



Depth Perception

Seeing God with Fuller Vision

by Elizabeth Enlow

One of my daughters has amblyopia—one of her eyes is significantly weaker than the other. In fact, the weaker eye was once so much worse than the other that her brain did something amazing. It ignored the signal from the eye that wasn't seeing clearly.

For a while, she had to wear a patch over the eye that sees normally, forcing the brain to receive signals from the weaker eye. The doctor also gave her some glasses that are very thick on one side, making her eye look really big. The other side has an ordinary lens, so that eye looks perfectly normal. She sees perfectly with her glasses on, but as soon as she takes them off, she sees 20/20 out of only one eye.

She really hates wearing her glasses, so I've asked doctors on several occasions, "Why does she have to do this? What's the big deal?" They give two reasons. First, if anything ever happened to her strong eye, then she wouldn't be able to see. Her brain will lock in on whatever it's doing at about age 10 or 11, so if it continues to receive the signal from her weaker eye until that age, she'll have sight in both eyes. The second reason is that we need two eyes for accurate depth perception.

Depth perception is the ability to see the world in three dimensions. If you only have monocular vision, you can still see a particular object accurately, but you can't see how far away it is very well. Binocular vision, on the other hand, sees two images of the same thing at slightly different angles. When the brain merges the two images, it can interpret the different angles and determine the distance of the object. Our vision becomes three dimensional.

I think a lot of us see God with monocular vision. Often our eye that perceives His love and kindness is strong, while the eye that sees Him as holy, as someone to be feared, is a lot

weaker. For some people, it's the other way around. Either way, our depth perception is limited. What we see is true, but it's not the full picture.

In Romans 11, Paul writes of Israel as a vine that has had some of its branches cut off so the church could be grafted into it. They were broken off by unbelief, he says, while the Gentiles coming into God's kingdom stand by faith. Therefore, "Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God" (Romans 11:20-22).

Paul's point is like a corrective lens for our weaker eye. As much as God loves us, He still chastises and corrects us, and sometimes that's a scary process. There are seasons when we can have such tender, intimate moments with the Lord that we sense His favor over us and feel comfortable with our relationship with Him. And I'm so thankful for those times. But then there are moments when He allows a situation we didn't expect, or He doesn't answer a prayer we thought He had promised to answer, and we take a step back and wonder how well we know Him.

When we only see one of those images of God, our other eye needs strengthening. I believe God sometimes covers our stronger eye and, for a season, shows us only the side of Himself we need to see more clearly. That can be disorienting at the time, but we need the therapy for our depth perception. Otherwise, our weak eye will only grow weaker.

God's attributes are held in tension, and we need to understand that. When we experience His severity, we need to remember His kindness. And when we're soaking in His love, we need to remember how holy He is. Both angles are accurate, but He wants our spirit to merge the two images and interpret them together. Only then will we have a fuller vision of who He is.