

# Seeing People Through Jesus' Eyes



---

## SABBATH AFTERNOON

**Read for This Week's Study:** *Mark 8:22–26; John 4:3–34; John 1:40, 41; Mark 12:28–34; Luke 23:39–43; Acts 8:26–38.*

**Memory Text:** “Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men’ ” (*Matthew 4:19, NKJV*).

Jesus is the Master Soul Winner. By watching the way Jesus worked with people, we learn how to lead others to a knowledge of salvation through Jesus Christ. Journeying with Him through the crowded streets of Jerusalem, the dusty paths of Judea, and the grassy hillsides of Galilee, we discover how He revealed the principles of the kingdom to seeking souls.

Jesus saw all men and women as winnable for His kingdom. He saw each one through the eyes of divine compassion. He saw Peter not as a rough, loudmouthed fisherman but as a mighty preacher of the gospel. He saw James and John not as quick-tempered, fiery radicals but as enthusiastic proclaimers of His grace. He saw the deep yearning for genuine love and acceptance in the hearts of Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan woman, and the woman with the issue of blood. He saw Thomas not as a cynical doubter but as one with sincere questions. Whether they were Jew or Gentile, male or female, a thief on the cross, a centurion, or a demon-possessed madman, Jesus saw their God-given potential and viewed them through salvation's eyes.

\* Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, July 18.

## The Second Touch

There is only one miracle in the entire Bible that Jesus worked in two stages. It is the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida. This story provides timeless lessons for Christ's church today. It illustrates God's plan of using each believer to bring someone else to Jesus. Scripture declares, "Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him" (*Mark 8:22, NKJV*). The two key words here are "brought" and "begged." The blind man did not come on his own. His friends saw his need and brought him. He may not have had much faith, but they did. They believed that Jesus would heal this man's blindness.

There are approximately 25 distinct healing miracles in the New Testament performed by Jesus. In more than half, a relative or friend brings the individual to Jesus for healing. Many people will never come to Jesus unless someone who has faith brings them. Our role is to become an "introducer" and bring people to Jesus.

The second word that is worthy of our consideration in Mark 8:22 is the word "begged." It can mean "beseech, implore, or exhort." It implies a softer, kinder, gentler appeal than a loud, boisterous demand. The friends of this man kindly appealed to Jesus, believing that He had both the desire and the power to help this man. The man may not have had faith that Jesus could heal him, but his friends did. Sometimes we must carry others to Jesus on the wings of our faith.

**Read** Mark 8:22–26. Why do you think He healed the blind man in two stages? What lessons does this story have for us today as witnesses for Jesus?

---



---



---

Is it possible that we, too, do not see people clearly? Do we sometimes see them more like "trees walking" in vague shadowy forms rather than as candidates for the kingdom of God? What do you think leads us at times not to see people clearly?

**Besides the obvious lesson that God uses us to reach people, what else can we learn from this story? What might it teach us, for instance, about how both the medical and the spiritual can have a part in healing and in ministry to the lost?**

## A Lesson in Acceptance

By modeling for them what it meant to see each individual from a new perspective, Jesus taught His disciples how to see people through heaven’s eyes. His view of people was radical. He saw them not as they were but as they might become. In all of His interactions with people, He treated them with dignity and respect. Often He surprised His disciples by the way He treated people. This is especially true in His interaction with the Samaritan woman.

*The Archaeological Study Bible* makes this interesting observation about the relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans: “The rift between the Samaritans and the Judeans dates from an early period. According to 2 Kings 17, the Samaritans were descendants of Mesopotamian peoples who were forcibly settled in the lands of northern Israel by the king of Assyria in the wake of the exile of 722 B.C. They combined the worship of Yahweh with idolatrous practices.”—*The Archaeological Study Bible* (Zondervan Publishing, 2005), p. 1727. In addition to these idolatrous practices, they established a rival priesthood and a rival temple on Mount Gerizim. Considering such theological differences with the Samaritans, the disciples must have been perplexed when Jesus chose the Samaritan route to Galilee. They were surprised that Jesus did not allow Himself to be drawn into a religious debate. He appealed directly to the Samaritan woman’s longing for acceptance, love, and forgiveness.

**Read** John 4:3–34. How did Jesus approach the Samaritan woman? What was the woman’s response to Christ’s conversation with her? What was the disciples’ response to this experience, and how did Jesus broaden their vision?

---



---



---

The eternal lesson that Jesus longed to teach His disciples and each one of us is simply this: “Those who have the Spirit of Christ will see all men through the eyes of divine compassion.”—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*, June 20, 1892.

**Who are the people whom, due to the influence of your own culture and society, you tend to view disdainfully or with a lack of respect? Why *must* you change your attitude, and how can that change come?**

## Begin Where You Are

Someone has rightly said, “In life the only place to start from is where you are, for there is no other place to begin.” Jesus emphasized this principle in Acts 1:8, in which He declared, “ ‘But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth’ ” (NKJV).

Jesus’ message to His disciples was too plain to be misunderstood: begin where you are. Witness where God has planted you. Rather than dreaming of better opportunities, start with those around you. See with divine eyes the possibilities closest to you!

You don’t need to be the most educated person in the world, the most eloquent, the most gifted. However helpful some of those gifts could be if rightly used, in the end all you need is your own love of God and your love for souls. If you are willing to witness, God will open the way for you to do so.

**Read** John 1:40, 41; John 6:5–11; and John 12:20–26. What do these passages tell you about both Andrew’s spiritual eyesight and his approach to witnessing?

---

---

---

Andrew’s experience speaks volumes to us. He began in his own family. He first shared Christ with his brother Peter. He developed a cordial relationship with a little boy who then provided Jesus with the material for a miracle, and Andrew also knew just what to do with the Greeks. Rather than debate theology, he sensed their need and introduced them to Jesus.

The art of effective soul winning is the art of building positive, caring relationships. Think about the people closest to you who may not know Jesus. Do they sense in your life someone who is compassionate and caring? Do they see in you a peace and purpose that they long for? Is your life an advertisement for the gospel? We make friends for God by sharing Jesus. They become Christian friends, and eventually, as we share God’s end-time message of biblical truth, they may become Seventh-day Adventist Christians, as well.

**Why can it be so difficult at times to lead our family members and relatives to Christ? Have you been successful in sharing Jesus with any of your family members or close friends? Share any principles that the class might find helpful.**

## Dealing With Difficult People

Jesus was a master at dealing with difficult people. By both His words and actions, He demonstrated acceptance. He listened sensitively to their concerns, raised questions, and gradually revealed divine truths. He recognized the inner longing in the most hardened hearts and saw potential in the vilest sinners. For Jesus, no one was beyond the reach of the gospel. Jesus certainly believed that “none have fallen so low, none are so vile, but that they can find deliverance in Christ.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 258. Jesus looked at people through a different set of lenses than the rest of us do. He saw in each human being a reflection of the glory of the original Creation. He raised their thinking to grasp the possibility of what they might become, and many rose to meet His expectations for their lives.

**Read** Matthew 4:18, 19; Mark 12:28–34; and Luke 23:39–43. What do you find similar in Christ’s appeals to Peter and John, an unnamed questioning scribe, and the thief on the cross? Study Christ’s approach to each of these carefully. What stands out to you?

---

---

---

Everywhere Jesus went He saw spiritual possibilities; He saw potential candidates for the kingdom of God in the most unlikely circumstances. We call this ability “church growth eyes.” Church growth eyes are a cultivated sensitivity to see people as Jesus saw them, as winnable for the kingdom of God. This also involves “church growth ears,” which has to do with listening to the unspoken needs of those around us. It has to do with listening to their hearts’ longing for something they do not have, even if they have not openly expressed it.

Ask the Lord to make you sensitive to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of others. Pray that God will give you the second touch and open your eyes to the spiritual opportunities He brings before you each day to share your faith with others. Seek God for a seeing eye, a listening, sensitive heart, and a willingness to share the Christ you know and love with others, and you will be on your way to an exciting journey of a lifetime. Life will take on a whole new meaning. You will have a sense of satisfaction and joy that you have never experienced before. Only those who work for souls can know the satisfaction it can bring.

## Sensing Providential Opportunities

The book of Acts is filled with stories of how the disciples took advantage of providential opportunities for the advancement of God’s kingdom. From one end of the book to the other, we read fascinating accounts of the early church and how it grew, even despite the challenges it faced both internally and externally.

In 2 Corinthians 2:12, 13, for example, the apostle Paul tells his experience at Troas: “Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia” (*NKJV*). God miraculously opened a door for Paul to preach the gospel on the European continent, and he knew that the doors God opens today might be shut tomorrow. Seizing the opportunity and seeing the possibilities, he immediately sailed for Macedonia.

The God of the New Testament is the God of the open door—the God who provides providential opportunities for us to share our faith. Throughout the book of Acts, God is at work. There are open doors in cities, in provinces, in countries, and most of all, in individual hearts.

**Read** Acts 8:26–38. What do these verses teach about Philip’s openness to God’s leading and his responsiveness to divine opportunities?

---



---



---

“An angel guided Philip to the one who was seeking for light and who was ready to receive the gospel, and today angels will guide the footsteps of those workers who will allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify their tongues and refine and ennoble their hearts. The angel sent to Philip could himself have done the work for the Ethiopian, but this is not God’s way of working. It is His plan that men are to work for their fellow men.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 109.

If we have ears to hear and eyes to see, we, too, will be guided by unseen angels to reach truth seekers with the truths of the kingdom.

**Notice how central the Scriptures were in this story. Also, notice how at this point it was so important for someone who knew the Scriptures to expound on them. What lessons are here for us?**

---

**Further Thought:** Read Ellen G. White, “The Gospel in Samaria,” pp. 103–111, in *The Acts of the Apostles*.

All around us people are seeking for the things of eternity. As Jesus so aptly put it, “ ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few’ ” (*Matt. 9:37, NKJV*). The problem, therefore, was not with the harvest. With eyes divinely anointed, Jesus saw a plentiful harvest where the disciples saw only opposition. What was Christ’s solution to the problem? “ ‘Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest’ ” (*Matt. 9:38, NKJV*). The solution is to pray that God will send you out into His harvest.

Why not pray this prayer? “Lord, I am willing to be used for the advancement of Your kingdom. Open my eyes so that I can see the providential opportunities You are opening before me each day. Teach me to be sensitive to the people around me. Help me to speak words of hope and encouragement and share Your love and truth with those I come in contact with each day.” If you will pray this prayer, God will do some extraordinary things with your life.

### Discussion Questions:

- 1 If you have worked to bring souls to Jesus, there is one thing you know: it is not always easy, is it? Yes, of course, only God can convert hearts, but in His wisdom He has chosen to use us to be part of that process. To work for even one soul takes time, effort, patience, and a love born from above. What choices can you make that will help you have the death to self that you need in order to be an effective witness for Christ?
- 2 Who are some of the people you come in contact with who don’t know the Lord? What have you done, or are doing, or should do, to witness to them?
- 3 Think about Saul of Tarsus. Here is someone who appeared to be about as unlikely a convert as one could imagine! And yet, we know what happened to him. What should this tell us about the danger of too quickly judging others by outward appearances?
- 4 Keeping in mind the story of Saul, how should we interpret a text like Matthew 7:6: “ ‘Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces’ ” (*NKJV*)?

## Filipino Family Transformed

By STEVEN DRAGOO

A lonely literature evangelist walked the dusty hot streets of Butuan City, Philippines. All day he toiled, yet he sold nothing. This was his only source of income, so he was a little discouraged. But he determined to knock on one more door. As he approached, he prayed. Then he knocked.

A slight woman with keen eyes greeted the tired man with a smile. He made his heavenly pitch, and she could see the sincerity in his eyes and hear it in his voice. It was as if the Holy Spirit Himself was pleading with the woman.

She was a Christian, but she had squandered years with no deep interest in pursuing Christ. When the family's financial situation became grave, the woman began to hunger to learn more about Jesus. But her pockets were always empty. She had 10 children, and three more would be on the way.

How could she afford the literature evangelist's book, which she knew she just had to read and share? The book was called *The Great Controversy* and was written by Ellen White.

Without hesitation, she bought that book with resources that she did not have.

More than fifty years have passed since that day, but the fruit of that singular book is still being felt. The woman, Epefania Ty, led every single one of her children to Christ. She surely believed, as Ellen White wrote in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, page 429, that "our work for Christ is to begin with the family, in the home. . . . There is no missionary field more important than this."

One of her sons, Florente Ty, became a pastor and now is the president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Philippine Publishing House in Manila. Others became deacons, elders, deaconesses, and teachers in Adventist churches and academies. Nearly all graduated from Mountain View College, and each one who did helped the next one go to that college.

I know this woman as "Mom." I married one of her daughters, Dorcas, who has taught at Adventist academies all her life.

Mom had a stroke before I met her. She was mute, blind, and bedridden. She tried with all her heart to talk to me at our first meeting but could not. That does not really matter. She already has spoken to my heart many times



because she responded to the Holy Spirit many years earlier. Mom died in August 2013 at the age of 89.

Dozens of people have come to Christ because of a lonely literature evangelist, a powerful book, and a woman receptive to the Holy Spirit.

I'll see Mom on that appointed day.

---

STEVEN DRAGOO, pictured with Dorcas, is a Bible worker and evangelist in Christiansburg, Virginia, in the United States.



**Key Text:** *Mark 8:22–26*

**Study Focus:** *John 4:3–34, Acts 26–28.*

## ***Part I: Overview***

---

The theme of this week’s lesson, “Seeing People Through Jesus’ Eyes,” focuses especially on the significance of one person leading another to Jesus. Jesus saw people not as they were but as they might become. He saw their potential for the kingdom of God. He perceived the divine longings within each individual to know God.

When we see people through Jesus’ eyes, we see each person we meet as winnable for Christ because they were created in His image. Despite the circumstances of their lives, they have an inner desire to know Him. This was true of the Samaritan woman, the Ethiopian eunuch, the thief on the cross, the Roman centurion, and many other New Testament seekers. There is an emptiness of soul without Christ.

Recognizing this eternal truth enables us to see people with new eyes, whether or not they realize they have a God-shaped vacuum in their lives. Although individuals have felt needs that are obvious, they also have an eternal longing to know God. There is a hidden hunger of the soul. Twenty-first-century men and women are starved for a knowledge of God.

It is God’s plan that each one of us sees and seizes the opportunities around us to lead our friends to Jesus. Many people will never come unless we bring them. One of the great myths is that people have no interest in spiritual things. If we believe that people are not interested, we will not see the interest they may have. Jesus saw people as winnable, and they responded to His belief in them.

## ***Part II: Commentary***

---

### **Jesus Heals the Blind Man at Bethsaida**

Christ’s two-stage healing of the blind man at Bethsaida has special significance for our witness today. It is important to note the location of this healing. Bethsaida is believed to be located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Scholars debate its exact location. The city is frequently mentioned in the Gospels along with Jerusalem and Capernaum. It was here that Jesus called Philip, Peter, and Andrew to become His disciples.

In addition to Jesus’ compassion for this blind man, it is evident that

He was teaching a deeper spiritual lesson to His disciples. He desired them to recognize that there were needy people all around them who would be open to the gospel if their physical needs were met first. Such needy souls were present even in Bethsaida.

There are some important reasons why Jesus healed this blind man in two stages. Because this cure is the only time in the Gospels that one of Jesus' healing miracles was not instantaneous, there must be some significance in this miracle not seen in other places in Scripture. First, the miracle reveals Jesus' compassion. Have you ever walked out of a dark room into the bright light? For a moment you were blinded. It takes time for the eyes to adjust to light if you have been in the dark. If you were blind, a sudden bright light would affect you even more. Jesus healed the man in two stages so his eyes would gradually adapt to the light. Jesus is gracious. He understands our condition and lovingly ministers to our needs.

As we share the light of God's truth with our friends, it is well to remember that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (*Prov. 4:18*). Just as the light of the sun gradually rises dispelling the darkness, so the light of God's truth gradually illuminates our minds until we walk in its full light. Light can be blinding as well as illuminating. Jesus understood this principle and left His disciples a vivid example of how to present truth in the two-stage healing of this blind man.

It also is possible that Jesus desired to reveal to His followers that each one of us needs the second touch. Too often we are partially blind. We see those around us as "trees walking around." When the Holy Spirit causes the scales to fall from our eyes, we, too, will see those around us much more clearly.

Mark 8:25 says, "Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly" (*NKJV*). The Greek word for "clearly" is *delaugos*, which is better translated as "radiantly" or "in full light." When Christ heals our spiritual blindness, we see others as Christ sees them in the full light of His love.

### **Jesus Ministers to a Samaritan Woman**

The most direct route from Jerusalem to Galilee was through Samaria, but because of their animosity with the Samaritans, the Jews avoided this route. They regularly took the longer and more circuitous route through the Jordan Valley. John 4:4 states that Jesus "must needs go through Samaria." He did not need to go through Samaria geographically. There were other ways to get to Galilee. Jesus had a divine appointment at the well with a Samaritan woman that would make an eternal difference.

Jesus desired to break down the walls of prejudice between the Jews and the Samaritans. His single-minded objective was to reveal to His disciples that the Samaritans were open to the gospel. Jesus saw this troubled woman through the eyes of divine compassion. He astutely observed that she came to the well at noon, the hottest part of the day. This was a strange time to come to draw water. The village women came in the early morning hours. There they gathered, socialized, and drew their water supply for the day. Evidently this woman wanted to avoid the gossip that would ensue due to her lifestyle if she came at the same time as the rest of the women.

She may have been embarrassed. Her profligate lifestyle left her an outcast. She was well-known, and she desired to avoid as much contact as possible. Her sole desire was to quickly gather her daily supply of water and return home. She was surprised to find this Galilean Jewish Stranger at the well. She was even more surprised when He spoke to her. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. When Jesus asked her for a favor, she could not refuse. In the barren and desert lands of the Near East and Middle East, it is still believed today that water is a gift of God. To refuse a cup of water to a weary traveler is an offense against the Almighty.

Gently, almost imperceptibly, Jesus broke down the barriers between them, won her confidence, then appealed directly to her inner longings for freedom from guilt and eternal life. She first recognized He was a righteous man, then acknowledged that He was more than a religious teacher—He must be a prophet of God. As the Holy Spirit awakened divine impulses within her soul, she sensed that Jesus might be the Messiah (*John 4:11, 15, 19, 26*).

Excited, she forgot the very reason she came to the well, left her water pot behind, and ran to tell the story of her encounter with Christ. Her testimony produced a spiritual revival in the entire area (*John 4:39–41*). When the disciples returned from their journey to buy food, Jesus shared with them this divine insight: the Samaritans were open and receptive to the gospel. For the disciples, this reality was almost unbelievable. The lesson that Christ taught them is for every generation. God is working in unexpected places. Keep your eyes open, and you will see the providential working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those whom you may not expect to receive the gospel (*John 4:35–38*).

### **Illustration: Berry Picking and Soul Winning**

One night, Ellen G. White had a dream about berry picking and soul winning. Along with a large group of young people, she went berry picking. A horse-drawn wagon carried their supplies and brought them to the

location that was filled with whortleberry bushes. There are various types of whortleberries, also known as huckleberries. They are either blue or red and quite delicious. They are healthy, too, packed as they are with antioxidants. Ellen White noticed the bushes filled with berries close to the wagon and began to pick them. Soon she had filled two buckets. The others in her group scattered and came back later with empty buckets. She admonished them that while they were looking for berries a distance away from the wagon, there were plenty right before them, if they would only open their eyes to see them.

### ***Part III: Life Application***

---

#### **Start Where You Are**

Jesus urged disciples to begin sharing the gospel where they were. There is no other place to begin than the place you are. The disciples were first to share the gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and then in the uttermost parts of the earth. There are people all around us looking for the peace and purpose that only Christ can give. Jesus invites us to begin sharing His love in our families, our neighborhoods, our workplaces, and communities.

Andrew began with his own family and shared the gospel with his brother Peter. On another occasion, he developed a relationship with a little boy who, because of the confidence he had in Andrew, gave his entire lunch to Jesus. Little in the hands of Jesus is much, and small in the hands of Jesus is great. Jesus always begins with what He has. He fed five thousand on the hillsides of Galilee with only five loaves and two fishes. Andrew was not as outgoing as Peter. He did not have the same leadership qualities, but he was an introducer. Every time we read about Andrew, we find him introducing somebody to Jesus.

The Gospels are filled with stories of Jesus sharing God's love with one person at a time. A Jewish scribe, a Roman tax collector, a Canaanite woman, a Jewish religious leader, and a young thief all experienced His loving touch. They were transformed by His grace.

Think about who in your sphere of influence you may share God's love with. Who among your family or friends might be most receptive? Start there. Ask God to impress you with who might be seeking Him now. You may be surprised with how God opens doors for you to share His love with people all around you whom you never thought would be open or receptive.

*Notes*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---