

Beware of These Soulish Blind Spots That Creep Into Your Life

Through my 35+ years of ministry and teaching and mentoring students in the Word of God, and meeting and counseling with young ministers and missionaries, it has become apparent to me how common it is for people to have blind spots. As I reflect back on my own life I can see where I was blind to certain areas of my own life.

One of the biggest blind spots I had over the years was that of being a professional minister. The Spirit of the Lord showed me how at different seasons of my life the spirit of religion spoiled the simplicity and innocence of my fellowship with Jesus. There were different times when activity and performance became the king of all my service. My love for people waned. Demonstrating love through practical service waned. I lost a certain purity of heart as my motives became stained with self-absorption and self-exaltation and a “me” first, “build my ministry” mentality.

Ministry was no longer about caring for people and meeting their needs, but it was about preaching and teaching. It was about sermons and outlines. It was about statistics, numbers, projects and programs (these things are certainly not wrong in themselves, but we need to watch our hearts to make sure Jesus remains our first love). Thank God for the Holy Spirit who showed me the error of my ways! He saved me from being disqualified (1 Cor. 9:27).

[I've written three books that address this issue (*Soulish Leadership*, *Purity Of Heart* and *The Journal Of A Journey*), and I actually need to write another one to help local churches and shepherds/elders deal with the growing carnality,

infatuation with ministry, instability and self-absorption in churches today.]

True mentors will help you deal with blind spots. I believe this one critical blind spot cost me years of a lost reward. Why do I say that? Because the foundation of the entire reward system of God is based on the motives of the heart. The earlier you learn this lesson the less blindness will have a chance to develop in you as you mature.

Let me tell you that this particular blind spot affected every other area of my life. It affected my marriage and how I related to my wife. It affected all my relationships—with my elders, peers and students. It affected my conversation, my conduct and all my demeanor. When you do things from a self-focus you stain and spoil your spiritual garments.

The Prosperity of Your Soul

Blind spots are overcome through the prosperity of your soul and mind renewal.

“Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, even as your soul is well” (3 John 1:2).

The greatest need in the body of Christ today is the renewal of believers' minds (Rom. 12:2) and the saving of their souls (James 1:21). There will be no real transformation in believers' lives without this.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but *be transformed* by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

Here's a shocker to some people: Being born again does not change you unless the renewing of the mind follows.

Blind spots in believers are the result of failure to renew their minds and an inability to be teachable or persuaded,

stemming from pride.

Over the years as I've grown and dealt with my own flaws and all kinds of people this has become more apparent to me. You could say that my eyes have been more open to blind spots.

Examples

As an example, after a number of discussions, email communiques and counseling sessions with one particular couple, they could not see what the elders (including myself) saw. Without mentioning the specifics of this one case, I will just say that it felt like we were trying to convince them gently and in love that they were not a racehorse, but a mule.

How do you tell someone that they don't qualify to be in a certain leadership position any longer? How do you break the news to their proud and blind hearts that they are not a level 10 missionary but a level three at best? How do you do that without totally crushing their motivation to keep trying? It's not that easy, but it is necessary for growth. It is not only a personal mentor's praise and encouragement that helps you, but it is the course corrections that he brings to your life that will bring long-term success.

A former student of mine who periodically asked me questions about ministry and whom I constantly affirmed recently unfriended me because I publicly corrected her for falsely accusing another friend of mine on Facebook.

Another minister also unfriended me recently because some of my posts expose his lack of ministerial ethics and local church etiquette and protocol.

In the aforementioned instances it is a classic example of running from your sins and faults and escaping the uncomfortable pain of facing them head on and then taking the proper steps to confess and forsake them, yielding to the grace of God and asking the Holy Spirit to help you and

empower you to overcome these strongholds in your soul. But often believers justify their behavior and run every time they are confronted with it. Some run all their lives and remain unfruitful because they will not deal with their soulish strongholds and fleshly lusts and hurts that war against their soul. Many are just blind to them.

Blind spots. There are marriages in trouble today because of blind spots. One spouse is always taking more than they give. One spouse has been dictating to the other, controlling the other, taking from the other and often they don't even realize how bad the situation is. Sometimes by the time they realize it, it's too late.

Fathers often are blinded to how hard-hearted and overbearing they've become with their children. At times parents have the opposite problem where they spoil their children by refusing to discipline them. I see this often. In either situation the children usually grow up warped in some facet of their character or personality. All of these situations occur because of blind spots.

Believers will never come into a stability in their souls unless they renew their minds and become doers of the Word and not hearers only (James 1:22). Until they are enlightened to their blind spots and obey the truth of the Word of God they will remain unfruitful and unproductive in certain areas of their lives. They will continue to be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14) and enticed by covetous ministers and false teachers (2 Pet. 2:14).