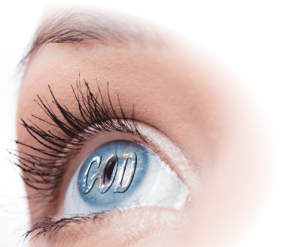


# Open Our Eyes

Psalm 119:9-24

Revelation 3:14-22; Acts 26:8-20



## Growing as Disciples in 2024

### Christ's Commission to His Church (Matthew 28:18-20)

- (v. 18) With **all authority** Christ commands His Church . . .
- (v. 19) The Church is to make **disciples** before baptizing them.
- (v. 20) The Church is to **teach** disciples to **do all** that Christ has commanded.
- (Matthew 9:9; 8:19-22) "His disciples **followed** Him" (Luke 9:23; Matt 10:28)
- **What is a disciple?** A disciple is one who is determined to become just like his master by being disciplined in his studies and obedience. A disciple **follows** his/her master. See John 10:27-29.
  - ① Chosen by the rabbi. (Ephesians 1:4-5)
  - ② Total submission. (Luke 14:33)
  - ③ Meet with other disciples to dialog over Scripture and life.
  - ④ Memorization required. (Psalm 119:105)
  - ⑤ Lively debate, but in the end the rabbi's interpretation was binding.
  - ⑥ Daily interaction with the rabbi.
  - ⑦ Goal: to become exactly like the rabbi. Christians, disciples of Christ, imitate Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1; John 13:1-5; 1 Pet 2:21; Eph 5:1-2; 1 John 2:6)
- Christ **commands/demands** His followers/disciples to wholeheartedly and uncompromisingly follow Him. NO EXCUSES. (Luke 9:23; John 10:27-29; Luke 9:57-62; 14:26; John 21:22)
- Christ **commands/demands** His disciples to follow Him on His terms. Followers do not set the terms of their following. (Luke 14:26, 27, 33)
- Christ **commands/demands** that obedience to Him must be His disciples' TOP PRIORITY. (Luke 14:26-27; Matthew 10:37-38)
- Christ **commands/demands total submission** to His Word. "IF you continue (abide) in MY WORD, then you are MY disciples." (John 8:31; Luke 6:46)
- Six "D's" of a Disciple
  - **Desire** - a genuine/passionate desire to become more than I am.
    - Every disciple is given a new heart from the Lord at the moment of rebirth. That new heart comes with new desires, wants, and attitudes. This new heart causes one to thirst, hunger, and pant after God. He/she has the desire to please God in all that he/she does. (Psalm 42:1; Phillip 2:13; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Col 1:9-11; 3:23-24; 2 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Cor 5:9; 1 Thess 4:1; Hebrews 11:5-6; 1 John 3:22)
  - **Determination** - A disciple enters into the "race" set before him by God with the determination to win - to give it his/her all. (1 Cor 9:24-27; Acts 20:24; Philippians 3:13-15; 2 Timothy 4:6-8)

- **Discipline** - A disciple disciplines him/herself so that he/she can finish what she/he started. He endures to the end. (Luke 14:28-30; Matt 10:22; 24:13; Romans 12:12; Col 1:11) Finishing (perseverance to the end) is more important than beginning!
- **Diligence** - A disciple gives his/her ALL in growing as a disciple and helping others to grow. (Romans 12:8, 10-11; Heb 6:11; **2 Peter 1:5-8, 10**; 3:13-18)
- **Delight** - A disciple **delights** in the Lord (Ps 37:4), in His Law (Psalm 1:1-3; 112:1; 119:16, 24, **35**, 47, 70, 92, 143, 174), other saints (Psalm 16:3), doing God's will (Ps 40:8), in His Sabbath (Isaiah 58:13-14)
- **Doing/Duty** - A disciple DOES whatever his/her Lord commands. He/she lives his/her life on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. (James 1:22; Luke 4:4; Matt 7:21-23; 12:50; 17:7-10; 1 John 2:3-6; Deut 10:12-13)
- All Christians are disciples. All Christians have a burning passion to be just like their Master. They imitate Christ. (1 John 2:6; 1 Peter 2:21)
- ★ **ONLY DISCIPLES GO TO HEAVEN.**

### **Theme for 2024** (Psalm 119:18)

- Open our eyes that we might see the **wondrous** things in Your Law.
- (Psalm 19:7-11) The Law is perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true. In keeping it there is **GREAT REWARD**.
- Paul's commission. (Acts 26:8-20) “. . . open their eyes . . .”
- We want to SEE God as He has revealed Himself in Scripture.
  - Though He is invisible. (Hebrews 11:27)
  - Though He dwells in unapproachable light. (1 Timothy 6:16)
  - Though even angels dare not look upon Him. (Isaiah 6:2)
  - Though His face shines like the sun. (Revelation 1:16-17)

### **Israel: For Our Learning** (Romans 15:4)

- (Psalm 50:17) “Seeing you hate instruction and cast My words behind you.”
- (Nehemiah 9:26) “. . . cast Your Law behind their backs.”
- (Hosea 8:12) “I have written for him great things of My Law, but they were considered a strange thing.”
- (1 Kings 14:9) In so doing, “You cast ME behind your back.”
- (Zephaniah 3:4) The priests did violence to God's Law. (Ezekiel 22:26)
- (Hosea 4:6) “My people . . . have rejected knowledge . . . Because you have forgotten the Law of your God, I also will forget your children.”
- (Zechariah 7:11-13) They refused to hear the Law of God.
- (2 Chronicles 36:14-17) They mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets. . . **Therefore**, God gave them into the hands of their enemies.
- (Psalm 2) A Psalm that SPEAKS TODAY!!!!

## To See You Need to Be Born Again

- (John 3:3) The “seeing” here is the understanding.
- (John 9) Blind since birth! “I once was blind but now I see!”

## The EYE (Matthew 6:22-23; 5:29)

- IF the eye is good, the whole body will be full of light.
- IF your right eye causes you to sin then cut it out!

## The EYE of Understanding (Ephesians 1:15-23)

- Paul prayed for the saints! He prayed five specific things: (Don't forget the “THEREFORE” in verse 15)
  - ❶ That God give them “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him”
  - ❷ That the “eyes” of their understanding would be enlightened so that they might know the hope of His calling . . .
  - ❸ To know what was the “riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.
  - ❹ To know what was the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe.
  - ❺ To know the greatness of Christ.

## An Aid to Seeing (Psalm 119:105)

- (Psalm 119:105) God's Word is God's lamp to light our way/**path**.
- (Psalm 43:3) “Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me. Let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your tabernacle.” (Matt 7:13-14)
- (Proverbs 6:23) For the **commandment** is a lamp, and the **Law** a light . . .

## Why Pray Such a Prayer?

- The days that we are living are **EVIL**. (Ephesians 5:14-17)
- (Revelation 3:14-22) **We don't even know** that we are “wretched, miserable, poor, **blind**, and naked!!!!” We think we are wealthy and **in need of nothing!** All at the same time making Christ SICK! (Isa 1:10-17; Amos 5:21-23; Jer 6:20)
- ✗ CHRIST WAS OUTSIDE KNOCKING!!!! MEDITATE! Warning: John 5:43.
- ★ End-times “church” - (2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:1-4)
  - We love ourselves more than God and others. (Matt 22:34-40)
  - We have a form of GODLINESS. (1 Timothy 4:7-8)
  - We do not believe that DOCTRINE is necessary.
  - We have turned away from truth. (Jer 9:3; 7:28; Isa 59:14-15; Hos 4:1)
  - We have cast God's Law behind our backs.
  - We have cast GOD HIMSELF out of governments, schools, universities, families, churches, - OUR LIVES!
  - We really do not **KNOW** God! (Isaiah 1:2-4; Jeremiah 4:4; 9:3)

- **TO SEE GOD** - Consider Exodus 33:18-19 with Isaiah 2:10-11.
  - Ezekiel 1:26-28; Isaiah 6:1-4; Revelation 1:9-18; Matthew 17:1-8.
- To give us a renewed consciousness of the dimness of our spiritual vision.
- To prevent wandering - see Psalm 119:10; Proverbs 4:25-27.
- Seeing the Invisible (Hebrews 11:27) and “seeing” the invisible gives us endurance and endurance is what we need! (**Hebrews 10: 36-39**; Matthew 10:22; 24:13; 1 Peter 1:8-9; Revelation 2:10; **2 Kings 6:8-18**)
  - Hebrews 11:1 - FAITH is seeing the things hoped for - glory!
  - Hebrews 11:13-16 - FAITH is “seeing” *the promises* of God while they are still not fulfilled.
  - Hebrews 12:1-2 - See JESUS, our Example, who ran His race and is now seated on His Father’s throne.
  - 2 Corinthians 4:18 - FAITH is seeing ETERNAL things rather than temporal things.
  - Job 42:5-6 - “Seeing God!” It is one thing to hear about God but it is completely a different thing to “see” Him as He is.
  - John 8:56 - Abraham “saw” Christ’s day!
- For REAL GENUINE FAITH! (Luke 18:8)

### What We NEED in 2024 (Revelation 3:18-22)

- ★ REVIVAL. (2 Chronicles 7:14)
- ★ RETURN! (Jeremiah 3:22)
- We NEED to BUY from Christ:
- ① GOLD refined by fire. FAITH - see 1 Peter 1:7 but be warned with Luke 18:8 with Matthew 7:22-23.
- ② White garments, that we might be clothed, that the *shame* of your nakedness may not be *revealed*!
- ③ EYE SALVE THAT WE MIGHT SEE! (Consider Isaiah 6:1-7)
- ④ REPENTANCE (Revelation 3:19; Luke 13:1-5; Acts 17:30)
- ⑤ ZEAL! (**Revelation 3:19; Romans 12:11; Titus 2:14**)
- ★ **Somebody needs to open the door!** WE need to **FELLOWSHIP** with Christ - **ON HIS TERMS!** (Revelation 3:20; John 14:23) **IT’s HIS CHURCH!**
- ★ Add to our faith so that we will not be shortsighted or blind. (**2 Peter 1:5-9**)
- ★ Come to and walk in the light as He is in the light. (John 3:19; 1 John 1:6-7; Psalm 36:9)
- ★ Pray for an increase of faith! (Luke 17:5; Mark 9:24; 2 Thess 1:3)
- ★ **We NEED to see God!** (Isaiah 6:1-6)
- ★ We need to worship God with all of our hearts, mind, and strength. We need to give God the glory that is due Him. (Psalm 29:2)

### Our HOPE in 2024: Hosea 14