

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

CHAPTER 7

*Eyes have not seen, ears have not heard, neither
has it entered into the hearts of men the things
that God has in store for them that love Him...*

1 Corinthians 2:11

Our perception is based on the perspective that we buy into. Perspective influences attitude, which in turn determines our behavior or lifestyle; therefore, if we want to change our lifestyle or our behavior, we should check out our perception.

If we'd take a walk down to the corner of the street and ask the first person that we meet about his or her philosophy of life, they would look at us funny. But, everyone has a particular perspective by which they view life. Your perspective on life is your philosophy of life. Your perspective on your history is your philosophy of history. The Bible says "*as a man thinketh in his heart so is he.*"¹

Your perspective is what you accept as the true relationship of events to one another. If what is accepted is based on erroneous principles then the resulting perspective or philosophy will be wrong. North is not just the perspective of the one holding the compass. In today's world we are often tempted to accept every opinion, but our perception is not right or okay, simply because we have one.

True north exists; likewise, the right perspective on each event exists. It is called a Godly perspective. Although some events can never be excused, it is possible for two people to experience the same event and have two different perspectives. Yet, only through God can both winners and losers see the same event and walk away with a higher perspective - a Godly perspective. Only God can make oppressors and the oppressed, one. Only through faith in Christ Jesus and obedience to the Holy Spirit can anyone be literally changed

from brokenness to wholeness and from a hurting life to the healing life. The Christian worldview is the only one that allows us all to win.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. expounded this truth so eloquently as he spoke on the topic of “loving your enemies.” He said, “Certainly these are great words, words lifted to cosmic proportions. And over the centuries, many persons have argued that this is an extremely difficult command. Many would go so far as to say that it just isn’t possible to move out into the actual practice of this glorious command. They would go on to say that this is just additional proof that Jesus was an impractical idealist who never quite came down to earth. So the arguments abound. But far from being an impractical idealist, Jesus has become the practical realist. The words of this text glitter in our eyes with a new urgency. Far from being the pious injunction of a utopian dreamer, this command is an absolute necessity for the survival of our civilization. Yes, it is love that will save our world and our civilization, love even for enemies.”²

What is your perspective on your history? Is it a baggage that burdens your soul? Is it a cloud that hangs over your head? Is it a weapon in your hand against your fellow man? Is it a gavel in your hand and a legal document held in judgment of any one associated with the evils you or your fore parents have suffered?

I went to Bible College with some people from Yugoslavia. Today that country does not exist any more. After years of control by a dictator, and really years of hypocrisy, the true hurt and hatred between Serbs, Croatians, and ethnic Albanians boiled over for all to see. And, oh, what a carnage. It is interesting to note that the dictator was manipulating both groups for his benefit. Right in the middle of Europe on the dawn of the new millennium we heard of ethnic cleansing and genocide. As we say in Jamaica, “the story come to bump.” Hurt, bitterness, years of hypocrisy will eventually surface. If not in this generation, then in the next: it always does. We must simply accept the fact that some issues will never be satisfactorily avenged; they are too big. The best solution is to forgive and keep on going and growing. How much money will it take to buy self-respect, peace and healing?

Are you familiar with 1 Timothy 6:10? It says, “The love of money is the root of all evil.” It is amazing how people can “put up” with other human beings just for the paycheck or the “bottom line”. That is the love of money not the love of the person. These questions trouble

me: “What would happen if the money stopped, and it was no longer necessary to pretend? If you had the upper hand, what would you do? What would you do to those who are descendants of those who enslaved your fore-parents or of those who hurt you in any way - if you had the chance? What principles would guide your actions? What is in your heart? And what is your secret wish on this issue?”

Here are some other troubling questions: What is the goal of the African Diaspora in this age? Where are the leaders leading us? Is there one goal for everybody to line up behind? If so, what is it? Who sets it? What philosophic principles guide it? Who are the teachers? What is the vision that we have? What do parents of African descent want to see happen ten years from now? Where do we see our children? Where do you see yourself? What is your vision of the end? What if the rapture does not come for the next 100 years? Is our goal to go back and develop Africa? Is it to take everything from everyone who in any way benefited from slavery? How would we know who benefited? What about those in Africa who benefited? What about our children and relatives that are racially mixed? Is it the segregation of the races? Should we go back across the tracks and develop our area to compete with theirs? Is it that our children should keep to themselves while the other races keep to theirs? Is it to develop totally different economic bases? Do we have the same perspective that Martin Luther King, Jr. had? What was his dream anyway? Is hope still alive? Where? Oh, what do you think of cross-cultural marriages? Well, let me stop except to say that these are genuine concerns that need answers. The absence of answers lies at the roots of the pain. We need truth.

I have a perspective and you have one too. However, my lifetime has been very short. I have only read so many books, listened to a few lectures, and heard a few stories. I am sure you have had a good share of information as well. Honestly, our perspectives are often biased and very, very limited. I was not there when slavery and all this mess started. I cannot completely trust any of the historical or political perspectives of the history of slavery, because, as my high school history teacher once said, “Every author has a certain slant.”

I like God’s perspective on these matters. Why? Well, because he has a proven track record of being unbiased and impartial. He has had the bird’s eye view though this whole affair. He was there then, and He is here now. And, with the skill of a surgeon’s gentle hand, He brings healing to the very root of the problem. There is a Divine

perspective on slavery. God has something to say about the past and the present, and it will give us hope and a clear vision for the future. He is wise, so wise.

Eyes have not seen, ears have not heard, neither has it entered in to the hearts of men the things that God has in store for them that love Him,... But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God... no one knows the things of God except the spirit of God. Now we have the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God.

1 Corinthians 2:11

I dare say, that if it were not for the obedient response of men and women operating under the direction of the God of heaven, slavery would still be going on openly and legitimately today. Slavery continues today in many nations, including in the West. A recent *Newsweek* report told of Cameroonians enslaving Cameroonians right in USA. A strong abolition movement is once again gathering momentum.

However, today after centuries of existence that stretched all the way back to the Bible days, the African experience in slavery exposed this immoral and inhumane system and broke the back of it. Thanks be to God, something good came out of it. Slavery is no longer accepted as the normal treatment for prisoners of war, thieves, and people we just don't like. Those who practice slavery today, do so quietly and well camouflaged. It is no longer morally acceptable to own slaves anywhere in the world. That only became true in the 1900s. So, because the victories of people of African descent over suffering and oppression were based on universal moral and Godly principles and sanctioned by just laws, the door was swung wide open for many other disenfranchised people around the world to dream and work for their own civil and human rights. The suffering of Africans paved the way for others.

God was there from start to finish, and He has a perspective on this historical fact. He also has a view of what the end should be.