

FINDING YOUR FULLEST LIFE - The Gospel of John

John 9:1-41 - Guide to Further Study

Some Key Points

The story of Jesus healing the “man born blind” is rich in detail, meaning and application. Similar to other places in John’s gospel, there is a seamless connection between a physical reality and spiritual truth. In John 6 Jesus linked feeding people with bread, to teaching about Himself as the bread from heaven. Here He links the restoration of physical sight to teaching about spiritual “seeing”.

It is startling that the healing itself takes place without any request from the blind man. In a sheer act of God’s grace, Jesus places a mud pack made from saliva and soil on the man’s eyes and instructs him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. Jesus asks the man to contribute effort to his healing, similar to asking the crippled man to take up his mat and walk (John 5:8). Divine healing is often linked to our need to take initiative and be obedient.

The blind man faced many barriers in his journey to healing. The disciples’ original question - *who sinned, this man or his parents?* (v 2) – reflected a narrow, sin-centered view of humans. Jesus, on the other hand, saw the potential in the man – that he was created in order to *bring glory to God* (v3). The Pharisees’ “investigation” of the healing through two separate cross-examinations (vv 13-17; 24-34) reflected a judgmental, destructive religious attitude. The man’s parents (vv 18-23) dodged their chance to support him or Jesus, fearing for their loss of social and religious standing. The man’s only support was Jesus himself.

Eventually, the man was driven out of the temple (v 34). All of Jesus’ healing and interaction with the man takes place outside the temple and sphere of authority of religious leadership. It was outside the temple that he was healed; outside the temple he worshipped Jesus (v 38).

Finally, note the gradual increase of spiritual “sight” for the man in His understanding of Jesus. His first reference was to *the man called Jesus* (v 11); it increased to *He is a prophet* (v 17); then *from God* (v 33); then the *Son of Man* and *Lord, I believe*, resulting in worship (vv 35-38). The Pharisees, however, remained stubborn in their blindness regarding Jesus (v 41).

For Discussion and Prayer

1. What strikes you as exciting or helpful in this teaching? What is troubling or challenging?
2. What barriers or prejudices have you faced in your journey of faith in Jesus? To whom have you been able to turn for help and support? Where have you “located” Jesus and His grace?
3. The man’s spiritual sight grew slowly. How has your faith in Christ matured over the years? What have been some key moments of growth or sharper spiritual “sight”?