds of things.

It wasn't until I was 12, and started attending a church that put a strong emphasis on growing in the gifts of the Spirit that I learned that what I was seeing came through a God-given gift. If God had given me a gift, it seemed to me that He would want me to use it to bless other people. Almost right away, this proved trickier than I'd hoped.

The worship team was blessed when they heard about how angels danced and sang alongside them during worship. The pastor was pleased to hear about angels moving through the crowd as he taught, helping truth root itself more deeply in people's hearts. Some of what I saw made intuitive sense: an angel dressed in elegant robes, dancing and singing during worship, must be a worship angel; an angel wearing heavy armor, spear in hand, is surely a protection angel.

But not everything was so easy to understand. What did it mean when a smear of smoky blue light drifted into a prayer meeting? What should I do when an angel stepped on stage during a church service and raised its hands for 30 minutes? Was I supposed to tell someone when I saw a demon lying to them? Maybe, but every time I did, it created enough fear and shame that I wondered if the person would be better off not knowing.

Common Thread

I read every book I could find about prophetic ministry, looking for guidance. I learned a lot about hearing God's voice, but I still didn't know how best to share the increasing number of things I saw. It would have taken me hours to share everything that happened in the spirit during any given worship service. Which part was the most important? What should I focus on?

I studied the seers in the Bible. I read about Daniel, who saw in the spirit in his age and the age to come. I read about Elisha, who laid his hands on his servant, opening his eyes so he could see the fiery chariots around them in the spirit. I read about Ezekiel's and Isaiah's visions of the throne of God and John's vision on the isle of Patmos of a glorified Jesus.

All these seers brought a unique message, but something, some thread, ran through all of them that I could not quite put my finger on. However, I thought I could feel the same thread running through the things I saw. While I would never claim to fully understand the nature of these great biblical visions, or even my own, my journey toward understanding finally gained some traction just after I turned 15.

My church hosted a youth mission trip each year, and this year, we went to Europe for street ministry. Our youth pastor had arranged for us to go to a large youth concert and conference near London.

Over 3,000 youth were attending the event, held in a massive cattle auction house with double-decker stadium seating. With local hotels maxed out, the conference organizers had arranged for tents to rent in the fields around the event center.

Fast forward to the last night of the conference. We would be flying out the next morning, and most of us were tired from the long trip, so we were taking it easy, sitting in the back corner on the upper deck.

I listened to the preacher for the first few minutes. I knew he would end the night with an altar call, inviting people to the front to receive Christ. I laid my head back and closed my eyes for a nap. I don't know why I looked back down, but for some reason I glanced at the stage again.

Supernatural Vision

It was then that I saw Jesus.

He was pacing back and forth at the front of the room in the margin between the stage and chairs. He didn't look like the stereotypical bearded and robed Jesus I had seen in so many Sunday school coloring books. Apart from the faint glow that engulfed His head, He would not have been out of place in line at the supermarket. But the moment I saw Him, I knew it was Jesus.

He continued to pace back and forth, a look of calm concentration on His face. I noticed that every time He turned, His gaze remained fixed at a spot somewhere at the back of the room. I followed His line of sight a hundred or so yards to the back where a girl, maybe a bit older than I, sat with her head slumped against the divider that separated the first row of stadium seats and the main floor.

"He sees no one but her," said a voice somewhere in my head.

The room began to fade as I watched Jesus pace. It was as though all my senses were so drawn to Him and what He was doing that anything else faded into the background. As if from a distance, I heard the preacher ask people to come forward if they wanted to be saved.

My eyes snapped back to the girl, and I watched as she lifted her head from the divider and glanced up at the front of the room. I saw Him move, but it took Him no time to get there. He went from pacing at the front to standing directly in front of her.

The room was all but gone, the kind words of the passionate preacher far away and muffled. I couldn't feel the ground beneath my feet. I couldn't smell the air around me. The scene below captivated every part of my consciousness.

The girl lifted her head just enough to look Jesus in the eye. Immediately, chains appeared around her neck, then her shoulders, then her waist until she was completely covered, neck to knees. The chains extended from her in four long

strings, a demon pulling at the end of each. She nestled her face into the crook of her arm as it rested on the divider, breaking eye contact with Jesus. But it didn't matter.

Jesus leaned forward and kissed her on the forehead. As soon as He did this, every link in the chain split in half, starting at her neck and running all down her body like a string of firecrackers. The demons flew back from the loss of tension as the world flashed away in blinding white light.

Deeper Insight

My vision slowly returned, but the room did not. I couldn't see the preacher, I couldn't see the stage, and I couldn't see the other attendees. I looked down and couldn't even see myself. I could only see Jesus and the girl.

A lifetime of satisfaction shone from Jesus' face as He stood, arms open wide. The girl, wearing pure white robes, stood facing Him. Jesus beckoned, and she lunged forward, sinking her face into His chest and wrapping her arms around Him. I felt embarrassed, as if I'd walked in on a private moment. Thinking of a way to escape, I felt a sudden weight from above.

I looked up and saw a giant hand descending from the endless pale sky. The index finger extended and touched me on the forehead. I snapped back into reality with such force that I fell backward into my chair. I sat there, feeling shell-shocked, then leaned forward just in time to see the girl from the back running up the aisle to accept Jesus (even though she already had).

This beautiful, powerful vision is burned into my memory as vividly today as the day it happened. But what changed me and helped me understand the nature of seeing in the spirit—maybe even all the gifts of the Spirit—is what happened right afterward.

The rest of the meeting swept by in a misty blur. Scanning the crowd, I found one of the girls from my group. I fixed my eyes on her, hoping she knew where she was going.

I knew this girl, but we weren't best friends. As I walked through the crowd, focusing on her, I saw everything there was to know about her life. I saw every moment of joy, peace, fear and pain. With each moment, I felt every emotion as if I were a brother or a dear friend.

I saw every choice she had made, good or bad, and the process that led to each decision. I saw every sin, lie and mistake. I saw secret hopes, hidden dreams and private prayers. I saw every moment of her future and then every possible future. Emotions flooded faster than I could comprehend. Triumph, loneliness, laughter, shame, hope, fear, warmth, sorrow and elation swirled and congealed into one impossibly profound whole: love.

Divine Purpose

Love is a word we have beaten into many molds, but this love was perfect and complete, the sum of every moment of a life viewed with adoring eyes. It was bigger than anything I'd ever perceived, simpler than anything I'd ever experienced. I suddenly understood why Jesus chose to die on the cross, and in that moment, strange as it seems, I would have done the same.

The feeling grew in my mind and overflowed my heart; my entire being was too small to contain it. It was almost painful.

Then my sight snapped like a magnet onto one of the guys from my youth group. Again, an entire lifetime poured in through my eyes. Again, a love I couldn't explain or contain filled my chest until I yanked myself free to keep from bursting. Then my eyes caught another conference attendee. I'd never met him, but I knew everything about him, and I loved him with my whole heart. Then I looked at another person and had the same

intense insight. Then another. And another.

Unfortunately, as I mentioned earlier, I was in a very large crowd. I soon found myself trapped, bouncing from person to person and fighting to keep my brain from erupting. I describe the love as a feeling, but this was no idle affection. It did not require anything of the other person, but it demanded expression. I wanted to prophesy over each one. I wanted to sing to them, kiss them, hug them, pray for them, grab them each by the face and scream, "You are loved!" until my lungs burst.

But any means I considered to express this love was so painfully and woefully inadequate compared to it that I felt paralyzed. Nothing was enough.

Finally, I stared down at my own feet. This worked for a second, until someone's foot kicked out in front of me, and I saw everything there was to know about their life. I saw every moment of joy and pain. I saw the fullness of their potential. I saw how far they were going to make it along that line of potential. And I fell in love with this person—without ever seeing their face.

Eventually the crowd thinned enough that I found my way back to my tent and fell into my pillow, face first. Thankfully, when I woke up the next morning, this intense time of seeing in the spirit had ended, because I do not know how I could have functioned otherwise.

Seeing in the spirit has many purposes, but I would like to suggest that its greatest purpose—and the greatest purpose of all the gifts of the Spirit—is to reveal God's nature. Whether it be the magnitude of His power, the mystery of His Holiness, the intimacy of His love or any other of the facets of His nature, I believe the gifts are best expressed when they are focused on revealing Him.

I still don't understand everything I see in the spirit. I

still don't understand all the visions in the Scriptures. But ever since I saw Jesus kiss that girl on the forehead, I don't feel as lost when looking in the spirit or deciding what to share. Instead of asking what is most important or what would be most helpful, I look for what would most reveal Him. And that has never left me feeling lost.

Blake K. Healy *is one of the senior team members at Bethel Atlanta church. He lives in Tyrone, Georgia, with his wife, April, and their five children. For more information, visit .*