

NEXT VISION

LESSON 4: BLINDFOLDS

2 Kings 6:18

REVIEW

1. **Assignment:** Let's check out those clay projects!
2. Vision in 3D: Destination, Direction, and Duration.
3. Vision is the **invisible fuel** that drives leaders, ignites passion, and creates lasting impact.
4. See the Vision.
 - a. What do you see?
5. Share the Vision.
 - a. Modeling vs Training
6. Every vision will be tested for authenticity.

Today our topic is 'Blindfolds.' Together, we will identify and eliminate the things that the enemy has used to cloud our vision. Grab your Bible and turn with me to **2 Kings 6:15,18**. (Read Scripture)

WHO TURNED OUT THE LIGHTS?

At this point in the story, our focus has shifted from Elisha and Gehazi to Elisha's encounter with the Syrian army. I can tell you; the members of this army have zero divine insight. They have no idea what's happening in the spirit realm, so as Elisha walks out to meet the commanders of this army, they believe it's for surrender.

- I can imagine these warriors mocking, taunting, and laughing at Elisha as they make their way to his house.
- They might have said, *"Well done, mighty prophet! If you were truly a visionary, you would've known we were coming and escaped while you had the chance."*
- The captain of the army has got to be thinking ... "There's a promotion coming my way!"
- The warriors are curious – "Why have we all been deployed to capture this one man?"

All the odds point to a lock-down win for Syria ... until Elisha prayed! As they close in for the capture, Elisha shouted: **"Lord, I pray, strike this people with blindness..." (Verse 18)**

Elisha's decision to blind the entire army at once was brilliant. He knew it would immobilize them, giving him the advantage. And clearly, the Lord approved of his strategy, as the verse continues to say...

"...And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha."

Have you ever been in a place where the power went out at night? The world suddenly turned black, and for a few moments, you felt disoriented. In that moment of darkness ... the entire army is gripped by fear and uncertainty. It was a "What just happened?" moment.

Elisha used this tactical decision to halt the enemy's progress. He literally took away their vision. That's why I've titled this lesson "Blindfolds." Blindfolds have the power to shroud our vision, causing confusion and immobilization...

This state of confusion is what Solomon refers to in **Proverbs 29:18: "Where there is no vision, the people perish."**

In the NLT translation, it says: **"When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild."** The Message Paraphrase adds this: **"If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves."**

These passages illuminate the enemy's awareness and craftiness in using blindfolds to hinder our progress. The last thing he desires is for us to truly embrace our God-given vision; instead, he seeks to keep us in darkness and confusion.

Illustration: Provide every student with markers, cardstock, and a blindfold. Ask the students to put on their blindfolds. Now ask them to take a few minutes to draw a picture of their vision while wearing the blindfold. This exercise will help students understand the challenge of navigating their vision without clear sight.

WHO NEEDED TO GO THERE ANYWAY?

About 350 years ago a shipload of travelers landed on the northeast coast of America. The first year they established a town site. The next year they elected a town government. The third year the town government planned to build a road five miles westward into the wilderness.

In the fourth year the people tried to impeach their town government because they thought it was a waste of public funds to build a road five miles westward into a wilderness. Who needed to go there anyway?

Here were people who had the vision to see three thousand miles across an ocean and overcome great hardships to get there. But in just a few years they were not able to see even

five miles out of town. They had lost their pioneering vision. With a clear vision of what we can become in Christ, no ocean of difficulty is too great. Without it, we rarely move beyond our current boundaries. -Lynn Anderson

Everything is more difficult when you are blindfolded, simple as that! Let me help you take them off! Together, we will identify and eliminate the things that the enemy has used to cloud our vision. Instead of stumbling in all directions, it's time to run straight ahead. ^[1]

BLINDFOLD #1: TRADITION

This blindfold shackles our creativity.

In the Greek, the word “tradition” signifies “instruction that has been handed down.” In a good sense, tradition can be linked to a divine commandment. There are many traditions that are good and helpful. But it can also be used to condemn hurtful, human traditions.

***“Jesus [asked], “...why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?”
Matthew 15:3 NIV***

Paul warned the church, ***“Be sure you are not led away by the teaching of those who have nothing worth saying and only plan to deceive you. That teaching is not from Christ. It is only human tradition and comes from the powers that influence this world.” Colossians 2:8 ERV***

While tradition can hold value, we must recognize that *God has no use for traditions that hinder progress*. The issue is when we allow our tradition to trump our mission. If our tradition is most important, the Church’s mission will always take a back seat. ^[2]

In the words of George Barna, *“One of the greatest barriers to true vision is the belief that God would never lead us to change what we have always done.”* He went on to say, *“Maturity is growing beyond your past...”*

The familiar ways we have experienced God in the past are comforting, but we can restrict the move of God in our lives today if we cling to old wineskins. Embrace every God encounter, regardless of how long ago it happened, but understand the purpose of those moments!

Initially, Elisha followed the pattern set by Elijah and copied his actions. When Elijah crossed the Jordan River, he struck the water with his mantle, creating a dry path to walk on. In his first miracle, Elisha replicated Elijah's final miracle.

However, as Elisha matured, he learned to depend on God's creativity. He could have relied on past traditions and called down fire from heaven, just as Elijah had done when facing a wicked king. Instead of clinging to the familiar, Elisha chose to move in new and fresh ways.

In his book, *The Go-Between*, L.P. Hartley opens with an epic one-liner. He wrote, "*The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.*" It is one of the most empowering things you can tell yourself. There is no life in the past!

You've heard me say this before but it's so worth repeating ... When the memories of your past, excite you more, than your vision for the future, you have begun to die.

God is a God of creativity. In **Isaiah 43:19**, He said, "***I am doing a new thing, even now it springs forth, can you not perceive it?***" A new chapter is about to begin in your life. Your creator didn't intend for you to stay at one level forever. New opportunities, new relationships, and new ideas await you!

Are there things you need to forget so you can see the new thing? Do you need to stop dwelling on something so that you can step into God's divine plan? If you're looking back to the old, you won't see the new. **This is a new day.** Don't dwell on the past. **This is a new day.** Do not dwell on your mistakes. **This is a new day.** Live in regrets and you'll miss out on new opportunities.

Removing the blindfold of tradition will enable us to see clearly and walk confidently in the path that God has set before us.

BLINDFOLD #2: FEAR

This blindfold steals our focus.

Andy Stanley once said, "*We can get so focused on what might be that we lose sight of what could and should be.*" ^[3]

Throughout the Bible, many great heroes lost their focus due to fear:

- Peter lost his focus while walking on water, sinking because of his fear of the wind and waves.
- The Children of Israel lost their focus in the wilderness, wandering for forty years due to their fear of the giants.
- Samson lost his focus while entangled with Delilah. The fear of losing her love made him reveal his secret and ultimately led to his downfall.

But Elisha was different. Despite the daunting size and determination of the enemy army, he didn't let fear rob him of his focus. Instead, he chose to keep his focus on the power of God.

Andy Stanley said it best when he wrote, *"Don't allow fear to rob you of your vision for your marriage, your finances, your relationships, your career or ministry. Worse than failure is living with the regret of never having stepped out in faith to pursue your vision."* ^[4]

Every vision involves elements of the unknown. In the early stages, there is more unknown than known. ^[5] It's in this unknown territory that fear often thrives. George Barna responded with this, *"Vision replaces fear with energy and hope. It dismisses unbelief and replaces it with peace and assurance. Vision raises questions, but it does not raise nagging doubts."*

BLINDFOLD #3: INDECISION

This blindfold chips away at our confidence.

Just like Elisha, who had unwavering faith in God's power, let's make decisive choices. He prayed, ***"Lord, strike them with blindness."*** That's decisive action. There's no second-guessing, no backtracking, just faith that God can do it and confidence that He will! God desires us to be bold, not dwelling in the gray zone of "maybe."

Dr. Myles Monroe said, *"Many people's visions never take specific shape because they can't make up their minds what they want to do in life. The only decision they make is to not decide."*

Confidence cannot flourish in instability. The Bible reminds us that ***"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."*** Living with uncertainty, delay, worry, and fear of failure puts oneself in a dangerous position. As Dr. Myles Monroe once said, *"When you live with indecision, life keeps running you over."*

Indecision leads to complacency. George Barna aptly said, *"Complacency extinguishes smoldering passion."* To succeed in our vision, we must have the courage to make difficult decisions, even in the face of uncertainty. ^[6]

BLINDFOLD #4: FATIGUE

This blindfold drains our strength.

We see in our story that Elisha prayed before he spoke to or engaged the enemy. This approach is not without merit. Pray *before* you engage! Apparently, the Lord was willing to grant Elisha's request (whatever that might look like), so he could have gone all Samson on those boys! Instead, he chose prayer as his weapon. Consequently, he didn't lose any strength in the process.

In our busy culture, busyness itself has become the norm. We appear to be constantly occupied, whether at work, school, church, practice, or social events. It's a life characterized by go, go, go ,go, go! Yet, it seems the only time we have no time is when it's time to go to God. This constant busyness weakens us and depletes our strength.

Bishop TD Jakes profoundly stated, *"Busy people don't 'schedule' tiredness, but it slips up on them when they least expect it. Fatigue is the silent cancer of our judgment and emotions. It robs us of creativity and secretly steals our potency and discernment. When we are tired, we tend to be more vulnerable and less careful. Our nerves stand on edge, our tempers flare, and even our simple problems seem insurmountable."*

With this understanding, it becomes crucial to address both indecisiveness and fatigue in our lives, as they can hinder our growth and potential. You may believe you're the exception, capable of pushing through exhaustion, but as George Barna wrote, "Even the mightiest spiritual warriors need moments of rest."

While you might not perceive any immediate consequences, rest assured that there is a price being paid. Someone close to you, be it your spouse, your children, or even your personal health, is bearing the burden. Fatigue will inevitably limit your vision and impact for God.

Now, let's discuss the final blindfold - the most challenging one to remove. This blindfold has been tightly knotted by a seasoned sailor and is the ultimate thief of your vision.

BLINDFOLD #5: OPPOSITION

This blindfold hinders our progress.

"It's an urge. Every champion has felt it. Every president has felt it. Every King has felt it. Every lion has felt it. Every winner has felt it. Every soldier has felt it. Every victorious person has felt it. The urge to quit. Don't you give up on your dream." -TD Jakes

Opposition makes you want to quit! It hinders your progress and obstructs your path. It weakens your resolve. Discouragement is sown by opposition, making you doubt your

chances of surviving. Opposition is a vision killer. You should rip off that blindfold and burn it! There is no need for it. There are places to go ... kingdom places ... and things to do!

It's a fact ... when you set off to do something great for the kingdom of God, RESISTANCE WILL COME! Dr. Myles Monroe said, *"Vision wakes up opposition. People of vision have found that the minute they decide to fulfill their vision, all their enemies seem to wake up."*^[7]

It's true. As you journey down the road of progress, the dust you stir up draws the attention of both supporters and detractors. But there's something intriguing about detractors - the voices of those against us tend to be louder and more audacious compared to our supporters.

Collins Dictionary defines opposition as, "to act against or provide resistance to; combat." To stand in the way of; hinder, obstruct.

The Syrian army was deployed to oppose Elisha. The king wanted to hinder and obstruct his work. The army made significant progress, advancing towards Elisha to capture him. It was all going as planned until Elisha struck them with blindness. Boom! Game over.

EXAMPLE: I'm going to mention a few Bible names, and I want you to guess who these individuals are: Shamuah, Shaphat, Igal, Palti, Gaddiel, Gaddi, Ammiel, Sethur, Nahbi, Geuel.

Now, let me mention a couple more names: Joshua and Caleb. The first ten names I mentioned were the spies who opposed the Word of God. They were the detractors, and their voices were heard loudly and clearly. Due to their resistance and their bold influence over their tribes, the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for forty years. The reward for their efforts is this... they are forgotten! Nobody today knows who they are.

It's not always external enemies who oppose us; sometimes it's our leaders, those closest to us, or those we trust the most. The men chosen by Moses to spy out the promised land were honorable individuals who were respected by their peers. They did not intentionally sabotage the vision of a new life; their concerns were genuine, but they were genuinely wrong!

That's why Dr. Myles Monroe wrote, *"People who change the world have declared independence from other people's expectations."*^[8]

Tonight, we discussed several blindfolds that can hinder your vision: tradition, fear, indecision, fatigue, and opposition. It is crucial to safeguard yourself against them and tear off every blindfold the enemy tries to bind around your vision.

ASSIGNMENT

Your assignment is as follows: Introduce yourself to five individuals whom you have never met before. Write down their names and highlight one distinctive feature about each person. Bring this assignment back next week.

Resource Credits

1. A Road 5 Miles Into the Wilderness | Bible.org. <https://bible.org/illustration/road-5-miles-wilderness>
2. 7 Things the Church Pretends are Biblical | The Journey Holm - Archive.
3. OVERCOMING PROBLEMS IN GOD'S WORK (Part four) – THE MYSTICAL BROTHERHOOD.
4. Break every chain – Audrey Joe-Ezigbo. <https://audreyjoezigbo.com/break-every-chain/>
5. Andy Stanley Quotes (VISIONEERING) - Wealthanize.
6. Faces of the Executives' Club of Fargo-Moorhead | Fargo INC!.
7. Vision Wakes Up The Opposition – Tsifodze Ernest.
8. Phase 8: Principles to Recognize People's Influence on Vision.