

Wide-Angle Lens

I enjoy photographing birds. I especially like to capture them in flight.

Often when I'm out watching birds, I have a powerful telephoto lens on my camera. I can zoom in on a bird from relatively far away and capture a stunning image of God's creation.

Sometimes, from the corner of my eye, I notice a bird winging across the pond. I try to yank my camera around with lightning speed to snap that picture-perfect calendar shot, only to find that my subject has escaped the viewfinder. The bird hasn't moved, but I missed the shot because I looked through the wrong lens. I need a wider angle to capture the flight properly.

Likewise, I need a wider lens—a different perspective—to make it through most days. The Lord has more for me to see than my hyperfocused activity allows. Last week, circumstances forced me to write a column using my iPhone for data entry. The front door lock on our building refused to unlock, so I trekked back to my car to write.

My normal place of focus is a computer screen above my keyboard. I write in total quiet with little stimuli within eyesight. But on that day, I opined from the front seat of my car, windows rolled all the way down. I listened to birds singing in the early-morning hours—birds I couldn't see but wished I could photograph. They sounded so full of color. I was wholly satisfied to snap images with my ears.

Here's the life lesson: When we change our focal length, we often expand our horizon. We see things—or hear things or think about things—in a new way. When we focus only on the issue at hand, we may miss a broader view of what God wants us to see. When circumstances force me to zoom out, I receive inspiration to see and hear new things as a young child would

see, as if for the first time. Perspective is everything.

This probably happens to you as you read the Word. A familiar verse jumps from the page with fresh insight. The Holy Spirit leads us with many and varied methods. I want to receive His direction with an open mind, especially when I've fallen into comfortable patterns or established ways of thinking. Comfort helps us zoom in with a desire to hold onto this feeling forever. But at times, God wants to move us out of the comfort zone and into a creative zone.

The Shepherd is happy when we "lie down in green pastures"(Ps. 23:2). This holds true until we must transition to a new pasture. We often have trouble traveling from where we are to where the Lord knows we should be without a prophetic perspective of what lies ahead. Although we walk by faith and not by sight, we must be willing to change our lens to see as God sees when we sense transition at hand. When the Spirit stirs us for a move, our vision must change to a wider lens.

What is the Lord doing with me? I remain happy in my normal routine. But He has greater plans. His rod and staff bring a unique kind of comfort to me if I don't respond with instant obedience. I want to be where He is, but sometimes that means hearing what He is saying, seeing what He is seeing—or at least sensing that He wants to show me something—and walking in blind trust, because He's ordering my steps.

The same is true when we live in discomfort. Our focus seems to narrow when we feel things are going well. We don't want anything to change when we're standing on top of the mountain. We enjoy the view. By contrast, when we're in the desert—when we are stuck in a cave—we can only see the problems that surround us. We cry to the Shepherd, "Get me out of this mud pit." We can't see the bigger picture. We likely won't be moved until God opens our eyes to the lesson of the day. Lord, give us Your perspective!

I put away my zoom lens that morning to allow the Shepherd to feed me with the dawn of a rising sun, bird-filled trees in our parking lot and creative thoughts about the day's potential. Change your lens and see all the Lord has for you today.

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