

Here's How You Can See as God Sees

Interpretation is important. From one language to another, between man-speak and woman-speak, from the Bible to our own lives—interpretation affects us greatly. Assuming we understand can often get us into trouble. When facing both the good and not-so-good circumstances, seeking God's perspective can change so much about how you act and feel.

Your marriage has a challenge; is it your own “bad” behavior, your spouse's evil heart or an opportunity to grow into new intimacy? You feel stuck in a confusing time or overwhelming problem; is it the devil coming against you, a “natural” result of your own or other's choices or God stretching you toward a new maturity? You face some big changes or new opportunities; is it a distraction from your purpose or a door into the future God has for you?

Understanding God's perspective at such times makes a huge difference. Here are a few categories that may help broaden your thinking when facing challenging times. You may default to one of these categories in your thinking, but considering the others may help you understand God's perspective more fully.

1. Earthly Consequences

We live in a fallen, messed-up world where institutions and people are usually far from God's original design. If the devil were eliminated today, our human nature would provide plenty of reason for pain to continue. Our choices have consequences; smoking means you're more likely to get lung disease. Other's choices have consequences; being raised in an abusive home means you're more likely to struggle with mental well-being. Human institutions and their choices have

consequences; governmental, financial, church and other organizations often act in ungodly ways that affect us and others.

The choices we ourselves, others and institutions make are not always conscious or intended. Sometimes we get harmed simply because we are living in a messed-up world. But looking at the choices we *do* have, and focusing on the things we *can* change, often leads to immense benefits for us and others.

2. Spiritual Warfare

Ignoring the very real impact of Satan's kingdom of darkness would be a mistake. Scripture makes it clear that we are living in a war zone. Sometimes the only way to make sense of a situation is to appreciate the activity of the enemy around us. Because we live in a war zone, we may well get wounded in the crossfire between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness.

This does not mean every problem you face is the result of the devil being out to get you. Remember that you don't have to go out and fight the devil on your own; Jesus already did that—and won! Interpreting the results of your own choices, or God stretching you to new maturity, as the devil's work will seriously limit your spiritual growth. But if it is the devil's direct work, or if he is using circumstances in unusually destructive ways, Jesus' victory means you can be victorious also.

3. Spiritual Maturity

Jesus loves you unconditionally just the way He finds you. But He also loves you too much to let you stay in that condition. Like a child learning to walk or an adult developing the skills needed for a new job, growth is often very uncomfortable, sometimes painful. As our world groans as it approaches the end of time, the level of maturity God needs us to have becomes perhaps even more important.

A good question to ask when facing tough stuff is, “What is God wanting to do in *me* through this experience?” That doesn’t always mean the other categories don’t apply, and God can use anything and everything that happens to grow us. But specifically looking at any challenges you face as opportunities to become more like Jesus will be so helpful in your ongoing spiritual transformation.

4. Expanding Your Purpose

The most skilled surgeons deal with the toughest cases. Our government sends the best-trained soldiers into the most difficult situations. A company looks for the person with the most valuable skills to get them through a big challenge. If you are facing a really big problem, it may be an opportunity to move into the next phase of the purpose God has for you.

Problems are opportunities for solutions. The level of rewards you will receive often has much to do with the seriousness of the problems you can solve. If God has built you for a bigger purpose than you are currently living in, it’s likely your promotion will come through wrestling with a bigger problem than you ever have before. That doesn’t mean “trying harder” or worrying about it; it means who you are as a person in body, mind and soul will be stretched to new dimensions in service for His kingdom.

Seeking God’s Perspective

Seeking God’s perspective when facing any challenge can be so helpful. Pause, get quiet and invite His presence. Survey the above categories for what He may have to say to you. Your challenge is no surprise to Him, and it’s not difficult for Him to deal with.

Specifically ask Jesus to interpret your situation and to help you in understanding His perspective. Healing, growth maturity and fulfillment of your purpose are only some of the possible positive outcomes.

Your Turn: Which of these categories seem to be your default interpretation when facing challenges? Do you need to more often consider the other categories listed here? Any other categories you've found helpful? Leave a comment below. {eoa}

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This article originally appeared at .