

Eternity Daily Bible Study

(A ministry of Eternity Christian Fellowship)

Walking In The Spirit - 41

Studies in this series can also be found online at www.globalchristians.org/walkspirit/
Studies may be intermittent over the next ten days or so as I will be traveling to Australia to see my mother. Your prayers for her salvation would be most appreciated.

Topic: The Spiritual Senses

Date: 8th September 2009

There are physical senses that we use for detecting light, color, shape, sound, chemicals, pressure and so on and then there are spiritual senses which we use for detecting things such as good, evil, beauty, and truth, and for receiving communication from God.

Hebrews 5:14 EMTV *But solid food is for the mature, for those because of their practice have their senses trained for the distinguishing of both good and evil.*

The prophets often referred to these spiritual senses as spiritual 'eyes' and 'ears':

Isaiah 6:9-10 MKJV *And He said, Go, and tell this people, You hear indeed, but do not understand; and seeing you see, but do not know. (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 hearts, and turn back, and be healed.*

Isaiah 29:9-10 MKJV *Stand still and wonder! Blind your eyes and be blind! They are drunk, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. (10) For Jehovah has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes; He has covered the prophets and your heads, the seers.*

Isaiah 32:3-4 MKJV *And the eyes of those who see shall not be dim, and the ears of those who hear shall listen. (4) And the heart of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of those who stutter shall be ready to speak plainly.*
These spiritual senses are our ability to discern God's spiritual truth. When people are in spiritual decline it appears that their spiritual senses are dull, and when people experience revival it appears that their spiritual senses are awakened and made sharp.

The spiritual senses are distinct from the physical senses. The Pharisees seem to have had very good physical vision (particularly for noticing other people's faults) but they were blind to obvious spiritual truth:

Matthew 23:16-17 MKJV *Woe to you, blind guides, saying, Whoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. (17) Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifies the gold?*

In the next few studies we shall look at the various spiritual senses one by one - but here is a very quick summary:

Eyes: Scan the environment, see the future, see visions, perception of people & events

Ears: Hearing words from God, obedience, servanthood, knowing the will of God

Taste: "Taste and see that the Lord is good" - discernment via experience

Smell: Fragrance of holiness, rapid discernment, "smells funny" / avoids toxic teaching

Touch: Communication of holiness, healing, anointing and spiritual power, also 'touch not the unclean'

The opposite to the spiritual senses are conditions such as spiritual blindness, deafness, returning to one's vomit (dysfunctional taste / smell) and being so insensate that one is unable to know even when one is being beaten (dysfunctional sense of touch e.g. Proverbs 17:10, Isaiah 1:5,6). We also find the prophets referring to maladies such as spiritual drunkenness and spiritual sleep where people lose all judgment and discernment.

Returning to Hebrews 5:14 (above) we find that the spiritual senses enable us to: (a) digest solid spiritual food and (b) discern between good and evil - and that the spiritual senses require constant practice in order to become mature and effective.

So if we are to advance in the Christian life we must constantly exercise our spiritual senses. We cannot be slothful and apathetic. Nor can we be stubborn, hard-hearted or complaining. Rather we are to be alert, watchful, curious, constantly learning from God as eager disciples. In fact those disciples who 'see and hear' are called blessed:

Matthew 13:16-17 MKJV *But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. (17) For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear what you hear, and have not heard them.*

Matthew 16:15-18 MKJV *He said to them, But who do you say I am? (16) And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. (17) Jesus answered and said to him, You are blessed, Simon, son of Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but My Father in Heaven. (18) And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

So one of the keys to blessing in the spiritual life is to have spiritual senses that understand what God is saying and doing. If we are capable of receiving God's direct revelation then we will be like the apostle Peter: *You are blessed, Simon, son of Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but My Father in Heaven.* On the other hand those who fail to perceive obvious spiritual signs are wicked, adulterous, under judgment and headed for destruction:

Matthew 16:1-4 MKJV *The Pharisees and the Sadducees came to Him, tempting Him. And they asked Him that He would show them a sign from Heaven. (2) He answered and said to them, When it is evening, you say, Fair weather; for the sky is red. (3) And in the morning, Foul weather today; for the sky is red and gloomy. Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky, but you cannot see the signs of the times! (4) A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign. And there shall no sign be given to it, except the sign of the prophet Jonah. And He left them and went away.*

The spiritual senses act as part of the conscience (discerning good and evil) and are part of our inner world rather than our outer world. A person who is physically blind may have a great sense of spirituality while a person who has 20/20 vision may be completely blind to spiritual truths. This was the case of Jesus' healing of the man born blind:

John 9:39-41 MKJV *And Jesus said, I have come into this world for judgment, that they who do not see might see, and that they who see might be made blind. (40) And those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, Are we also blind? (41) Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you would have no sin. But now you say, We see. Therefore your sin remains.*

Note the puzzling phrase: *and that they who see might be made blind*. There is definitely a 'use it or lose it' aspect to each of the spiritual senses. Both Isaiah and Jesus said that their ministries would make some people spiritually blind and spiritually deaf. In other words, those people who ignore God's appeal in their conscience, over and over again, become hardened in their inner worlds and their spiritual senses become dull and unresponsive:

Matthew 13:9-15 MKJV *....He who has ears to hear, let him hear. (10) And the disciples said to Him, Why do You speak to them in parables? (11) He answered and said to them, Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, but it is not given to them. (12) For whoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance. But whoever does not have, from him shall be taken away even that which he has. (13) Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not; nor do they understand. (14) And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which said, "By hearing you shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see and shall not perceive; (15) for this people's heart has become gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and they have closed their eyes, lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."*

To summarize today's study:

- 1) We have distinct spiritual senses which are part of our conscience / inner world
- 2) The spiritual senses are inner senses and are different from our five outer senses
- 3) The spiritual senses enable us to digest "solid food" and to discern good and evil
- 4) The spiritual senses require practice and constant use - "use it or lose it"
- 5) The spiritual senses enable us to receive direct revelation from God
- 6) Good spiritual senses are necessary for Christian maturity and blessing
- 7) The use of the spiritual senses is emphasized by the prophets and by Jesus.

More on this in the next study, God willing.

Blessings,

John Edmiston (johned@aibi.ph)

Pastor – Eternity Christian Fellowship

Chairman/ CEO Cybermissions

<http://www.eternitychristian.com>

<http://www.cybermissions.org>

<http://www.aibi.ph>

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