

# IF THE BLIND LEAD THE BLIND

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We all have an outer man and an inner man (Luke 11:40; Rom 2:28-29). The outer man is only temporal, but the inner man is eternal (2 Cor 4:16-18). Our inner man contains our spiritual heart (Rom 2:29; Eph 3:16-17). It is the heart that is the source of all that we think, say, and do (Matt 15:16-20; Mark 7:18-23) and it is our spiritual heart that needs to be purified so that our actions will change (Acts 15:9; Jas 4:8). But without sight of these spiritual things, we are going to end up falling in the ditch.

## **The parable of the blind leading the blind**

Jesus gave this parable in Matthew 15:14, where he warned his disciples about the Pharisees: “Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” Jesus also gave this parable in Luke 6:39 during his sermon on the plain. The entire context of the sermon on the plain in Luke 6:20-49 is about being formed in the inner man, in the heart (Luke 6:45), to be what God wants us to be. That is why Jesus warns us about blindness in Luke 6:39. If we cannot “see” the spiritual heart and what pertains to it, then our heart will not be purified, and then we will not succeed in doing God’s will, and then we will fall in the end (Luke 6:39-49). The context of his warning to the disciples in Matthew 15 is also about being formed in the inner man, in the heart, so as not to be defiled in God’s sight (Matt 15:10-20). That is why Jesus warns us about blindness in Matthew 15:14. If we cannot “see” the spiritual heart and what pertains to it, then our heart will not be purified, and then we will not be able to do God’s will, and then we will be spiritually defiled (Matt 15:10-20).

## **Spiritual blindness**

The Pharisees were spiritually blind. Their “sight” consisted of teaching that physical dirt on one’s hands, or on cups, pots, or tables would defile a person in the sight of God (Matt 15:14-20; 23:16-28). They were covetous people (Luke 16:13-15), looking on the things which are seen, which are temporal in nature (2 Cor 4:18). The Lord pointed out their blindness in Matthew 23:16-19: “Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a

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debtor! Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?" In verses 23-28, he added, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

## **The pathway to spiritual sight**

These people were blind to their own blindness. In John 9:39-41, Jesus said, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." To gain spiritual sight, so that we can grow and fulfill God's will, we must humble ourselves and glorify God as God (Rom 1:18-25). This involves living only for our Creator, not the creation. Similarly, to know the Lord's doctrine, we must have a will do to God's will, not our own will (John 7:17). We must flee from a love of material things and seek after and look on the things that are eternal (2 Cor 4:16-18; 1 Tim 6:10-12). We must also be prepared to look into the mirror of God's word and acknowledge our shortcomings and what we need to change (Jas 1:22-25).