

Small group activity: List 3 specific scenarios from your everyday lives that need to be viewed through the lenses of the Gospel. These can be sin struggles (keep them general for the purposes of this activity), struggles or difficult circumstances, or suffering that you're currently facing.

WE ALL VIEW THE WORLD THROUGH A SET OF LENSES

→ One of the most important questions we could ever ask ourselves is this: **"Through what set of lenses am I viewing the world?"** In other words, **what is the prevailing narrative that drives our thinking and responses to our circumstances?**

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS IS IN US ALL

Sin Blinds Us

God created man in His image to work and keep the Garden. We know from Genesis 3 that Adam and Eve quickly dropped the ball and usurped God from the throne of their hearts. Since then, we are all born blind to the world as God sees it. Our sin further works to keep us blind to the righteousness of God and His promises in the Gospel.

Isaiah 6:10 - *"Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."*

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 - *And even if our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Small group discussion: How have you seen the blinding effects of sin in your life and the lives of the people around you?

Forgetfulness Blinds God's People

2 Peter 1:5-9 - *For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.***

Small group discussions: When have you been spiritually nearsighted or blind? How was this revealed to you?

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS IS ALL AROUND US

We live in a world full of blinding influencers

It is vitally important that we recognize ungodly worldviews when we see them. The blind will lead the blind and both will fall into the pit (Luke 6:39). Blindness is everywhere. Using the list below, **circle** which blinding influences have affected you the most in your Christian walk:

- Worldliness
- Pride
- Self-righteousness
- Legalism
- Social media
- Entertainment
- News
- Leisure
- Hobbies
- Ungodly friendships
- Overwork
- False teaching/counterfeit Gospels

We all have blind spots. We can be so nearsighted that we are blind.

Using the list below, **circle** lenses that you're tempted to view the world through:

- Self-centeredness
- People pleasing
- Left, right, other political perspectives
- Self-help
- Licentiousness
- Legalism
- Personality
- Sexual identity
- Social identity (race, class, ethnicity, etc)
- Fear/anxiety/worry
- Depression

It is also important to note that some of these lenses are not inherently evil or sinful. However, when these lenses overtake the Gospel or become our predominant way of healing the world, we are in danger. When the Gospel doesn't inform these lenses, we can become more shaped by the world, then by Christ.

Small group discussion: *What things blind your vision and keep you from viewing the world as God sees it? What lenses are you tempted to view the world through? What would you add to these lists?*

A SET OF GOSPEL LENSES PROTECTS US FROM SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

Seeing discipleship through the lens of the Gospel means applying the Gospel to all of life, believing transformation occurs when disciples center their lives on the Gospel. The Gospel is sufficient; it is enough. It is relevant.

- Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow*



When the Gospel is our set of lenses, we will look at the world differently. We will strive to see God at work in our difficult circumstances. We will aim to rely on God when we need to deal with sin. We will respond with grace and love towards those around us.

How Do We Do This?

- **We maintain a living and vibrant relationship with God.** We aim to love God and center our lives on Him rather than anyone or anything else.
- **We strive to grow deeper in our understanding of the Gospel and our place in God's grand narrative.** When our narrative is bigger than ourselves, we can locate our sins, struggles, suffering, and circumstances within the context of God's bigger story.
- **We stay connected to God's people both in our local church and beyond.** Though we are not called to hide out and be isolated from the world, we need to be in and among believers who share our Gospel lenses.
- **We strive to view all of our lives through the Gospel lenses.** We don't just accept the facts of life or the narrative as presented by the world around us. We ask important questions that help us process our sins, struggles, suffering, and circumstances. Some helpful questions might include:
 - How is God at work in this situation *for my good and His glory* (Romans 8:28)?
 - How do these circumstances draw me to rely on Christ instead of my own resources (John 15:5)?
 - How does my weakness point me to the sufficiency of Christ (2 Cor. 12:9)?
 - What is the Holy Spirit teaching me in this situation? How does that differ from the world's perspective or my natural inclinations (1 Cor. 2:14)?
 - How is God the Hero of this struggle (Psalm 94:7)?
 - How is this struggle helping me to know and love Christ more (John 17:3)?

Small group discussion: *Using one of the real-life struggles you wrote down, walk through a couple of these Gospel lenses questions. What are some other questions you could add to this list?*

Conclusion: If we don't view life through the lenses of the Gospel, we will use another set of lenses. No other lenses are sufficient to help us see the world the way God wants us to see it. Using the tools, you can strive to view the world through the lenses of the Gospel in every circumstance and situation.

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

Using a current situation from your own life, spend some time working through the following questions:

Q: How is God at work in this situation *for my good and His glory* (Romans 8:28)?

Q: How do these circumstances draw me to rely on Christ instead of my own resources (John 15:5)?

Q: How does my weakness point me to the sufficiency of Christ (2 Cor. 12:9)?

Q: What is the Holy Spirit teaching me in this situation? How does that differ from the world's perspective or my natural inclinations (1 Cor. 2:14)?

Q: How is God the Hero of this struggle (Psalm 94:7)?

Q: How is this struggle helping me to know and love Christ more (John 17:3)?