

Lesson 84

TEXT Psalm 121:1,2; Matthew 14:22-33; Luke 11:34-36

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Genesis 13:10; Job 31:1; Matthew 13:15,16; Mark 9:47; Luke 24:31

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to list the pitfalls of focusing their eyes on the things which are promoted by the devil and his followers. In contrast they will also be able to list the benefits that come to those who keep their eyes on things that are spiritually beneficial.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way. — Psalm 119:37

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. — 1 John 2:16

**ANSWER
TITLE:** **White Water**
**SEARCH
TITLE:** **Eyes**

Reference Information

The Sea of Galilee, on which the storm mentioned in our text occurred, is about 13 miles long and up to 8 miles wide. Located about 60 miles north of Jerusalem in the Jordan Valley, it is 685 feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea and varies in depth up to 150 feet.

In Bible times, the lake was productive enough not only to supply fresh fish for the surrounding region, but also to support a thriving industry in Capernaum and other shore towns where large quantities of fish were salted and dried for shipment throughout the Roman Empire. Winds often sweep in from the west through the Valley of

Doves which acts as a funnel, trapping the westerly winds and causing them to swirl violently over the lake, creating waves and danger to small craft.

In the Bible, the word *eye* is often used to denote spiritual perception and understanding; i.e., “The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes” (Psalm 19:8). How important it is, then, what our natural eyes behold. Knowledge is gained by our perception of what we see, and it can be to our good or our detriment depending on what we look at—what we focus our eyes upon.

YOUR OPENER

Eyes

TEXT: Psalm 121:1,2; Matthew 14:22-33; Luke 11:34-36

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KEY VERSE: For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. — 1 John 2:16

RESPONSES

1. Allow time for students to give their thoughts. They will probably conclude that it is possible for temptation to come through what a person sees, and that this is a danger that should be guarded against. Discussion should bring out that their eyes are the gateway to their minds. This makes the controlling of what their eyes gaze upon of vital importance.

2. Joshua 5:13 — Joshua saw the captain of the host of the Lord.

2 Samuel 11:2 — David looked upon Bathsheba.

2 Kings 2:10-12 — Elisha saw Elijah depart in a whirlwind.

2 Kings 6:17 — Elisha's servant's eyes were opened to see the chariots of fire.

Matthew 14:30 — Peter looked at the elements and was afraid.

Acts 22:6 — Saul saw a great light from Heaven.

After the students relate their thoughts concerning each incident, draw their attention once again to the importance of focusing on the right things.

The Bible says that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. One of the most striking examples of this statement is the human eye. It is mentioned at least 534 times in Scripture. Our eyes were created to adapt to extreme sunlight or near darkness. In the dark, their sensitivity increases 10,000 times so that one can detect a faint glow, less than a thousandth as bright as a candle's glow. God gave us color vision superior to most animals'. Each retina contains about 130 million cells which connect with the brain to provide instantaneous response. It has been estimated that from the vast panorama presented by our eyes, each eye can send a billion impulses per second to the brain—then our mind chooses significant details. We can stare at a sign without becoming aware of its message, while on the other hand, a fragmentary glimpse of some familiar object attracts our attention immediately.

1. In considering the wonders of this organ of our bodies, we value our eyes highly and care for them. But Jesus said we would be better off to go into eternity without one of them if it should cause us to sin. What conclusions can we draw from Christ's teaching in Matthew 5:29?

2. Scriptures relate several instances in which people were affected by what their eyes did or did not see. In the following examples, fill in the situation described in the text given and tell what we learn from each of these instances.

Joshua 5:13 — Joshua

2 Samuel 11:2 — David

2 Kings 2:10-12 — Elisha

2 Kings 6:17 — Elisha's servant

Matthew 14:30 — Peter

Acts 22:6 — Saul

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

3. List some of the things which might be classified as tools of the devil and describe how they could be used to allow evil to enter into the mind through the eye.

4. List some things that our eyes can look upon which could be classified as being spiritually beneficial.

5. One of the best ways to keep our eyes from focusing on the wrong thing is to have our spiritual eyes single toward Christ. Read Luke 11:34. To illustrate the meaning of the word *single*, place two dots on your paper. Suppose that one dot represents Christ and one yourself. What conclusions can you draw regarding the relationship between the two points?

6. What do you think verse 35 of our text in Luke implies? You may use 1 John 1:6,7 as a supporting reference for your answer.

7. What are some of the things we are promised if we use our eyes to look on the right things?

Psalm 121:1

Isaiah 33:15-17

James 1:25

8. Consider the differences between the physically blind and the spiritually blind. Which would be the greater handicap, and why?

3. Answers may include television, videos, billboards, magazines, novels, pornography, and horoscopes. After listening to your students' answers, briefly touch on the possible negative influence and the sin that might result from looking at the wrong things. Then move on to the next question.

4. Your students' first response will likely be the Word of God. Other thoughts suggested may be: observing the good others are doing, noticing the beauties of nature, singing spiritual songs, or reading inspirational material.

5. The students will see that only one line can be drawn. Help them develop the results of this exercise to conclude if they aim their desires toward Christ, the single line will represent their singleness of heart in their desire to please Him. If they do not aim at Christ—even if they aim very close by—they will miss the mark and may end up very far from where they intended.

6. Consider your students' comments on these verses. Guide their thoughts to the knowledge that it is possible to lose the light in the body through the eyes. Develop the subject by asking how we can guard against allowing the light that is in us to become darkness. What specific things can we do to prevent this happening? Some thoughts might be: walking in the light—being obedient to the Word, keeping our thoughts focused on the goal we are striving for, and being alert to potentially dangerous situations that would bring darkness.

7. Psalm 121:1 — Help.

Isaiah 33:15-17 — A dwelling on High; shall see the King.

James 1:25 — Blessed in his deed.

The students will see that there are benefits if they use their eyes for the right purpose.

8. Accept students' responses, and guide your discussion to include the thoughts that one can be physically blind and still have 20/20 spiritual perception, but the spiritually blind may not realize their condition. Physical blindness lasts until death, or until something happens (operation or miracle) to restore sight. The same is true with spiritual blindness. At death, the one who has been spiritually blind will see and rue his stubborn, wasted life, knowing all the while that his "blindness" could have been "healed."

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Describe spiritual myopia. (*Myopia* — The condition of being nearsighted.)

What is spiritual astigmatism? (*Astigmatism* — A defect of an optical system, as of the eye, that prevents light from focusing accurately and results in a blurred or indistinct vision.)

Cataracts tend to develop slowly and can eventually lead to blindness. Discuss with the class how Christians might develop spiritual cataracts.

What are a few things that can lure us from our Christian walk? Are these things harmful to everyone or are there different “lures” for different people?

How much time does it take to miss out on something? What about the Second Coming?

Why was Peter sinking when Jesus was there to help him walk across the water? What was he looking at instead of the Lord?

What does “Keep your eyes on the Lord” mean? Why is it important for us to keep our eyes on the Lord if we want to please Him?

What are some things around us that can divert our attention from the Lord? Are they good for us? Why or why not?

If we need help to focus our eyes on Jesus, where do we go? What should we do?

What was it that distracted Doug in our ANSWER story?

THINGS TO DO

Take to class a comic book, a novel, and a hand-held game. Discuss how, though these things may not be sinful in themselves, excessive time spent on them could detract from our Christian experience.

Ask the students to pretend they are blind. Have them try to describe the room, what someone is wearing, or what you are doing. Demonstrate what a person misses if their eyes are closed.

Bring a book to class. Start reading it to the class, and then, in the middle of a paragraph or thought, skip some pages and continue reading. How does the story sound when something has been skipped or overlooked? An important thought or the whole theme is missed.

Arrange for a time during the week to take the students on a field trip to enjoy and appreciate the beautiful creations of our Lord.

Bring a camera, a picture of a beautiful scene, and a picture of pollution or garbage. Ask the students which picture they would rather look at. Show that our eyes are like cameras, and if we want to see beautiful pictures, we have to focus our “cameras” on the beautiful things of God: His Word, His wonderful creations, Jesus, etc.

Answers for ANSWER

Looking the Right Way

To find out where we should look for help, use the following eye chart and fill in the blanks below. The numbers under each blank space give you the coordinates for the letters on the chart. For example, the first blank has the numbers 8-5. This means 8 lines down, 5th letter from the left. All other number coordinates read the same way.

I WILL LIFT UP MINE
8-5 7-3 2-1 3-3 10-3 5-3 6-2 8-6 10-8 6-6 7-7 9-7 5-4 9-1 6-1

EYES UNTO THE HILLS.
1-1 9-4 3-1 9-8 8-3 7-6 7-1 10-4 3-2 8-4 4-3 2-2 10-4 9-3 7-5 6-5

FROM WHENCE COMETH
5-5 9-9 7-4 7-2 8-7 6-3 8-1 4-2 9-2 9-6 4-4 4-1 6-4 10-5 10-2 8-2

MY HELP. Psalm 121:1
10-9 5-2 5-1 8-8 9-5 10-7