



LESSON 9 ~ I WAS BLIND, BUT NOW I SEE! John 9

DISCUSSION STARTER

- What would you miss most if you couldn't see?

INTRODUCTION

We have seen over and over in the *Gospel of John*, that the author, John the Apostle, loves to make use of *double meanings* to tell his story and make his point. Nowhere is this more evident than in **John 9** as he relates the story of the man who was blind from birth. In this story, physical blindness becomes a metaphor for spiritual blindness as those who are *blind* are shown to be the ones who *see*, while those who think they *see*, are actually *blind*!

It is in the midst of this intriguing story, that Jesus declares he has come as the *Light of the world*, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.

John 9 is a magnificent summary of what Jesus has been saying about himself throughout the *Festival of Tabernacles*. He is the *true light* that surpasses any light available in the temple. He promises that whoever follows him will never walk in darkness but will have the *light of life*.

PREPARATION

1. Before you read **John 9**, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you into all truth (John 16:13). You may want to make the following prayer your own:

Spirit of the Living God, the One who comforts, strengthens and encourages me.

I admit that I cannot understand the truth found in God's Word with only my mind.

I agree that spiritual truth has to be understood with my heart as well as my head.

So I ask You to give me spiritual understanding as I do this lesson.

*I pray that You would enable me to see, hear and understand,
with my spirit, all that You want to teach me.*

I ask this in the powerful Name of Jesus (as if Jesus were asking it).

Amen

2. Read **John 9** slowly and thoughtfully in your own Bible. As you read and reread, *underline or highlight* any verses, phrases or words that are meaningful to you. Put a *question mark* beside anything you don't understand. Put a ✓ beside anything you would like more information about.

You may also want to read this chapter in another translation. The Scripture handouts for these lessons contain the *Amplified Version* of the Bible. It is important, however, that you don't try to answer the questions in the lesson from just the *Amplified Version*. The questions are phrased to be answered from the *New International Version (NIV)*, the *New Living Translation (NLT)*, or something similar. Using **only** the *Amplified Version* may be confusing. It is given only as a supplementary text.

3. Write one question that you have about this chapter that you would like answered as you do this lesson.

QUESTIONS

Read **John 9:1-12**.

1. What was the disciples' primary interest in the blind man and what does this reveal about *them* and their *beliefs* (9:1-2)?

- ♥ We have an expression that says, "Where there is smoke, there is fire." Using the terms *sin* and *suffering*, make a similar statement that reflects the disciples' beliefs about sickness. Do you agree or disagree with the disciples' viewpoint? Why or why not?
- ♥ How does **Exodus 34:6-7** help explain the disciples' reasoning?
- ♥ We humans want to know who is to blame. When was a time that you looked for the hidden cause behind some tragedy?

Who sinned, this man or his parents? If the man in this story was born blind, how could his blindness be the result of his own sin? The disciples' question reflects two popular beliefs of the time. The first was that sin began not at birth, but at conception. The disciples wondered if the child in the womb had committed some sin prior to birth and as a result was born blind. The second belief was that souls existed prior to birth and were assigned to different kinds of physical bodies as a reward or punishment for their prior actions. In this case, the thought was that the man's soul had committed some evil prior to being assigned to a particular body. Although these beliefs are found in some rabbinic writings of the time, neither of them are based on scripture.

2. Jesus seemed more concerned about *changing* the situation than *explaining* it. When there is suffering, what are some things that Jesus says are more important than trying to figure out the cause (9:3-5)?

- ♥ Sometimes a person's suffering is linked to personal sin and sometimes it is not. Give an example from your knowledge or experience when suffering *was* linked to personal sin as well as an example where there seemed to be no connection between the two.
 - ♥ What is your first reaction to someone who seems to be consistently "down and out": Religious curiosity like the disciples or compassion like Jesus? Why?
 - ♥ When you find yourself in the midst of affliction, sorrow, suffering, pain, disappointment or loss, do you usually see it as punishment or an opportunity for God to work and show his glory? Why?
3. In this story, what is the "work" of God (9:3) and what is the "day" and the "night" (9:4)?

- ♥ Why do the images of *day*, *night* and *light* (9:4-5) fit so well into this story?
 - ♥ How does Jesus' statement in 9:4 apply to your own life and purpose? What work has God given you to do while you still have time?
4. Jesus used a variety of methods when he healed, but he consistently required *faith* and *obedience* from those he cured. How did the blind man demonstrate he possessed both these qualities (9:6-7, 11)?

- ♥ We can only speculate as to why Jesus chose to heal the blind man with mud made from saliva, but what are some things Jesus may have been inferring from the method he chose (**Genesis 2:7**)?
 - ♥ Through what disability or weakness can you display the glory of God?
 - ♥ Have you ever been able to thank God for your suffering because of what came out of it? How so?
5. How did the blind man's neighbors react to this miracle (**9:8-13**)? What does this tell you about them?

- ♥ When was a time that you were unsure or confused by the way in which God worked?
- ♥ Why was Jesus' method of healing in this story especially appropriate for a blind man (**9:11**)? What does this tell about Jesus and his work in your life?

Read John 9:13-34

6. How did the Pharisees reaction to this healing reveal their *spiritual* blindness (**9:16, 22, 24, 28-29,34**)?

- ♥ Can you think of a time when your preconceived ideas, prejudices or traditions kept you from seeing God's obvious truth?
 - ♥ If a person has already decided he or she does not want to believe in Jesus, is it of any value to share the good news of Jesus with that person? Why or why not?
 - ♥ Why does Jesus keep healing on the Sabbath when it upset the religious leaders so much?
7. What was the Pharisees view of sin and suffering (**9:34**)? How does what happened to the blind man prove their theory wrong?

8. How would you rate the parent's response to the Pharisees questions (**9:18-23**)? Was there anything wrong with their answer? Why or why not?

- ♥ Imagine being summoned and grilled by the Pharisees (**9:18-19**). How would you have *felt* if you were the blind man's parent? From what you know about yourself, how would you have reacted?
 - ♥ Have you ever been afraid of religious leaders? Why?
 - ♥ In what area in your life do you fear rejection? How do you find yourself reacting to this fear?
9. What are the Pharisees hoping for when they question the healed man a second time (**9:24**)?

- ♥ There is something in all of us that loves a good "come-back." Consider the healed man's "come-backs" to the religious leaders in **9:25, 27** and **30-33**. Which of them would you score the highest for "Good answer, good answer!" Why?

10. The healed man's "good answer" resulted in severe consequences (9:22, 34). What would be an equivalent action today? In your opinion, was standing up to the religious leaders worth it or should the healed man have played it safe like his parents? Why?

- ♥ When have you been unkindly questioned about your faith? How did you hold up under the pressure? Did you have a sense of Jesus helping you in the situation?
- ♥ In what ways has Jesus upset the status quo in your life?
- ♥ When have you felt unaccepted by other Christians?

11. The man healed of blindness makes a personal statement of truth and belief because of what Jesus did for him (9:25). Fill in the blanks to make your own personal statement of truth, based on what Jesus has done for you. *One thing I do know. I was _____, but now I _____!*

Read John 9:35-41.

12. Fill in the chart to trace the blind man's progression in his view of Jesus that eventually led to faith.

| Verse | <i>How did the blind man view Jesus?</i> |
|-------|--|
| 9:11 | |
| 9:17 | |
| 9:27 | |
| 9:33 | |
| 9:38 | |

- ♥ How has your view of Jesus and your commitment to him progressed over time? Where are you now in the process?

13. Relate Jesus' statements in 9:39 and 41 to the events in this chapter.

- ♥ In this story, who are the blind and who are those who see?
- ♥ How would you measure your spiritual vision now? a) 20/20? b) near-sighted? c) far-sighted? d) a few blind spots? e) legally blind? What would help correct your spiritual vision?
- ♥ When your long-held ideas, beliefs and traditions are challenged, is your reaction most like the *disciples*, the *neighbors*, the *Pharisees*, the blind man's *parents* or the *blind man*? How so?

response

In this chapter, which character qualities of Jesus comes through most strongly to you: His *compassion*, his *power* or his *wisdom*? How does Jesus' actions in this chapter reflect his statement in 9:5? What actions or words of Jesus do you like best from this story? Why? How does this encourage you in your relationship with Jesus?

The healed man believed in Jesus and worshipped him (9:38). How do you think he did this? What words, posture and actions could he have taken? How will you worship Jesus for all he has done for you?

Encounter with Jesus

Take a few moments to be still and quiet in the presence of Jesus. See yourself having a conversation with Jesus. Jesus came into the world so that the blind would see (9:39). Ask Jesus to show you any spiritual blindness you have. Are you willing to be shown? Willing to acknowledge and take responsibility for what he shows you? Willing to admit you were wrong? Willing to change? Willing to see a person or situation through Jesus' eyes? After you tell Jesus what is on your heart, listen for what he will tell you.