



“Perspective”
 Luke 22:35-38

Idea: A Christian’s biblical perspective on life determines his or her spiritual health and effectiveness.

Intro: A mid-size company used to encourage its departments to creatively engage in team building exercises throughout the year as a way to perpetuate a healthy work environment. Well, the marketing department started holding an inter-office softball game annually between the executives and support staff as part of their team building. One year, the support staff whipped the executives soundly. The following week, the marketing executives demonstrated just how creative and witty they can be, by posting a memo on the bulletin board in the breakroom. It read:

The executive’s team is pleased to announce that we came in second place in the recent softball season, after losing but one game all year. The support team, however, had a rather dismal season, winning only one game."

Perspective changes everything. I heard about a group of elementary kids who were attending an end-of-the-year party at a neighborhood lake. They were enjoying jumping off the dock and floating in the water with their life jackets. One girl slipped hers off to swim to shore. She was not the strongest swimmer and began to show signs of fatigue, but she never got panicked. A man who lived in the neighborhood and spent a good amount of time on that lake was watching her just a few feet away on the dock. He knew the depth of the water where she was, so he knew that she could easily touch bottom with her feet. So, when she started to struggle, he told her to stand up. However, another lady, unfamiliar with the lake, saw the girl and jumped in thinking she was drowning. Two people saw the same young girl and her situation, but they saw it from different perspectives or vantage points.

Perspective changes everything. The way a person views a situation makes all the difference. On our next stop in Luke’s Gospel, we discover that Jesus and His disciples possessed competing perspectives about the Kingdom of God. These eleven men who had been following Jesus for three years still had not learned to see things from the Lord’s vantage point. So, we are going to consider the idea of perspective from these verses. From them we will learn that a Christian’s biblical perspective on life determines his or her spiritual health and effectiveness. If you want to grow in your faith and make an impact for the Kingdom, then you need the right perspective. Let’s look at what Luke says.

[Read Luke 22:35-38.](#)

Inquiry: Contextually, the Lord Jesus and His disciples are still gathered around the table for the Passover meal. During this evening, they have heard Him reinterpret the Passover, teach further on the Kingdom, and announce that one of them would betray Him into the hands of the chief priests. This news of betrayal was

deeply unsettling, and they wondered who it might be. As they sat there around the table with Jesus, they began to eyeball one another, which led to an argument about who is the greatest. They are sharing their spiritual resumes and talking about what they have accomplished for the Lord. In the face of such pompous arrogance, Jesus tenderly informs the men of the danger of their misplaced strengths. Satan was crouching at the door, ready to pounce on them, but He graciously had been praying for them. Peter refused to see things the way Jesus did. He pledged his faithfulness even if it brought imprisonment or death, yet that very night he would deny any association with Jesus three different times.

In response to Peter's and the other disciples' skewed perspective, the Lord offered some counsel to them. Sadly, His words of wisdom were largely misunderstood once again. Their perspective prevented them from seeing what Jesus was describing. They were spiritually dull. Rather than possessing a keen awareness of the Kingdom of God and how it impacts the believer, their perspective was at best cloudy. The fog of their own preconceived ideas and biases blurred their vision. We too, if we are honest with ourselves, many times view Kingdom living through the wrong lens. As disciples, however, we should seek to see things from the Lord's perspective. After all, this is the essence of what it means to be a disciple. Followers of Jesus walk where He walks, but they also see things as He sees them. Perspective changes everything. There are two major thoughts to see, and then two points of application to employ.

1. Spiritual dullness creates a self-centered, presumptuous, and weak disciple.

Jesus reminds His disciples in verse 35 of their short-term mission work. He had sent out the twelve (9:3), and later He sent out seventy-two others (10:4). When they were sent out, Jesus instructed them to take nothing with them. During their work, they lacked nothing because God provided everything that was needed. This experience was miraculous, and we must take note of it. The disciples were sent out on a special assignment and given special powers to show them how God could and would faithfully work through them. This mission was just as much for their benefit as it was for those they served. Now, they are called to use the normal activities and tools of life to faithfully serve the Lord (vs. 36).

After the mission, the seventy-two disciples returned and rejoiced over how the demons had been subjugated by them in Jesus' name (10:17). It is not a stretch to think that the twelve rejoiced over the same things. The disciples had experienced such great success and had been received so warmly by the people. It is highly likely they thought that this was how the Christian life is and forever would be. After all, the Kingdom of God had arrived. Jesus, however, continues to prepare His followers for what was coming. He had set His face toward Jerusalem months earlier. He could see in the city a cross and a tomb that awaited Him. Much of what He would experience, the disciples would undergo. Therefore, Jesus was preparing the disciples for rejection, persecution, and suffering.

Peter and the other ten men did not understand what Jesus was saying. Instead, they interpreted His words quite literally. Peter's use of a sword in Gethsemane is evidence of this (John 18:10). While these men had walked with Jesus for three years, they were spiritually dull or slow to understand. Their perspective of Christ and His Kingdom was clouded, which resulted in their lives continuing to be self-centered, presumptuous, and weak. Their argument about who is the greatest and Peter's declaration of faithfulness proves this (Mark 14:29; Luke 22:33). They were still focused on getting ahead, and their successes led them to presume further success. As was said about the previous passage, their misplaced strength had become a double weakness.

Today, Christians can think that believing on Jesus solves all of life's problems. This dullness leads people to think that being a Christian means all marriages are healthy, all bank accounts are full, all doctor visits are delightful, and everyone wants to be your friend. The reality is that believing on Jesus usually brings many more problems. Christians struggle in their marriages, file for bankruptcy, and die of cancer. On top of that, there is the constant threat of societal rejection. Just as Jesus would be

“numbered with the transgressors,” the disciples would be regarded as outlaws. Suffering is just part of the deal, so following Jesus is not for the faint of heart.

2. Spiritual acuteness builds a selfless, prepared, and strong disciple.

The Lord recognized the spiritual dullness in His disciples. The point Jesus was making was this: “Men, you are now moving into a whole new situation. If they arrest Me, they will one day arrest you. If they treat Me like a common criminal (Is 53:12), they will do the same to you. So, be prepared. Be spiritually acute.”

Christians who are spiritually acute have a perceptive understanding because they see the world through the eyes of Jesus. They are observing and understanding the events of life from His vantage point. In that, they remember He is the great provider and protector. Therefore, the spiritually acute can live selflessly because that is the character of Jesus. They do so also because He has promised to take care of His children. They can live without fear in the face of any threat because He has promised to never forsake His children. Rather than presumptuously declaring their faithfulness in the face of such obstacles, they pray and ask the Lord to prepare them to endure in suffering, knowing that only He can help them to do so.

The spiritually acute, those who view life through Jesus’ lens are strong disciples. They stand in the face of adversity. They remain faithful when it is dangerous to do so. They think of others when it does not make sense to do so.

Perspective changes everything. From this interaction, we can see that a Christian’s biblical perspective on life determines his or her spiritual health and effectiveness. If the disciples had not learned to look through Jesus’ lens, then the gospel would never have spread, and the Church would never have been birthed. But they did. So, what can we take away from this passage.

Application: A disciple with the proper biblical perspective of the Christian life:

- Serves the Lord faithfully.
When Jesus sent out the twelve and the seventy-two, He told them to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the people, using their giftedness while taking nothing with them. This they faithfully did. Put yourself in their shoes for a minute. Jesus, the rabbi you have started to follow, tells you that power has been given to you to cast out demons and cure disease. You are now to go and preach the Kingdom and heal the sick. The only problem is that you have no experience doing either of these things. “Wait, Jesus I am a fisherman. Can I do something that is more related to my skill set?” “Yeah Jesus, I was a tax collector. I am good with numbers. You have something for me in that area?” Can you see yourself saying something like that? If it is not that, then you might offer up some excuse about a busy schedule or personal conflict. Sometimes, our faithfulness to the Lord is more circumstantial than we like to admit.

A disciple with the proper biblical perspective of the Christian life serves the Lord faithfully. This brother or sister understands that Jesus is enough. *“Did you lack anything?” ... “Nothing.”*

- Serves the Lord wisely.
The disciples had once experienced great success and were treated with respect and appreciation. During that time, people gladly invested in their ministry, but the climate was changing. They would soon become outcasts. Therefore, they would need to wisely use the normal activities and tools of life to faithfully serve the Lord. Today, God’s people are aliens in enemy territory, and we must use our faith and sanctified common sense as we serve the Lord. This is a good warning to zealous people who foolishly get themselves into tight spots and then expect the Lord to perform miracles for them. Think

about the Apostle Paul. He knew how to use the “sword” of human government to protect him and the gospel (Acts 16:35-40; 21:37-40; 25:11; Rom 13).

Conclusion: From what perspective are you viewing the events of life? The disciples followed up Jesus’ teaching with the presentation of two swords. Their perspective had not changed. They thought Jesus literally wanted them to pack a bag, take up arms, and stand a post. His response is interesting (vs. 38). Commentators have explained it as “That is enough of that” or “Enough of this kind of talk.” Colloquially, we might render these words as “I give up!” Thankfully, the Lord never gives up on His people, but He does at times become frustrated. Though these men had heard Jesus teach on the Kingdom and the upcoming events in a new and profound way during the evening, they remained self-centered, presumptuous, and weak. They were spiritually dull because they had not yet begun to look at life from heaven’s vantage point, but they would one day.

Today, you might best be described as spiritually dull. Your life is lived in your own power and ability, which means it is all about you, whether or not there is a Jesus label on you. God does not want you to be a weak disciple. Therefore, He invites you to lean in and view every aspect of life through His lens. He invites you to trust Him in all things. When you do, you will be able to serve Him faithfully and wisely.