

OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART! HOW TO BECOME A BETTER LOVER OF TRUTH

Luke 11:14-36

By Paul R. Shockley ©

www.prshockley.org

THE PARABLE OF THE LIGHTED LAMP:

³³ “No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts *it* in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. ³⁴ The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good [clear or healthy], your whole body also is full of light. But when *your eye* is bad [evil or unhealthy], your body also *is* full of darkness. ³⁵ Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. ³⁶ If then your whole body *is* full of light, having no part dark, *the whole body* will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light.”¹ ~ Luke 11:33-36

Please take your Bible and read Luke 11:14-36. Afterwards, consider the following.

I. Luke 11:14-36:

This account begins with Jesus performing a miracle (vv. 14-16). A person who was mute was delivered from demon possession. Jesus performed an exorcism. From all the Synoptic accounts of this event, no one questions the fact that a miracle took place. All seem to agree it is a miracle. But the miraculous event did not lead to the same response or conclusion, belief that He is the Messiah as predicted in the Scriptures. Why? In fact, four different responses to the event: (1) The religious leaders concluded that Jesus’ power to do this miracle was from Satan (vv. 17-23); (2) Others tried to maintain a position of neutrality (vv. 24-26); (3) a woman, who shouted out to Jesus bringing attention to his mother, was absolutely clueless (vv. 27-28); (4) There were others who still demanded more proof by seeking a sign (vv. 29-32).²

How is that they all can see the same miracle and yet conclude so differently? No one denied the miracle Jesus just did. In fact, no one denied that Jesus actually performed an exorcism. But the crowd failed to come to the right conclusion. Why didn’t the evidence lead to the same conclusion? It is not because of the evidence. In fact, this event harmonizes with events some of them would have already heard about.

The problem was not sufficient evidence. Since Jesus had come to offer the Kingdom, His evidence was both plentiful and public. The miraculous birth, the fulfillment of prophecies, the message of John the Baptist, and the miracles Jesus performed, and the words he spoke, all make the evidence was clear. Jesus is the Son of God.

No, the real problem is their eyes (vv. 33-36). Read again Luke 11:33-36:

¹The New King James Version. 1982 (Lk 11:33-36). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² Helpful exposition of this passage is “Evidence that Produced Various Verdicts (Luke 11:14-36)” by Bob Deffinbaugh on www.bible.org.

The eye, Jesus said, is the door to a person's entire being, that is, his whole body. If the eye is good, if it lets in the light, the whole body is illuminated. If the eye is bad, if it lets in little light, the whole body is dark.

Jesus is not saying that the problem is their actual physical eyes. Rather, everyone who failed to interpret the evidence of this miracle as they should have done so because of a failing, a deficiency, in their ability to "see" the truth, not because of any deficiency in the evidence. In other words, the problem is not their actual eyesight. The problem is their heart! **They are not open to the truth!** In other words, they were not lovers of truth. The heart is the soul's organ. R. C. H. Lenski puts it this way:

We know that everything depends on the eye (heart) with which a man looks at something or at somebody. If his eye is single, bent only on discovering the reality, the truth, he will soon see it; but if his eye is wicked and full of vicious motives, we all know what he sees, and we dread it. Have you not been looked at in the ways? Jesus is speaking of the same thing regarding himself.³

When David says, "I will set nothing wicked before my eyes" (Psalm 101:3), he knew that what we gaze upon impacts our heart. But in this case, the condition of our heart impacts our ability to discern properly. Remember, the "*heart*" emphasizes your deep-seated affections, your inner desires; it is the control center of your human personality. Thus, your heart is tied to your ability to see spiritual truths as they actually are. These crowds saw the miracle! But their responses reflected a heart-condition that says:

1. I'm not open to the truth!
2. In fact, some were quick to align the miracle to satanic power rather than God. Why? Because their hearts were not bent on discovering truth and conforming themselves to it.

How far will people go if their hearts are not right? Let us again consider the words of N.T. scholar R. C. H. Lenski:

The eye refers to the heart, so the body is not conceived as being with its soul but as the soul's organ. All the bodily members, mouth, hands, feet, etc., will act as the eye (heart) sees and direct. The eye that sees 'more than Solomon,' will draw the whole body into the light to follow, trust, worship, obey Jesus; the eye that sees a friend of Satan, a man discredited, will put the whole body into darkness, the mouth to oppose him with words, the feet to dog him, the hands at least to drag him to the cross-darkness indeed.⁴

II. How Should We Then Live?

We might think that these people are ridiculous for their rejection of Christ. It is so obvious and yet they did not have the heart for it! But are we really that different? When you encounter truth, that is truth that corresponds to reality, identifies things as they actually are, can never fail, diminish, change, or be extinguished, and is sourced from the God of the Bible who is the Author of all truth, how do you respond? Do you submit yourself to it? What about prescriptive truth in Scripture?

³ R. C. H. Lenski, *Commentary on the New Testament: The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel* (Hendrickson: Peabody, 1998), 653.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 653-4.

We may have received the gift of eternal life by placing our trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior by placing our trust in Him, believing that He is God and that He died on the cross for our sins and rose bodily from the dead. But when it comes to really pursuing intellectual and moral prescriptive truths, truths dictated on how we are to live, are we that much different? Consider the following assessment.

Answer the following questions honestly; be sure to avoid excessive self-criticism and self-congratulation. Some of the questions are similar in nature.

Key:

- 1 = Not at all**
- 2 = Rarely**
- 3 = Sometimes**
- 4 = Often**
- 5 = Absolutely**

1. Do you find yourself defensive when you encounter true truth, regardless of the source? 1 2 3 4 5
2. Do you find yourself defensive when prescriptive “ought” commands in Scripture (e.g., “be holy because I am holy”) are revealed to you? 1 2 3 4 5
3. Are you quick to justify your actions in an effort to deflect or avoid the truth? 1 2 3 4 5
4. Are you quick in protecting your activities when they are exposed by the truth? 1 2 3 4 5
5. Are you defensive in protecting your habits when they are exposed by the truth? 1 2 3 4 5
6. Are you defensive in protecting the pleasures you enjoy when they are exposed by the truth? 1 2 3 4 5
7. Are you quick in defending your personal goals when they are exposed by the truth? 1 2 3 4 5
8. Do you find yourself defensive, concentrating more on preventing truth from gaining an advantage in your heart because it will require some cost from you? 1 2 3 4 5
9. Do you find yourself putting down the person who is proclaiming truth in an effort to not deal with the truth? 1 2 3 4 5
10. Are you honestly afraid to be exposed to truth? 1 2 3 4 5
11. Does truth make you feel uncomfortable? 1 2 3 4 5
12. Do you separate truth from personal application? In other words, you intellectually understand the truth, but you choose not to apply it in how you actually live your life. 1 2 3 4 5
13. Do you allow truth to seep into your affections in order to change your values, namely, what you hold dear? 1 2 3 4 5
14. Do you hunger for true truth? 1 2 3 4 5
15. Do you honestly and diligently seek to consistently apply true truth in the way you actually live? 1 2 3 4 5
16. Do you compartmentalize the whole truth by only listening to that particular truth that does not demand that you change your life? 1 2 3 4 5
17. Do you build your life upon what the world (which is hostile to Gods’ revealed truth) thinks is most important? 1 2 3 4 5
18. Do you find your identity matching with that of the world? 1 2 3 4 5
19. To what extent do you find yourself in conflict with the world’s values? 1 2 3 4 5
20. Do you strive to serve God but on *your* terms, not His? 1 2 3 4 5
21. Do you allow the world to shape your expectations about truth? 1 2 3 4 5
22. Would your closest family members describe you as one who is “truthful”? 1 2 3 4 5
23. Do you long to be valued, respected, and honored by the world? 1 2 3 4 5
24. Do you spend significant time thinking about how you might better apply true truth in your personal study of Scripture? 1 2 3 4 5

25. Do you regularly examine what is **keeping you from** fully living out God's truth in God's ways?

1 2 3 4 5

III. Conclusion:

So, how's your heart? Are you really willing to receive spiritual truth? Conditions of heart can be so filled with prejudice and bias that we are unwilling to listen to truth even if it comes from an unlikely source. The Pharisees and the Scribes were willing to receive teaching from their own people, but their hearts were not willing to receive Christ's instruction even though His message was confirmed by miraculous events, predictive prophecies, and a sinless life. See, they did not welcome "true truth" in their lives because it is costly. Truth demands conformity. See, they were not lovers of truth. Instead, they were lovers of their own traditions. **Are we that much different?**

Be a pursuer of truth and as you conform yourself to truth in the way you live, you will go beyond what you ever thought possible-for people are longing for truth, for something to believe in that is true and trustworthy. If you will *diligently* seek to *consistently* know, practice, and protect true truth, not mere programmed instruction, beliefs, and opinions, then you will bear the following characteristics:

1. **Truth** rather than personality.
2. **Intellectually honest** rather than closed thinking.
3. **Broad education**-for you will go beyond the beliefs and personalities of your sub-culture.
4. **Surprising insights** as you discover truth in extraordinary ways.
5. **A life established on truth** rather than indoctrination.
6. **Attractiveness** because you are able to offer truth that goes beyond programmed instruction and propaganda.
7. **Characteristically point people to God** and not your instructor by words and works.
8. **Adventure**-because your pursuit of truth enlightens you in ways you never considered.
9. **Competence and creative insight** as you engage others rather than simply repeating what you have been taught to believe.
10. **Scope of relationships continually enlarges** as you engage others who compliment and add to your understanding, practice, and protection of the truth.
11. **Practice truth and love and love and truth** because you recognize that both are inseparable [2 John].
12. **Better equipped to recognize what really is false teaching.**

13. **Better equipped to recognize viable, reasonable options within the range of orthodoxy; you resist dogmatism when dogmatism is not necessary.**
14. **You avoid presumptuous, premature thinking.**
15. **You can refute** lies with truth, not indoctrination.
16. **Promote personal and social charity**, not unnecessary criticism.
17. **Habitually ask questions to any truth claim that is made:** What? Why? Where? How? When? Therefore? In other words, you ask questions such as: (a) What is the justification for this view?; (b) Why is this the case? (c) Did they ever consider this...? (d) What are the implications if this is true?
18. **You pursue truth no matter the source.**
19. **Worship**... you realize that truth points you to the ultimate source of truth: the God of Truth, the God of the Bible. Therefore, the pursuit of truth is not merely an intellectual inquiry, but an opportunity of worship.
20. You experience the joy of personal discovery of truth rather than relying upon another's interpretation of it.

IV. Final Thought:

What I have tried to communicate is that our ability to rightly understand and respond to the spiritual truths is affected by the conditions of our heart. But what you fix your eyes upon affects the condition of your heart! Therefore, fix your eyes upon Christ! Look to Him! Follow Him! Receive from Him!

Heavenly Father, our hearts are too frail apart from you! So, we humbly come before you and ask that you would not only give us a disposition that dreads the very approach of sin, but work in our lives to be all yours and all yours alone! Cause us to lose ourselves to find ourselves in you, the foundation and water spring of our lives. Give us a deeper knowledge of Jesus as Savior, Master Lord, and as Future King. Give us deeper power in private prayer, more sweetness in your Word, and more steadfast grip on its truth. Give us deeper holiness in speech, thought, action, and let us not seek theology apart from you. Plough deep in me, great Lord that we may be a tilled field, the roots of grace spreading far and wide, until you alone are all that we see. May the fruit of the Spirit be produced like never before! May we have no master but you, no law but you will, and no delight but yourself, no wealth but what you give, and no peace but that which you bestow. Quarry in us deeply, dear Lord, and then fill our minds, our souls, and our hearts with your overflowing truth so that we may live more faithfully before your ever-watching eye unto your glory. Amen.⁵

⁵ This prayer was adapted from the book, *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions*, edited by Arthur Bennett.