

Nearsightedness

I. Introduction

A. A number of Bible passages speak figuratively about illnesses, maladies, diseases, or sicknesses in order to warn against *spiritual* ailments we must guard against. One such spiritual ailment is the problem of nearsightedness. Like physical nearsightedness, one who is spiritually nearsighted only sees clearly that which is near. The focus of one who is spiritually nearsighted is on what provides *instant* gratification or benefits, rather than what is *eternally* profitable. **2 Peter 1:9**

II. The Source of Foresight

- A. Instead of falling into this trap, we must develop the foresight encouraged by God's Word, not just focusing on the "here and now," but viewing the here and now in light of what we know has eternal significance. **2 Corinthians 4:18; 5:7**
- B. Such foresight demands believing God concerning things we have not physically seen. This gets at the heart of spiritual foresight – it involves shaping our thinking according to what God tells us is true, rather than seeing things from the shortsighted perspective of the world. **Romans 10:17**

III. What Really Matters

A. When we allow God to direct our thinking, it gives us a view of eternity that changes what we value in life. While the world emphasizes earthly fame, fortune, prestige, power, popularity, etc., God's Word shows us that earthly successes profit nothing if one is not right with God. On the other hand, those who, according to the shortsighted view of the world, are unsuccessful in life, actually have the greatest riches imaginable if they are pleasing God. **Luke 16:19-21, 22-25; Revelation 2:9 (v. 10); 1 Timothy 6:6-7; Matthew 16:26**

IV. Sin's Fleeting Pleasures

A. God's Word also produces a different perspective toward what Hebrews 11:25 calls the "fleeting pleasures of sin" (ESV). While the world's shortsighted perspective focuses on the instant gratification sin promises, those with spiritual foresight see the folly of pursuing short-lived gratification at the cost of eternal torment. **Hebrews 11:25; Proverbs 23:29-32; Hebrews 12:16-17; Song 266, v. 2**

V. The Folly of Procrastinating

- A. Some who are spiritually shortsighted might see the need for escaping eternal torment, but think, "I'll get right with God some time down the road." Yet, Scripture shows the wisdom of obeying God with urgency so as to avoid the regrets many will have "down the road" when their fate is sealed. **Luke 16:26ff**
- B. The foresight Scripture produces helps us acknowledge both the uncertainty and the brevity of life on earth. **James 4:14**
- C. Moreover, while those who are spiritually nearsighted look to the fact that Judgment Day hasn't come, and presumptuously assume it won't come anytime soon, those who see things through the lens of God's Word prepare for this Day with vigilance and eager anticipation. **2 Peter 3:4, 10, 11-13; Hymns for Worship, Song 381**