



Blinded by Unbelief

A South Pacific Christian Ministries Bible Study

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Instructions

This study is designed to use questions and scriptures to enable believers to gain understanding of the topic. While it may be used for individual study, it is designed for a group setting. The Leader's Guide provides a group leader with additional information, scripture passages, and directional comments to enable and direct the discussion. The questions provided are designed to direct the discussion and enable participants to gain insight into the topic.

Group Leaders should read the summary and Leader's Guide prior to the meeting. It is also helpful if you read the scriptures and answer the questions in the Study Question section. The Study Question should be provided to participants in advance of the group meeting so that they have time to read the scriptures and answer the questions. During the group meeting follow the Leader's Guide, reading the scripture passages as they are presented, read or discuss the information presented. It is helpful to have members of the group read the scriptures out loud. Ask the questions in the order that they appear in the Leader's Guide. Keep in mind the recommended answer participants present their answers. Depending on the answers provided by the group, you may want to ask additional questions to help them see the recommend answer.

It should be noted that this and our other studies often reference scriptural symbolism. As with the parables that Jesus told, a scriptural symbolism represents a deeper truth found within a passage. In order for scriptural symbolism to be valid it must line up with scripture and be supported by scripture and conform to the character of God.

All scripture references found in this study are the King James version, unless otherwise noted. Do not use or allow the use of none scripture references during the discussion. In particular, so called lost books, the Apocrypha books or any other book or material not included in the Bible. While Apocrypha books are part of the Catholic bible, they are not included in the Protestant bible due to contradictions with other scriptures. If a scripture used by a group participant seems questionable, compare it to the King James and Amplified versions.

Also, in a group setting, do not allow anyone to dominate the discussion. If one member talks too much, it will hinder others. Don't allow group members to challenge directly the answers of other group members. Keep in mind that the answers presented in the Leader's Guide, are not the final or only acceptable answers. These answers serve as a guide to direct the discussion and impart insight.

If you are using this study for your personal study time, then read the summary, scripture referenced in the Study Question section and then answer the questions. Make sure that you read and study the scriptures used in the Study. After you have completed the Study Question section, then read the Leader's Guide and compare your answers to those in the Leader's Guide.

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About Us

South Pacific Christian Ministries is a Non-Denomination Missions Oriented Ministry that sprang out of a small tourist focused church in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. After 16 years serving as the Senior Pastor the LORD redirected our steps from the little chapel by the sea to the small island communities of the South Pacific.

Our Vision is to bring the living water to the small islands of the South Pacific; a vision summed up in the Hawaiian phrase Ke Ola Wai, which means the living water. Ke Ola Wai encompassing our greatest spiritual and physical need, pure spiritual and physical water.

Our Mission is to meet the spiritual and physical needs of the people who live on the small islands of the South Pacific that can only be reached by boat. To bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to their shores, assisting local Pastors, providing Bible Training for believers and conducting outreaches to draw in non-believers. To provide gravity fed, family sized, reverse osmosis water filters; emergency medical supplies; medical services; and disaster response training.

Summary

What does it mean to be Blinded by Unbelief? Is unbelief sin? How to cure spiritual blindness? Find the answers to these questions and more as you go through this study.



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Leaders Guide

By definition, to believe means to credit upon the authority or testimony of another; to be persuaded of the truth of something upon the declaration of another, or upon evidence furnished by reasons, arguments, and deductions of the mind, or by other circumstances and than personal knowledge. When we believe upon the authority of another, we always put confidence in his veracity, his trustworthiness.

In order to believe something we must trust the source; or be persuaded by evidence supporting the statement or claim. When we do not believe something then we are making a statement regarding the trustworthiness of the source or authority, or of the validity of the evidence furnished.

Matthew 11:16-19

- 16 But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,
- 17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.
- 18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.
- 19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

Both Jesus and John were rejected by the Jewish leaders and to some degree by the people. They rejected the call of John the Baptist to repentance and His declaration of the coming Messiah. They rejected the words of Jesus refusing to accept the truth, despite the miracles that He did and the validity of His words. Unfortunately, many of the people also failed to accept the words of Jesus through their own ignorance and hardness of heart.

{**Side Note:** It is important to note that the presents of miracles by themselves does not automatically confirm that someone is of God. When their words also line up with God's Word, then that confirms that they are of God. }

Isaiah 6:8-10

- 8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.
- 9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.
- 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Just as the LORD had said, the people heard the words of Jesus, but they did not understood them. They saw the miracles, but they failed to perceive that the Messiah stood in their mist.

Matthew 11:20-23

- 20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:
- 21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.
- 22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.
- 23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

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Matthew 11:24

- 24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

Questions

- 1) What did the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida do that caused Jesus to speak against them?
 - They refused to repent even though Jesus did many great miracles in those cities. The rejected His Words because their hearts were hard and they neither understood God's Word or where ignorant of it.
- 2) How did the people of Tyre and Sidon differ from the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida regarding the ministry of Jesus? (Luke 6:17, Mark 3:8)
 - When they had heard of the things Jesus did the came to where He was to hear from Him themselves.
- 3) How did Jesus compare Chorazin and Bethsaida to Tyre and Sidon?
 - In the day of Judgement, Tyre and Sidon would be better off than Chorazin and Bethsaida.
- A) Why is this significant?
 - Judgements were spoken against Tyre and Sidon by God through both Isaiah and Ezekiel; therefore their sin is greater.

Those of the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum saw many great miracles. Countless of them were healed and set free. Despite all of the miracles and the truth of His Words, they would not accept Him as the Messiah. A few believed by most of them did not. Their unbelief condemned them to a greater judgement than Tyre and Sidon which God spoke against through the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel because of their evil deeds.

Jesus goes further to declare that if the same miracles had been done in the city of Sodom that they would have repented from their sins and been spared God's judgement. Considering the evil in the city of Sodom and the way that God destroyed it, killing everyone, those of Capernaum faced a severe judgement.

Mark 8:22-26

- 22 And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.
- 23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.
- 24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.
- 25 After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.
- 26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

Question

- 4) What did Jesus do when a blind man was brought to Him in the town of Bethsaida?
 - He led him by the hand out of the city and then healed Him.
- A) Why did Jesus not heal the blind man where he was?
 - The unbelief of those in the city would have brought even greater judgement against them. Unbelief also hinders those who seek to be healed.

Unbelief can hinder the working of the Holy Spirit. Even with this blind man we see the impact of unbelief. This is the only time where Jesus prayed twice for someone regarding the same issue. The first time, then blind man received partial eyesight. The second time his vision was fully restored.



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Your own unbelief can rob you of something that God desires to do in your life. He won't go against your will. The unbelief of others around you or of those praying can also hinder a miracle. Just as wrong teaching can. The Church has long taught that sometimes sickness is given by God to teach them something. There is no scriptural support for this assault against God's character, but it is often taught nonetheless.

The Apostle Paul's statement regarding a thorn in the flesh is often misconstrued to say that God caused it to keep him humble. The word does not say that.

2 Corinthians 12:3-10

- 3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)
- 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.
- 5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.
- 6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.
- 7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.
- 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.
- 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
- 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Paul describes the thorn as a messenger of Satan, not an affection sent by God. Also, the Greek word translated as infirmities in that passage means feebleness of mind or body, by implication, malady; morally, frailty. It also can mean disease, infirmity, sickness and weakness.

We can confirm that this thorn, regardless of what it was, by Jesus' words found in John 10:10. Any infirmity, sickness, weakness, feebleness of mind or body, is something that steals peace and joy, and even brings about death and destruction. An evil messenger would not be of God, because God is not evil. Sickness or any type of physical affliction could not be of God because that would contradict the words of Jesus.

John 10:10

- 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Note that the LORD said "my strength is made perfect in weakness". Considering God's statement to Paul, is the correct interpretation weakness instead of infirmity? Perhaps. In either case, the thorn was not sent by God. The fact that God said, "My grace is sufficient" does not mean that God was trying to teach Paul something. It simply means that His grace will enable Him to deal with the situation.

If you consider a sickness or other affliction to be sent by God to teach you something then why would you expect Him to heal you or deliver you from that affliction? If you believe it is of God then why seek medical attention to help deal with it?

Unbelief robs God's people of what is theirs through the work of the Cross. Our peace, provision, healing and forgiveness were paid for by the cross.



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Isaiah 53:5

- 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

1 Peter 2:24

- 24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Question

- 5) After Jesus put His hands on him what did the man see?
- Men as trees. He had sight, but is was not seeing clearly.
- A) What prevented him from fully receiving his sight the first time that Jesus touched him?
- His unbelief.
- B) What is the difference between a lack of understanding and unbelief?
- Unbelief begins with a choice not to accept God's Word as fact. A lack of understanding is not a rejection of God's Word, just a failure to understand or comprehend.

The fact that the blind man did not see clearly at first speaks to His unbelief. This event is the only time recorded in the Word where Jesus prayed more than once for someone for the same thing. It is important to note that what proceeded was a statement against that city and others regarding their unbelief. The blind man did not call to Jesus for healing, He was brought to Him.

Consider the leper who came to Jesus, saying "if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." (Matthew 8:1-4) He came with the belief that Jesus had the ability to heal. His expectation was that if Jesus was willing then he would be healed.

After the blind man was healed Jesus told him to go home and not to go into the town or tell anyone in that town about his healing. The unbelief of others can rob someone of a healing if they believe their words. Also, by telling him not to testify to those in the town of his healing, Jesus spared them of further judgement for their unbelief.

Questions

- 6) Was the blind man who Jesus healed from Bethsaida?
- No. Jesus told him to return to his home and not go into the town.
- 7) Is there any significance to the fact that he was found in Bethsaida? Explain your answer.
- Yes. Bethsaida was a place of unbelief, of blindness to the truth. The man was brought from Bethsaida to Jesus and had his sight fully restored. He is a symbolic representation the condition of one who is lost or in unbelief. They must have their eyes opened to the truth so they can truly see.

Believers walk in blindness to the truth when they reject something that the Bible says. A truth that you reject prevents you from walking in the benefits of that truth. A truth that you reject may cause you to stumble on a lie that is not exposed by that truth.

Question

- 8) When you are blinded by unbelief, what does it take to be restored so that you can see?
- Studying God's Word and choosing to accept what it says as truth.

Rejecting the truth of God's Word is choosing to be blind to the truth and the deception of the enemy. When you reject God's Word, you reject Him. When you choose not to believe His Word, then reject the life that His Word provides.



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John 1:1-9

- 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- 2 The same was in the beginning with God.
- 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
- 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
- 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.
- 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
- 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.
- 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.
- 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Jesus, who is the manifested Word of God, is the light that shines in the darkness. The light of Christ, the Word of God, is life. His Word exposes the lies of the enemy that bring death and destruction. His Word imparts life to all who receives and accepts it as unshakeable truth. When you have beliefs that are contrary to God's Word, then you are blind to the truth and what His Word provides.

A common misconception is that light is the opposite of darkness. The truth is that darkness is the absence of light. The smallest light in a dark room can expose every corner and everything hidden there in. Darkness can never overcome light and it is always reduced or removed by the presence of light. The greater the light, the less the darkness.

In the same way, a lie is the absence of truth. A lie is contrary to the truth and can hide other truths. A lie can only exist as long as the truth is not known or accepted. As long as you reject part of God's Word you are blind in that area. A lie maintains power over your life until it is identified and cast down by accepting the truth.

2 Corinthians 10:3

- 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:
- 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)
- 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

As noted before, you can have a lack of understanding without rejecting His Word. That lack of understanding can be just as blinding as a willful rejection of the truth. The key difference with a lack of understanding is that once you gained the necessary knowledge you will accept that truth. Unbelief on the other hand requires an acknowledgment of your unbelief and then the purposed acceptance of the truth.

Romans 4:3

- 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Jesus spoke against Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum because of their unbelief. They saw the miracles and heard His words, yet they did not accept Him as the Messiah. They rejected the truth. They rejected God's Word. If by believing God's Word righteousness was accounted unto Abraham, then sin is accounted for rejecting God's Word.



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Genesis 3:1-7

- 3 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?
- 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:
- 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.
- 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:
- 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.
- 6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.
- 7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Adam and Eve entered into sin because they accepted a lie over God's Word. Eve put her faith in the words of the serpent that were contrary to what God had said. Then having rejected God's Word she partook of the forbidden fruit. Adam accepted the lie of the appearance of Eve not being harmed by the fruit and partook of the fruit. Both actions required a rejection of a truth and the acceptance of a lie as truth. The result of their action was sin, spiritual death and physical death with a Day unto the LORD. The lie they accepted as truth blinded them to the truth and the consequences that God had proclaimed.

Question

- 9) How do you know that you are blind to a truth?
 - When it is contrary to God's Word.

The truths of God's Word that we reject are highlighted when we read something and find ourselves saying that is not true, or that is no longer true. If God's Word says it, then it is so. Every thought or belief to the contrary is the acceptance of a lie. Lies can only be exposed and destroyed through understanding and fully accepting a truth.

Many Christians today believe that God only heals sometimes. They believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit stopped functioning with the death of Apostle John. Yet the Word does not say that those gifts were limited to the twelve Apostles or that they would only remain as long as one of the was alive. Many church leaders have promoted this lie to cover their unbelief.

1 Peter 2:24

- 24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

The same work that allows our sins to be forgiven enables us to be healed. Just as God will cleans the sins of all who come to Him seeking forgiveness, He will heal all who ask and believe. Every great healing ministry in the past had one thing in common. All of them believed that if God's Word says something then it was true. They saw great miracles of healing because they believed what God said. They believed that if they asked God to heal someone, then that person would be healed. Most believers don't see that level of miracles because they don't believe God's Word in the area of healing. Most believers will place exceptions or excuses why God won't answer a prayer instead of accepting that His Word says, "Ask and it shall be given".



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Question

- 10) What are the Biblical truths that you do not fully accept or that you reject outright?
(This is a question for personal reflection. Be honest with those areas of the Word that you have doubts about or outright reject.)



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Study Questions

Answer the following questions, using scripture to support your answers where appropriate. The goal is to gain understanding, not to adhere to short, pat answers. Don't limit yourself to the space on the page between questions. Write your answers on a separate sheet if necessary. Do not include answers based on the books that are not part of the Bible. The opinions of man and blending the works of man, in particular false books, will hinder your walk and understanding.

Read

Matthew 11:16-24

Luke 6:17

Isaiah 53

Romans 4:3

Isaiah 6:8-10

2 Corinthians 12:3-10

John 1:1-9

Genesis 3:1-7

Mark 8:22-26

John 10:10

2 Corinthians 10:3

Questions

- 1) What did the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida do that caused Jesus to speak against them?
- 2) How did the people of Tyre and Sidon differ from the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida regarding the ministry of Jesus?
- 3) How did Jesus compare Chorazin and Bethsaida to Tyre and Sidon?
 - A) Why is this significant?
- 4) What did Jesus do when a blind man was brought to Him in the town of Bethsaida?
 - A) Why did Jesus not heal the blind man where he was?
- 5) After Jesus put His hands on him what did the man see?
 - A) What prevented him from fully receiving his sight the first time that Jesus touched him?
 - B) What is the difference between a lack of understanding and unbelief?
- 6) Was the blind man who Jesus healed from Bethsaida?
- 7) Is there any significance to the fact that he was found in Bethsaida? Explain your answer.



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- 8) When you are blinded by unbelief, what does it take to be restored so that you can see?
- 9) How do you know that you are blind to a truth?
- 10) What are the Biblical truths that you do not fully accept or that you reject outright?