

I. Introduction

A. Blind spot

1. Human eye: both eyes have a natural blind spot, or scotoma. Everyone.
 - a. They're normal and you probably don't notice them.
 - b. Skipping the technical, your brain fills in what's missing.
 - c. Our blind spots aren't inherently worrisome.
2. Human life: every person has blind spots in their lives and unlike the eyes, we must be concerned about these.
 - a. These are not only an area of weakness but an area of weakness that we cannot see or don't believe.
 - b. We don't recognize these as an area of struggle because we're not aware of the problem; therefore, we don't know the danger we are in.

B. Brief review, Mark 8:31-10:45

1. Jesus says that He will die (willingly) and rise again.
2. Jesus says that if you want to be His disciple (follow Him), you have to deny yourself and take up your cross.

*Even though Jesus clearly spells it out and the truth is right before their eyes, the disciples (and us) cannot see it because it is a primary blind spot.

**I believe that today is a defining moment for you and for me.

II. What do you want?

A. V 32a

1. Jesus: walking purposefully toward Jerusalem
2. Disciples: seen miracles, intense exchanges with religious leaders, and unbelievable claims. They knew something is up and they can feel it in the air tonight (Oh Lord), and I've been waiting for this moment for all my life (Oh Lord)...
3. Those following along: fear, something feels foreboding, they always feel like somebody's watching me. ...

B. 32b-34

1. With dust-filled lungs and some confusion in their minds, the disciples hear Jesus talk of His death, in detail, a third time.
2. And, for the third time fail or refuse to get it
 - a. Every time Jesus shares His mission and future, the disciples fall apart.
 - b. First time, Peter takes Jesus aside and rebukes. Second time, they are all baffled and start to talk about who's the greatest. And finally now, they make a completely inappropriate request.

*This, right here, is the disciples' blind spot (and yours, and mine too). They can't or won't understand the cross as it relates to Jesus first and to them second.

- c. Three times Jesus talks of His suffering and death and each time, like a future robot from a '70s show, they respond with, "Does not compute."
- C. Vs. 35-41

1. James and John (along with the rest) were focused on who gets to be the leader.
 - a. "Do whatever we ask."
 - b. "What do you want me to do for you?"
 - c. "Because of our connection, give us a position that will communicate authority and importance."
2. Jesus (we're assuming He's exhausted and disappointed) responds to the request.
 - a. Cup and baptism (sacrifice and suffering)
 - b. "And you will, even though you have no idea what you just said, but your request is out of line."
3. The others were angry, not because they were embarrassed but because they got beat to the punch of what they all wanted.

*This misguided hope of Messianic glory motivating the disciples enables us to see the gulf of separation in Jesus' mission from the natural aspiration of those who follow Him.

D. Vs. 42-45

1. Disciples focus on who gets to be leader, but Jesus teaches them about what true leadership looks like, not in the coming Kingdom, but as His disciples right now.
 - a. Leadership like Jesus has been elusive in the generations following.
 - 1) Crusades: stop the advance of Islam but at the cost of thousands and thousands of lives
 - 2) Other end: leading by example as more passive approach
 - 3) Others avoided all together: opted for solitude, devotion to prayer, life absent from the fallen world
 - b. All these attempts in the name of obedience to Scripture and the teachings of Jesus
2. Disciples' perception of leadership
 - a. Ruled harshly by Rome; saw the corrupt nature of the religious leaders; therefore leadership is all about position, connection, and opportunity
 - b. Capitalize on their connection to Jesus by seizing the opportunity of His death which would leave them in a position to make changes and shape their world as they saw it needed to be
 - c. Saw leadership as either good or bad

*Their understanding of leadership had been built by the world around them rather than the God they served. Authority was about position, about being at the top and the first to the top makes the rules.

*Church, if the way we lead looks like the way the world leads then we are not leading like Jesus.

3. Jesus' redefinition of leadership and authority
 - a. The earthly construct of leadership and authority is temporary, based on status and privilege.
 - b. The earthly leaders about to crucify Me have very low-level authority compared to heavenly authority.

*Jesus isn't **asking** them to do leadership a different way, He **expects** them to. Jesus doesn't **ask** us to post differently on social media, He **expects** us to post differently.

4. What Jesus expects

- a. Earthly - directive leadership resulting in obedience
 - b. Jesus - leading through service
 - 1) Servant/slave: house servant not a desirable state of life; slave meant complete loss of autonomy and status
 - 2) Forfeiting my own rights to serve all others voluntarily and sacrificially, not my own interests
5. Before they could reshape the conversation, Jesus added, "For even the Son of Man ..."

*Leadership currency in the Kingdom of God is found in the sacrificial giving of oneself to others, as is evidenced by the example of Jesus, set for all His disciples.

*Jesus' focus was on the cross, not the crown.

III. Application

A. Our concept of following Jesus is likely not what He is actually calling us to.

- 1. We pursue the best for us first rather than follow Jesus into death.
- 2. Let me paraphrase Jesus' "pitch" to follow Him:

"Let me tell you about an opportunity I can share with you. It won't involve using any of your talents or skills, because honestly you have nothing to offer but your helplessness. It will involve you giving up positions of honor and letting everyone else go ahead of you. It will involve giving up your rights and becoming the last of all. And if you do it right, you'll probably get listed in Failure magazine."

B. Our blind spot

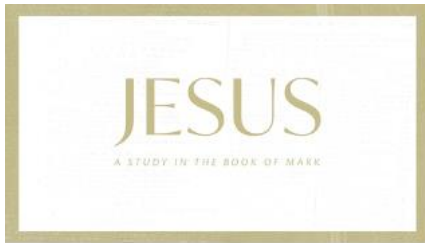
- 1. We fail to see (whether intentionally or unintentionally) our blind spots: self-advancement or self-defending, a name for ourselves, great reputation, getting ahead, or simply being right.
- 2. Jesus' call/expectation: admit helplessness, give up rights, take the last place and become the servant of all.
 - a. Give up everything and follow Him.
 - b. Still, as Plato said, "How can anyone be happy when he is the slave of anyone else at all?"

*We want Jesus without the cross.

DEFINING MOMENT

C. Here is the only relevant question at this defining moment and it's the same one Jesus asked His disciples.

- 1. "What do you want me to do for you?"
- 2. What do you ask for?



MARK 10:32-45

DEFINING MOMENT

FEBRUARY 7, 2021 | PASTOR MATT WHITEFORD



In addition to this study, attached at the end is an article called **"5 BLIND SPOTS BLOCKING GOD'S WORK IN YOU"** by Steve Arterburn. This might be helpful in your conversation as a group this week.

GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER (USE JUST ONE OR ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS TO CONNECT AS YOU START YOUR CONVERSATION)

- 1 **Among your siblings or friends, what were you most likely to be first at when you were a teenager?** Examples could include athletic competitions, cleaning your plate at dinner, getting on the honor roll, getting detention, etc.

Our ambitions as children and teenagers are often quite different than our ambitions as adults. In Mark 10:32-45, we will see James' and John's ambition to rule with Jesus in the Kingdom of God. Jesus used the encounter to once again teach about true greatness in God's Kingdom, which is vastly different than what is considered greatness here on Earth.

QUICK REVIEW (OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE WHAT MOST STOOD OUT FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

Looking back at your notes from this week's message, was there anything you heard that caught your attention, encouraged, challenged, or confused you?

DIG DEEPER (OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURE OR COMPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURES FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

- 1 Someone read **Mark 10:32-34**.

³² And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to Him, ³³ saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him over to the Gentiles. ³⁴ And they will mock Him and spit on Him, and flog Him and kill Him. And after three days He will rise."

As Jesus began walking toward Jerusalem, Mark explained that the disciples were astonished but the people who followed Jesus were afraid. In your experience, how do astonishment and fear play a part in following Jesus? When has following Jesus astonished you? When has it made you afraid?

How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus described what was going to happen to Him when they got to Jerusalem - afraid, confused, cynical, or something else?

For the third and final time, Jesus predicted His death and resurrection. This was the fullest of His three predictions. In addition to what He had already said, He pointed out where these events will take place and what the role of the Gentiles will be. The progression from condemnation to mocking, being spit on, flogging, and finally death made clear that the focus of coming events was His death.

- 2 Someone read **Mark 10:35-45**.

³⁵ And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to Him and said to Him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." ³⁶ And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³⁷ And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." ³⁸ Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" ³⁹ And they said to Him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with

which I am baptized, you will be baptized,⁴⁰ but to sit at My right hand or at My left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”⁴¹ And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.⁴² And Jesus called them to Him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.⁴³ But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,⁴⁴ and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

What made James’ and John’s request of Jesus not just inappropriate, but short-sighted?

In v. 39, what did Jesus mean when He used the words “cup” and “baptism?” Do you think James and John really understood what they were asking for?

It’s clear that James and John expected Jesus to come into a position of authority as the new king of Israel. Those who would sit on His right and His left would be His chief lieutenants. Jesus quickly corrected their thinking. “Drink this cup” is a phrase which meant, “share the same fate.” In the Old Testament, the cup was a metaphor for wrath (Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:17–23). Both the cup and the baptism referred to Jesus’ coming suffering and death for the sins of the world. Both would remind Mark’s readers of the sacraments of communion and baptism and help them understand that to participate in these was to open themselves up to suffering and death - an apt word for those facing death in the coliseum.

What was it that offended the other disciples about the request of James and John? How did Jesus use the indignation to convey new insights to the disciples? What did He teach them?

As self-serving as the request of James and John had been, the response of the other ten disciples is not much better. They got angry when they heard what happened. All 12 shared the same view of the Kingdom, it seems, namely that it would be earthly and political, with Jesus as the reigning king and them as His chief lieutenants. In response, Jesus revealed why He must suffer and die. It is in order to redeem the many. This statement of Jesus also defined the theme of the final section of Mark’s Gospel - the suffering and death of Jesus on behalf of humanity.

LIVE IT OUT (DISCUSS HOW YOU CAN LIVE OUT THE TRUTHS YOU JUST OBSERVED IN SCRIPTURE)

- 1** **Think for a moment about this: In what ways have you displayed a similar (short-sided or self-serving) attitude towards Jesus like James and John did in vs. 35-37? If so, what led to that attitude and how has Jesus used that to transform you?**
- 2** **How can we keep our desires or ambitions from getting in the way of serving God sacrificially?**
- 3** **Matt wrapped up the message on Sunday saying that the only relevant question at this defining moment is what Jesus asked His disciples: “What do you want Me to do for you?” Knowing that we likely have similar blind spots that the disciples had, what would you ask for?**
- 4** **BONUS QUESTION: Of the five blind spots shared in the article by Steve Arterburn at the end of this discussion guide, which one have you most commonly struggled with? Was the alternative insight offered with that blind spot helpful and what would it look like to apply this to your life right now?**

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time in prayer with your group.

NEXT WEEK:

Read **MARK 11:1-25** before Sunday and your next home group gathering. Remember to take good notes so you are ready to add to the discussion your home group will have!

PRAISE/PRAYER REQUESTS (TRY TO HAVE ONE OR A FEW PEOPLE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME)

Use this space or the back of this paper to write the requests and find a way to share those with the group so you can be praying for each other during the week.

TIPS ON GROUP PRAYER

Prayer is an important part of being in a Home Group. Here are some tips to help make group prayer be a life-giving aspect of your group.

PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME: Anyone in the group is free to introduce a prayer request or praise during the prayer time. Once a topic is introduced, the group focuses on that request alone. Once it's covered, the group moves on to the next request or praise.

PRAY MORE THAN ONCE: If your group is focusing on one topic at a time, each person is encouraged to pray several times during the prayer time for those topics they feel most led to pray about. No one should be required to pray.

KEEP PRAYERS SHORT AND SIMPLE: Group prayer goes better when members keep their prayers short and to the point. When someone prays for a long time, it's hard for the other members to stay focused and long prayers tend to intimidate those who are just learning to pray out loud in a group. No one should be required to pray out loud.

How to Use this Discussion Guide

This guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create a healthy environment for Gospel community, growing in friendship, and becoming like Jesus together. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, please review the guide before your group meets to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel the need to ask every question during your group discussion. This guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help your group grow in Gospel community. In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead. We are praying for you too!

Visit cpmodesto.org/groupleaders to download the sermon discussion guide every week. Not in a Home Group, but want to be in one? Visit cpmodesto.org/homegroups and use the Home Group Finder!

COMMENTARY

MARK 10:32-45

10:32. The picture that comes across in this verse is of the disciples lagging behind. They do not want to go with Jesus. They were confused and frightened. Jesus had faced much opposition and they knew they were headed into enemy territory. But Jesus was determined to go, no matter what. The disciples may have been confused about Jesus' absolute insistence on going up to Jerusalem. Two groups were following Jesus—the 12 disciples, whom Jesus pulled aside to give further instructions, and other followers of Jesus who were heading to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival.

10:33-34. At Jesus' first prediction of His death (Mark 8:31), He gives the bare announcement. At the second, the hint of betrayal is there (Mark 9:31). And at the third prediction the jesting, the mocking and the scourging are identified. Furthermore, Jesus would be handed over to the Gentiles. This was the ultimate rejection and humiliation that His own people could lay on Him.

At the beginning of Mark's Gospel, we compared Jesus with a hero - a larger-than-life hero. It becomes clear just how heroic He is as we see Him headed for Jerusalem, even though He knew what awaited Him there.

10:35. The insensitivity of James and John in this verse prefigures the insensitivity of the three disciples in the garden of Gethsemane when they could not stay awake while Jesus was in great agony. It is clear from their words that they

did not recognize that Jesus would die; they were expecting Him to inherit His Kingdom. Some interpreters believe they spoke from faith, because they believed Jesus would die but would overcome through His resurrection. In this case, they wanted to be a part of His Kingdom when He came back victoriously. This interpretation does not fit with the rest of Mark's Gospel or with the general disbelief of the disciples.

10:36-37. Jesus, however, did not rebuke them, but invited them to tell Him the desires of their hearts. They were asking for seats of high honor, ruling positions. Although they believed that Jesus would eventually conquer, they misunderstood what kind of kingdom Jesus had come to establish through His suffering and death. To balance this, however, we must remember that James and John loved Jesus and were loyal to Him. Although they misunderstood His words, at least they promised they would be with Him.

10:38. Again, Jesus did not rebuke them, perhaps because He knew of their love for Him. But Jesus asked them if they were prepared to suffer as He would suffer. Jesus asked them, as He asks all disciples, to count the cost (cf. Luke 14:27-33). In the Old Testament, "the cup" signified divine judgment on sin. By "His cup," Jesus was probably referring to the divine judgment poured out on Him on behalf of all humanity. This phrase further points out the disciples' lack of understanding.

10:39-40. Whether or not they knew what they agreed to, Jesus told James and John they would share His sufferings. James was martyred when He was beheaded by Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:2), thus becoming the first apostle to be martyred. Although tradition says that John was the only apostle not to be martyred, he was persecuted for Christ and eventually died in exile on the island of Patmos. Jesus' reply that their request was not His to grant shows His reverent submission to His Father. In all matters, He submitted to His Father's will.

10:41. Mark's statement about the other disciples that they became indignant is an obvious understatement. Their anger and resentment were probably not because of their concern for the Lord. They were probably thinking of their own positions. How did the other disciples hear about this incident? Did James and John tell the others? Were they overheard? Did Salome brag to others in the group that her sons would receive special privilege? While all these may be possible, the Bible does not specify how they knew.

10:42-44. Jesus called the disciples together. They had been with many other people, but Jesus pulled them away to teach them, as He had done so often in the past. This act reminded them that they were to live in unity. His words underscored the need for this. A good example of Gentile lordship can be found in Daniel 4. King Nebuchadnezzar believed that His Kingship gave Him the right to claim the status of God: "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by My mighty power and for the glory of My majesty?" (v. 30). God took away His authority and He lived as an animal, "until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone He wishes" (v. 25).

This is why God did not want King David to take a census (2 Sam. 24:1-17). God wanted His ruler, the shepherd placed over the sheep, to put his trust in God, not in the number of warriors. Such things are characteristic of unbelievers. At the time of Jesus, Gentile lords (such as the Caesars) loved to equate themselves with gods. They placed their likenesses on coins to remind people of their self-proclaimed divinity. They did not rule their subjects with benevolence, but they required them to bow down and worship them. Do not be like these Gentiles, Jesus told His disciples. He repeated essentially what He had been saying for the last two chapters of Mark: To be great, you must serve.

10:45. In this verse, Jesus delivered the stunning summary of all His teaching on servanthood in the Gospel of Mark. He gave the disciples the supreme example of servanthood: Himself. And they had seen Him serve. They had seen Him touch the unclean. They had seen Him heal the multitudes. They had seen Him feed thousands. Before it was over, they would see Him wash the grime from their feet. They had seen the only One Who truly deserved to be called "Lord" place Himself in humble service to others.

If we remember where Jesus came from, we can see how absurd this must have sounded to them. Jesus had ten thousand angels at His disposal. He was the Creator of everything that exists. He was in eternal fellowship with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He shared their glory and splendor. And yet He gave it all up and was born in a stable to a poor teenager in order to draw all people to God.

5 Blind Spots Blocking God's Work in You

Steve Arterburn

Take a look around you. Can you see everything in your surroundings? Most of us would say yes. But the truth is, whether your vision is 20/20 or corrected by lenses, the answer is the same: no matter how hard you try, you cannot see everything around you.

The human eye has a blind spot—a small area on the retina, about the size of a pencil eraser, without photoreceptors. We usually aren't aware of this blind spot because our brain fills in this blank area with the surrounded images, making our vision field appear seamless.

We also have blind spots or gaps in our perception that keep us from seeing the truth about others and ourselves. Because we are at times blinded to reality, we are immobilized and crippled by guilt and shame, anger and bitterness, worry and regret, and fear and anxiety.

Too many people live needlessly in defeat, immobilized by their own mistakes or the mistakes of others. They stumble around in life with blind spots blocking the work God wants to do in them. But it doesn't have to be this way. No matter how broken or hurt, every person can discover the way to healing, hope, and a joyful new way of living.

1. Stubborn Resistance - Blinded by Denial

Many people hang on to stubborn resistance just as Pharaoh did in the days of Moses. Moses went to Pharaoh and asked to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Pharaoh resisted with entrenched stubbornness. So God sent plagues on Pharaoh's nation to turn his thinking around. Now, if I had been Pharaoh, I might have resisted Moses' request to let my slaves just walk out of my country. But after the gnats, it would not have been a problem at all. If not the gnats, the flies surely would have turned my heart. One fly is enough for me. I know where those dirty, hairy little legs have been. But the gnats and flies were not enough to break through Pharaoh's stubborn resistance. Nor were painful, infectious boils. He remained stubborn until Egypt was utterly devastated. But still he stubbornly resisted, finally to his own undoing.

We do the same thing. We become kings of stubborn resistance in our own little worlds. We develop habits and hang-ups we will not even think of releasing. We hurt ourselves and those around us, allowing boils to fester in almost every area of our lives. Rather than looking for a way to remove these blind spots, we deny we have a problem.

- **Willingness: The Key to Overcoming Stubborn Resistance.**

If you realize you have a tendency toward stubborn resistance, be grateful, because it's not easy for people to see their need to change in this area. Stubborn resistance is by its very nature stubbornly resistant to change. So don't expect to overcome it in a moment or a day. It will take time and work.

Open-mindedness is a valuable assessment tool, but it's worthless unless it's followed up with a willingness to act. A person with willingness goes beyond good intentions. There's no "try" or "want to" for the willing. The willing actually get things done. Willingness moves beyond desire to doing whatever it takes to make things different. Willingness lead to real change.

2. Arrogant Entitlement - Blinded by Selfishness

We live in a world that encourages my-way thinking. We're bombarded with ads that tell us to "have it your way" and "you deserve a break today." Go out there and get what you deserve no matter what it does to others. Buy this luxury product because you deserve it. You're entitled to be happy, so if you're not getting what makes you happy, you're entitled to find it elsewhere. And even if in our hearts we know our thoughts and actions are wrong, we rationalize so that we can continue to indulge.

Self-centered people want from others what is "due" to them. They've staked out their territory, and they expect everyone to honor their boundaries and their rules. In short, they are stuck in an immature way of thinking. Mature adults learn that their adolescent, selfish sense of entitlement hinders their ability to achieve all that God has in mind for them. They broaden their viewpoint from self-absorption to include the needs of others.

- **Humility: The Key to Overcoming Arrogant Entitlement**

Humility eliminates the self-centered arrogance that results in entitlement. Humility doesn't climb over others. It reaches out to connect with others, appreciating them for who they are, not for what they can do for you. A humble person doesn't use everything within himself to further his own cause, but rather he desires to use whatever strength or position he has to help others and meet their needs. As a result, the relational blind spot is removed, giving him access to a rich life full of valuable connections with family and friends. "Humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time, he will lift you up." (1 Peter 5:6)

3. Justifiable Resentment - Blinded by Bitterness

Are you angry about something in your life? Has someone hurt you, and you feel you have every right to remain angry and bitter? Have you done something so awful you cannot forgive yourself? What I'm addressing here are not the petty little resentments that momentarily upset us from day to day but instead betrayals and deep hurts. The kind that has you believing that anyone who went through such an experience would feel the same way. If you're carrying around anything like this, it's as dangerous as radioactive material. And it can eat away at who you are at the deepest levels of your being.

- **Forgiveness: The Key to Overcoming Justifiable Resentment**

Without exception we are to forgive, no matter how strongly we feel that the severity of the offense justifies our continued resentment. Often we look for any possible loophole to withhold forgiveness, but there is none. We must forgive.

When the hurt is deep, forgiveness can seem too much to ask. Some are unwilling to forgive because they believe the abusers deserve the worst. Or they think forgiving lets the perpetrators off scot-free and seems to allow them to think that their despicable act was justifiable. I've been the victim of offenses I thought were so great, no one could ask me to forgive them. I was astounded at the depth of pain, and could not believe I had to forgive these people. Anyone could see I was entitled to any amount of anger, rage, resentment, or bitterness. But I knew in my heart the longer I held onto the resentment, the more it would hurt me. The forgiveness was not instantaneous; it took time. Forgiveness is a process rather than an event. One of the most beautiful promises in Scripture is found in these words of Jesus, inviting us to a higher way of living than the world offers: *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.* (Matthew 11:28-29) Jesus desires peace for our souls. So at some point, we must courageously move toward giving up our resentment and begin replacing it with forgiveness.

4. Disconnected Isolation - Blinded by Detachment

Life alone is easier, but it's emptier. Isolated from relationships that bring out the inner truth about ourselves, we don't have to face who we really are. We remain unaware of the areas in which we need to grow. We stop developing the maturity and wisdom God wants for us. The disconnected life is based on an assessment that the world is unsafe, people are not dependable or worth the trouble, or their own relational skills are inadequate.

- **Intimacy: The Key to Overcoming Disconnected Isolation**

Isolation is a blind spot that blocks us from deep joy and the way humans are designed to live as relational beings in a community with others. If we've been hurt in the past, intimacy is the opposite of what we want. Who can blame the abused woman, the abandoned boy? The world and people seem unsafe. But Jesus has given us his body—the church—a community of refuge and love. "Anyone who loves another brother or sister is living in the light and does not cause others to stumble" (1 John 2:10).

5. Willful Ignorance - Blinded by Disobedience

Psalm 119:29 issues a plea to God that we all need to echo: "Keep me from lying to myself." We all do it. Even when we don't lie to ourselves overtly, we keep busy enough to avoid looking at the true reality of a situation. So often we are ignorant of our own blind spots. The prophet Isaiah addressed the people of his day, hoping to shake them up so they could see the truth from which they had turned away. He upbraided them for their empty religious ritualism, urged them to turn from the idols they were worshipping, and warned them of the coming downfall of the kingdom if they did not change. He could just as easily have been talking to us today.

- **Obedience: The Key to Willful Ignorance**

It would be natural to think that the key to overcoming willful ignorance is knowledge, but that is not the case. The key is obedience. To understand why this is true, there's no better explanation than what we find in the Bible. To know God's will we have to do more than just read about it; we have to do what he tells us to do. John 8:31-32 tells us if we *follow* the teachings of Christ, we will come to know the truth. We read the truth and incorporate it into our lives. We respond by doing the right thing. Acting on truth removes our blind spots because truth helps us see beyond those blind spots into the wide-open vistas of reality. All truth is from God, and truth conforms us to the way he created us to live. Because he loves us, he created us to live in ways that produce the most satisfying, joyful, loving, and harmonious lives possible. *You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free* (John 8:32).

Read this article online: <https://www.oneplace.com/ministries/new-life-live/read/articles/5-blind-spots-blocking-gods-work-in-you-16026.html>