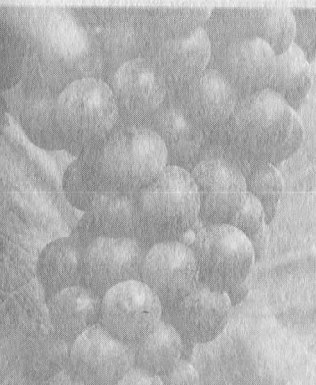


LESSON SEVEN

A MAN BORN BLIND

His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

JOHN 9:2-3



REFLECTION

We all are born with disabilities, whether they are physical, emotional, or spiritual ones. The hard part is admitting this and letting God use them. Think about your personal strengths and weaknesses. How has God worked through your weaknesses for his glory?

SITUATION

As Jesus traveled with his disciples, they came upon a man who had been blind from birth. The encounter sparked a theological question from the disciples, but then quickly escalated into a major confrontation about the rules of the Sabbath. Jesus used the episode to reveal how we develop a distorted view of God when we limit his actions or inflate his commandments.

OBSERVATION

Read John 9:1–12 from the New International Version or the New King James Version.

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

¹ As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

³ “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ As long as it

is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

⁶ After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. ⁷ “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

⁸ His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹ Some claimed that he was.

Others said, “No, he only looks like him.”

But he himself insisted, “I am the man.”

¹⁰ “How then were your eyes opened?” they asked.

¹¹ He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”

¹² “Where is this man?” they asked him.

“I don’t know,” he said.

NEW KING JAMES VERSION

¹ Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

³ Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. ⁴ I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

⁶ When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. ⁷ And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

⁸ Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, “Is not this he who sat and begged?”

⁹ Some said, “This is he.” Others said, “He is like him.”

He said, “I am he.”

¹⁰ Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?"

¹¹ He answered and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight."

¹² Then they said to him, "Where is He?"

He said, "I do not know."

EXPLORATION

1. What assumptions did Jesus' followers make about this man's blindness?

2. How did Jesus correct these misconceptions?

3. What did Jesus mean when he said, "Night is coming, when no one can work" (verse 4)?

4. How did Jesus involve the blind man in the healing process?

5. Why do you think Jesus sent the man to wash in a pool before he healed him?

6. How did the people of the town respond to the miracle?

INSPIRATION

The followers thought the blind man was a great theological case study. "Why do you think he's blind?" one asked. "He must have sinned."

"No, it's his folks' fault."

"Jesus, what do you think? Why is he blind?"

"He's blind to show what God can do."

The apostles knew what was coming; they had seen this look in Jesus' eyes before. They knew what he was going to do, but they didn't know how he was going to do it. *Lightning? Thunder? A shout? A clap of the hands?* They all watched.

Jesus began to work his mouth a little. The onlookers stared. "What is he doing?" He moved his jaw as if he were chewing on something.

Some of the people began to get restless. Jesus just chewed. His jaw rotated around until he had what he wanted. Spit. Ordinary saliva.

If no one said it, somebody had to be thinking it: *yuck!*

Jesus spat on the ground, stuck his finger into the puddle, and stirred. Soon it was a mud pie, and he smeared some of the mud across the blind man's eyes.

The same One who had turned a stick into a scepter and a pebble into a missile now turned saliva and mud into a balm for the blind.

Once again, the mundane became majestic. Once again the dull

became divine, the humdrum holy. Once again God's power was seen, not through the ability of the instrument, but through its availability.

"Blessed are the meek," Jesus explained.

Blessed are the available. Blessed are the conduits, the tunnels, the tools. Deliriously joyful are the ones who believe that if God has used sticks, rocks, and spit to do his will, then he can use us. (From *The Applause of Heaven* by Max Lucado.)

REACTION

7. What do you learn from responses of the blind man and the townspeople to Jesus?

8. If you had been one of the townspeople, how do you think you would have responded?

9. When have you seen a person's weakness or disability used for God's glory?

10. What fresh insight have you gained from this passage about the struggles of life?

11. How do you need to change your attitude toward your personal weaknesses and strengths?

12. Why does God choose to use weaknesses and problems to bring glory to himself?

LIFE LESSONS

We find it difficult to trust God when we can't figure out why he allows certain uncomfortable things to happen to us. Interestingly, we don't seem to wonder about God when he allows *good* things into our lives. One of the life lessons in the blind man's experience is the reminder that no matter how long we've known Christ, we will never get over the fact that he knew us long before we knew him—and that we will never reach the end of discovering more about him.

DEVOTION

We pray, O Father, that you would increase our faith. Forgive us for doubting your ability to use us for your glory. Forgive us for demanding proof instead of simply believing in you. Use all that we have to accomplish your purposes.

JOURNALING

What are some ways God has used your weaknesses or problems for his glory?

FOR FURTHER READING

To complete the book of John during this twelve-part study, read John 9:1–10:42. For more Bible passages on being used by God, read Exodus 3:7–4:12; Joshua 1:1–9; Romans 8:26; 1 Corinthians 1:26–28; 2 Corinthians 12:7–10; and 2 Timothy 2:21.