

Seeing People the Way That Jesus Sees Them



SABBATH—JULY 11

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Mark 8:22–26; John 4:3–34; John 1:40, 41; Matthew 4:18, 19; Acts 8:26–38.

MEMORY VERSE: “Jesus said to them, ‘Come, follow me, and I will make you a different kind [sort; type] of fishermen. You will bring in people, not fish’ ” (Matthew 4:19, ERV).



Jesus sees all men and women as souls He can win for His kingdom.

JESUS IS THE BEST SOUL WINNER WHO EVER LIVED.

Just look in the Bible at the way Jesus works with people. Then you will learn how to lead other people to God to be saved. As we read about Jesus, we see Him walk the crowded streets in Jerusalem. We see Jesus travel the dusty roads in Judea. We watch Him sit on the grassy hillsides in Galilee. As we read about Jesus, we discover how He shows the important rules of His kingdom to people who want to be saved.

Jesus sees all men and women as souls He can win for His kingdom. Jesus looks at each person with the eyes of love. Does Jesus see Peter as a loud fishermen? No, Jesus sees Peter as a mighty preacher of the Good News. Does Jesus see James and John's bad tempers? No, Jesus sees James and John as men who announce His mercy. Jesus sees the deep wish for love in Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan woman, and the woman who bled. Jesus does not see Thomas as a doubter. No, Jesus sees Thomas as someone with honest questions. Jesus sees everyone the same: Jews and non-Jews, men and women, the thief on the cross, the Roman officer, and the man filled with demons. Jesus sees us as more than we are now. Jesus sees us the way God meant us to be. Jesus sees everyone with the loving eyes of a Savior.

THE SECOND TOUCH (Mark 8:22–26)

There is only one miracle in the whole Bible that Jesus does in two parts. It is the miracle when Jesus heals the blind man at Bethsaida. This healing miracle has important lessons for our church today. This miracle also shows us that it is God's plan for each believer to bring someone else to Jesus. The Bible says, "Jesus and his followers came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to him and begged [asked] him to touch the man" (Mark 8:22, ERV). The two most important words in this verse are "brought" and "begged [asked]." What do these two words tell us? The blind man does not come to Jesus on his own. His friends see his need. They bring him to Jesus. Maybe the blind man does not have much faith. But his friends do. They believe that Jesus will heal their friend.

In the New Testament, we read about 25 of Jesus' healing miracles. In more than half of these miracles, a family member or a friend brings the sick person to Jesus to heal. Many people will never come to Jesus on their own. They need someone who has faith to bring them. Our job as Christians is to introduce, or "bring" people to Jesus.

The second important word in Mark 8:22 is "begged." It can mean "asked." It means to ask for something in a kind and gentle way. The blind man's friends are kind. They gently ask Jesus to help their blind friend. The friends believe that Jesus wants to help their friend. They also believe Jesus has the power to heal him. Maybe the man himself does not have faith that Jesus can heal him. But his friends do. Sometimes our faith must "carry" other people to Jesus until they can learn to have faith too.

Read Mark 8:22–26. Why do you think that Jesus heals the blind man in two parts? What lessons does this story teach us about how we should share Jesus with other people?

Is it possible that we also do not see people clearly? Do we sometimes see people " 'like [the same as] trees walking around' " (Mark 8:24, ERV)? That is, do we see them as real people that God wants to save? Or do we see them only as shadows?

What else can we learn from this story? How does it show us that sinners may need both spiritual and medical help?



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A LESSON ABOUT ACCEPTING PEOPLE (John 4:3–34)

Jesus shows His followers how to look at each person in a new way. Jesus teaches His followers how God looks at people. Jesus does not see people only as they are. He sees what each person can become. Jesus always is kind to people. He shows them respect. Often, Jesus surprises His followers because He is nice and kind to the people that the Jews do not like. We see Jesus behave this way in the story about the Samaritan woman at the well.

The Archaeological Study Bible says this about the bad feelings between the Jews and the Samaritans in Jesus' day: "The separation between the Samaritans and the Judeans started a long time ago. In 2 Kings 17, we learn that the Samaritans were the future children of people who lived in Mesopotamia. The king of Assyria forced these people to live in Northern Israel after the Jews were forced to leave Northern Israel, in 722 B.C. The Samaritans who moved there mixed the worship of Yahweh with the worship of false gods." —(Zondervan Publishing, 2005), page 1727, adapted. The Samaritans build their own temple on Mount Gerizim. They also choose their own holy leaders for the temple. So, it is easy to see why Jesus' followers also are surprised when Jesus chooses to enter Samaria on His way to Galilee. Jesus' followers are surprised when Jesus does not argue with the Samaritans about religion. What does Jesus do? He knows that the Samaritan woman wants to be accepted, loved, and forgiven. So, Jesus gives her what she needs.



Jesus knows that the Samaritan woman wants to be accepted, loved, and forgiven. So, Jesus gives her the things she needs.

Read John 4:3–34. How does Jesus start a conversation with the Samaritan woman? How does she answer Him? How do Jesus' followers act? How does Jesus use this experience to teach His followers about how God sees people?

Jesus wants to teach His followers an important lesson. They need to learn that "those people who have Jesus' Spirit will look at everyone with eyes of love. This love comes from God."—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*, June 20, 1892, adapted.

Are there people around you that you feel you cannot respect? If so, who are they? Why must you change your feelings about this group or groups? How can you change your feelings for them?

START WHERE YOU ARE (John 1:40, 41)

Someone said, “In life the only place to start from is where you are. There is no other place to start.” Jesus shows us this important rule in Acts 1:8 (ERV), when He says, “ ‘But the Holy Spirit will come on you and give you power. You will be my witnesses. You will tell people everywhere about me—in Jerusalem, in the rest of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world [earth].’ ”

Jesus’ message to His followers is clear: “Start where you are. Tell people where you live about God. Start by doing the work that needs to be done around you!”

You do not need to have a lot of education to start working for God. You also do not need to have more skills than other people. Yes, God-given skills are helpful when we use them in the right way. But in the end, all you need is your own love for God and a love for souls. If you are willing to share Jesus, then God will open the way for you.

Read John 1:40, 41; John 6:5–11; and John 12:20–26. What do these verses tell you about Andrew’s spiritual eyesight and his way of sharing Jesus?

Andrew’s experience teaches us many things. He starts with his own family. He first tells his brother, Peter, about Jesus. Andrew also is kind to a little boy who gives Jesus the food He uses for a miracle. Andrew knows just what to do with the Greeks too. Does Andrew argue with them about God and religion? Not at all! Andrew sees that the Greeks need Jesus. So, Andrew takes them to Jesus.

The secret to winning people to Jesus is showing them that you care. You do that by building strong friendships. Think about the people closest to you who may not know Jesus. Do they see you as a caring and loving person? Do they see in you the peace that they want so badly? Does your life make people want to know more about Jesus? When we share Jesus, we make friends for God. In this way, we lead people to become Christians. Then we share with them God’s end-time message about Bible truth. In time, these friends may become Seventh-day Adventist Christians too.

Why is it often so hard to lead family members to Jesus? What has been your own experience? What important rules about sharing Jesus with family members can you share with the class?



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HOW TO GET ALONG WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE (Matthew 4:18, 19)

Jesus is an expert at getting along with people. Jesus meets people who have a hard time getting along with other people. Jesus shows these people that He accepts them. He listens carefully to them. He asks them questions. He shows them God's truth. Jesus sees into people's hearts. He sees that even people with the hardest hearts want a better life. Jesus also sees the good in the worst sinners. In Jesus' eyes, the Good News can save anyone who accepts it. Jesus believes that "no person has fallen so low into sin or is so bad that Jesus cannot save him or her."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 258, adapted. Jesus looks at people in a different way than the rest of us do. Jesus sees in each person what he or she is meant to be. Jesus helps people to see how they can become better. So, many people become better in this life because of Jesus.



Ask God for eyes to see and a heart that listens.

Read Matthew 4:18, 19; Mark 12:28–34; and Luke 23:39–43. What is the same about Jesus' words to Peter and Andrew, a religious leader, and the thief on the cross? Study Jesus' plan for touching each person's heart. What is the most important part of this plan to you?

Everywhere that Jesus goes He sees the chance for spiritual growth. Jesus sees people that He can save for God's kingdom. Jesus finds these people in strange places. In these places, you may think there is nobody to save. Jesus has what we call "church-growth eyes." That means understanding people as Jesus sees them. Jesus sees everyone as someone to win for His kingdom. Christians with church-growth eyes also need to have "church-growth hearts." Church-growth hearts is a word picture for people who listen with their hearts. They listen to the wish in people's hearts for something they do not have. People who listen carefully to other people can understand what is really in another person's heart, even if he or she does not talk about it.

Ask Jesus to help you to see and understand the Holy Spirit's work in other people's lives. Please pray that God will open your eyes to the chances He brings to you each day to share your faith. Ask God for eyes to see and a heart that listens. Ask God to make you want to share Jesus and His love with people. Then you will feel a joy that is deeper than anything you experienced before.

WHEN GOD OPENS THE WAY FOR US TO TELL PEOPLE ABOUT JESUS (Acts 8:26–38)

The book of Acts is filled with stories. The stories show how Jesus' followers share the Good News. Jesus' followers share God's saving message with everyone they can. From beginning to end, Acts shows us stories about how the New Testament church grows. We see how the church grows in good times and in bad.

In 2 Corinthians 2:12, 13, NLV, Paul talks about his experience at Troas: "When I arrived in the city of Troas, the Lord opened the door for me to preach the Good News of Christ. I was worried because I could not find our brother Titus. After saying good-bye, I went on my way to the country of Macedonia." God opens the way for Paul to preach the Good News in Europe. Paul knows that this is a miracle. Paul also knows that the "doors" that God opens today may be shut tomorrow. So, Paul sails to Macedonia right away.

The God of the New Testament is the God of the "open door." That is, God opens the way for us to share our faith. The book of Acts shows us that God is busy opening doors for His people in cities, in countries, and in kingdoms. Most important, God is busy opening doors in people's hearts.

Read Acts 8:26–38. What do these verses teach us about Philip? In what way is Philip open to God's leading in his life? What does Philip do when God gives him the chance to share his faith?

"An angel leads Philip to the person who wants to know more about the Bible. This person is ready for the Good News. Today, angels also will lead workers who allow the Holy Spirit to give them holy words and hearts. The angel that led Philip can do the work himself. But God does not work this way. It is God's plan for humans to work with Him to save other humans."—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 109, adapted. So, we need to have hearts to listen and spiritual eyes to understand. Then God will send His angels to help us touch people's hearts.

Do you see how important the Bible is in Philip's story? Also, do you see that it is important for someone who knows Bible truth to share his knowledge with the one who wants to know more? What does that teach us?



We need to have spiritual hearts to listen and spiritual eyes to understand. Then God will send His angels to help us touch people's hearts.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Gospel in Samaria,” pages 103–111, in *The Acts of the Apostles*.

All around us people are searching for everlasting life and heaven. Jesus says, “ ‘There is such a big harvest [crop] of people to bring in. But there are only a few workers to help harvest [cut the crops; collect] them’ ” (Matthew 9:37, ERV). Is the problem with the harvest? Not at all! The problem is that there are not enough workers. Jesus sees what His followers cannot see. What is Jesus’ answer to the problem? “ ‘God owns the harvest [crops]. Ask him to send more workers to help gather [collect] his harvest’ ” (Matthew 9:38, ERV). The way to solve the problem is to pray that God will send us out to collect His “crops” of people.

Here is a prayer we can pray: “Lord, I want You to use me to build up Your kingdom. Open my eyes. Give me spiritual understanding to see all the doors that You open for me every day. Teach me to care about the needs of the people around me. Help me to say kind words to people to encourage them and give them hope. Help me also to share Your love and truth with the people I meet every day.” Pray this prayer. Then God will do some wonderful and surprising things with your life.



Pray that God will send us out to collect His “crops” of people.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Have you worked to bring souls to Jesus? It is not always easy, right? True, only God can change hearts. But He chose us to be part of that work. What does it take to win one soul to Jesus? It takes time, a lot of work, a patient spirit, and a love that comes from above. Your selfish heart must die too. What choices can you make to die to self so that you can win souls to Jesus?
- ② Who are some of the people you meet every day who do not know Jesus? What have you done to share Jesus with them? What more can you do?
- ③ Think about Saul from Tarsus. He is the last person people thought would become a Christian, right? But that is exactly what happened to him. What lesson should this teach us about not judging people by the way they look and act on the outside?
- ④ Think some more about Saul’s story. Now read Matthew 7:6. How do you understand Jesus’ words here?

A Christian bookseller walked the hot streets of Butuan City, Philippines. He worked hard all day. But he sold no books. This job was his only income. So, he felt disappointed. He decided to knock on one more door. First, he prayed.

A small woman with smart eyes greeted the tired man. She smiled at him. He told her about the books he had for sale. The woman felt the Holy Spirit had led this man to her.

The woman was a Christian. For many years, she had not shown a deep interest in Jesus. Then her family became poor. At that time, the woman wanted to learn more about Jesus. But she had no money. She already had 10 children. Soon she would have three more. How could she afford this man's book? But she knew she must buy, read, and share this special book. It was named *The Great Controversy*, by Ellen G. White. The book was too expensive. But she bought it anyway.

The woman's name was Epefania Ty. More than 50 years later, the book Epefania bought that day continues to change her family's life. She led every one of her children to Jesus. She believed what Ellen White wrote in *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 6, page 429: "Our work for Jesus must start in our homes. . . . It is the most important place where we can witness for Jesus."—Adapted.

One of Epefania Ty's sons is named Florente. He became a pastor. He is the president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Philippine Printing Press in the city of Manila. Some of Epefania's other children became leaders and teachers in Adventist churches and schools. Almost all of Epefania's children graduated from Mountain View College. Each child who graduated helped the next child go to school there.

My name is Steven Dragoo. I knew this woman, Epefania, as "Mom." I married one of Epefania's daughters, Dorcas. Dorcas has taught in Adventist schools her whole life.

Mom had a stroke before I met her. She could not talk, see, or get out of bed. She tried with all her heart to talk to me when we first met. She could not. But she did not need words to move my heart. I am moved each time I think about how she answered the Holy Spirit many years earlier. Mom died in August 2013 at the age of 89.

Dozens of people have accepted Jesus because of a lonely Bible bookseller, a powerful book, and a woman whose heart was open to the Holy Spirit. I look forward to seeing Mom again at the Second Coming.

INSIDE
Story
by STEVEN DRAGOO

**A FILIPINO FAMILY'S
LIFE-CHANGING
STORY**



The book was too expensive for the woman's budget. But she knew she must buy, read, and share this special book.



Steven Dragoo, shown with Dorcas, is a Bible worker in Christiansburg, Virginia, where he shares the Good News about Jesus.