CHAPTER 4
More than Meets the Eye
Natural and Spiritual Senses

Our Heavenly Father reveals Himself from behind the scenes, beneath the surface, beyond the moment, and above the fray. He created us with both natural and spiritual senses, so we can notice His distinctive attributes and supernatural accomplishments. They are evident to us, “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made”.\(^1\) Filled with the Holy Spirit, we perceive reality by peering through layers of wisdom and levels of revelation. Since we share in His “divine nature”, we possess “the knowledge of truth” to live life with prevailing joy, perpetual peace, and permanent love.\(^2\) Religion as usual, business as usual, life as usual—no longer apply.

Knowing the potential of our God-given faculties, Paul wrote:

\[\text{we look [skopeo] not at the things which are seen [blepo], but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.}\]

2 Corinthians 4:18 (NAS)

Our Heavenly Father designed us to recognize His expressive activity so we might realize His exclusive attributes and priceless promises. The Greek word *skopeo* means to observe, contemplate, direct one’s atten-

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\(^1\) Romans 1:19-20 NAS

\(^2\) 1 Timothy 2:4 and 2 Peter 1:4 respectively.
tion to and fix one’s eyes upon.³ This definition extends looking and seeing beyond a casual glance; it implies deliberate focus with marked attention.

The Greek word *blepo* means to perceive or discern, either with the body’s eye or the mind’s eye.⁴ Our body’s eye relies on light to illuminate natural vision. God designed our optical system for viewing three dimensional images in diverse planes of focus, i.e., depth perception. With our mind’s eye, we visualize images from mental memories and imaginary impressions, past, present, and future. Utilizing our spiritual senses, we also perceive an extended range and scope of otherwise veiled realities—illuminated beyond the material realm.

Ultimately, we live by informed faith not by dubious hunches or fickle instincts. Our spiritual acuity complements and clarifies our natural perception and human intuition; it enriches fleeting details with eternal significance.

**Undetected Sights, Sounds, and Smells**

Birds see details that humans cannot see. They observe colors in distinctive shades and dynamic hues beyond our range of view. The eyes of an owl are 100 times more sensitive to light than the average human eye. Owls have the capacity to see over one million stars under the same conditions that we see 6,000.⁵

Unique to their visual anatomy, birds also possess superior color perception. Some birds use 120,000 color-sensing cones per square millimeter in each eye, compared to our 10,000 cones. They have 4 or 5 color pigments compared to our red, green, and blue. Our eyes miss a resplendent range of color created by God. We see colors between 400

⁴ Greek lexicon based on Thayer’s and Smith's Bible Dictionary plus others https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/blepo.html (accessed 10-20-06).
and 700 nanometers in wavelength while birds resolve ultraviolet colors below 400 nanometers.

Unlike humans, shrimp polarize light simultaneously in both linear and circular patterns.\(^6\) God endowed them with eyes to see spectacular infrared scenes invisible to humans. The Mantis shrimp blends 12 primary colors compared to our 3.

Humans are currently deaf to a gamut of sounds that animals hear. The audible range of the human ear lies between 64 Hertz (Hz) and 23,000 Hz. Ferrets detect frequencies as low as 16 Hz and bats distinguish frequencies as high as 100,000 Hz. Whales and dolphins identify frequencies of sound over 125,000 Hz.\(^7\)

With rhetorical emphasis, God questioned Job’s whereabouts when “\textit{the morning stars sang together}” as He laid Earth’s foundation.\(^8\) Pre-dawn stars and planets literally rang out notes interpreted as joy, exaltation, and praise.\(^9\) Astronomers assert that stars emit a cosmic symphony in the million-frequency range. Similar to seismologists who study earthquakes, asteroseismologists study oscillations and resonant modes occurring throughout the universe with stellar diversity. With prophetic assurance and without scientific data, David proclaimed:

\textit{The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.} (Psalm 19:1-4 NIV)

The olfactory system is responsible for smell. It connects discrete aromas with memory, emotions, and creativity. Smells trigger nostalgia

\(^8\) Job 38:7 NAS
because they interact with brain cells responsible for long-term and emotional memory. Mammals, rodents, reptiles, fish, and insects depend on smell for survival. It allows them to detect and select safe foods, avoid predators, choose mates, and locate suitable habitats for reproduction. Guided by an internal magnetic compass, Salmon can travel more than a 1000-miles then use their sense of smell to locate their original home-spawning waters.

Bloodhounds are macrosmatic; they operate with a huge sense of smell between 10 million and 100 million times more sensitive than humans.\textsuperscript{10} With about 220 million scent receptors (compared to our 5 million) they smell in stereo 10,000 times more accurately than humans.\textsuperscript{11} Trained detection dogs expose drugs, explosives, money, corpses, and contraband devices. They identify medical conditions such as malaria and cancer, and years before symptoms appear, Parkinson's Disease. Nonetheless, the Silvertip Grizzly has a sense of smell seven times stronger than a bloodhound. Bears detect the scent of food eighteen miles away and smell seals beneath three feet of ice.

As mortal human beings, we are oblivious to sights, sounds, and smells experienced by the animal kingdom. Nonetheless, when filled with the Holy Spirit, our spiritual acuity exceeds that of birds, bats, and bears. Paul wrote:

\textit{There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can’t see now will last forever.} (2 Cor 4:18 MSG)

Made in God’s image, we possess a spiritual advantage that sets us apart from the rest of the animal kingdom. Filled with the Holy Spirit, we can distinguish sights, discern sounds, and differentiate smells, that are normally invisible, inaudible, and undetectable. In Christ, we notice


spiritual realities—so we might know God better and follow where He leads us.

**First KNOW and BE—Then GO and DO**

Our Heavenly Father offers “the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better”. Since knowing the truth about God sums up our built-in longing, He invites us to KNOW the truth about Him without bias and BE the person He designed us to be without deviance. As the Holy Spirit focuses our attention on God’s priorities, we gain insight for GOING and DOING His will.

God’s Word collaborates with His Spirit to illuminate the future for us, on a need-to-know basis. The “spirit of prophecy” reveals Jesus, not as a concept or philosophy but as a living person. Jesus, “the Living Word” made flesh, embodies the truth with irrefutable insight, hindsight, and foresight. It shines as a high intensity lamp brightening our spiritual vision.

Our Heavenly Father is preparing an informed bride to connect permanently with His passionate Son Jesus. The more fully we realize who He is and who we are, the more effective our goings and doings become. Transformed by the power of His resurrection, we connect with Jesus in whom “all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form”. He personifies reality with sacred precision. Connecting with the truth about Jesus aligns our spiritual compass with our Heavenly Father. It puts us in touch with the core sentiments that govern His heart.

Paul prayed for enlightened heart-sight, essential for maintaining accurate expectations. The credibility of our hope depends on the legitimacy of our inheritance and the power of God’s provision.

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12 Ephesians 1:17 NIV
13 Rev 19:10
14 Psalms 119:105
15 Colossian 2:9 NAS
I pray that the **eyes of your heart** may be **enlightened** in order that you may **know the hope** to which he has called you, the **riches of his glorious inheritance** in the saints, and **his incomparably great power** for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he **raised him from the dead** and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms (Eph 1:18-20 NIV)

Unlike conventional modes of communication, the word of God clarifies reality with infallible authority. It bridges the communication gap between heart and mind using dynamic words that are alive and active.\(^{16}\) The Spirit of Truth dispels myths, so we can avoid misconceptions about God, us, and others. God’s word is spirit; it activates abundant life.\(^{17}\) His word fills in the blanks and connects the dots with well-timed revelation so we can live out the truth with informed confidence.

The Holy Spirit offers flawless advice as our devoted advocate and consummate counselor. Our greatest need however, is not decision-making; we need more than guidance and direction. Jesus did not ascend on high so He could micromanage our life. Controlling our conduct does not dominate His agenda. God’s priority for us connecting with Him is not performance driven. He is more concerned with the integrity of our relationship than the appearance of our behavior.

As we perceive the purpose behind God’s passion, the route for our life-journey emerges. Our assignments gain enthusiasm as we grasp who God is, what He’s done, what He’s doing, and what He promises to do. The word enthusiasm comes from *entheos*, which means divinely inspired, possessed by God—literally, in-God.\(^{18}\)

In Christ, our Heavenly Father has forgiven our sins, removed our guilt, delivered us from evil, and restored our identity. Filled with the

\(^{16}\) Hebrews 4:12

\(^{17}\) John 6:63

Holy Spirit, we now possess inspiration for living from God within. Equipped with spiritual discernment, deception becomes less effective in perverting our perception, distorting our opinions, and corrupting our conclusions. As the Holy Spirit propels us from the inside out, toward the way things should be, we decisively abandon the way things were.

Perceiving life from God’s perspective empowers us to face true reality without groping for coping mechanisms and escape routes. God’s word neither advocates nor accommodates fantasy as an escape from reality. It equips us with reliable truth to confront reality while possessed by God. The word of the Lord illuminates both natural and spiritual senses so we can follow the Holy Spirit with courage to go where our own strength cannot take us.

**Sin and Temptation Blur our Vision and Impede our Headway**

As the father of lies, Satan throws diabolical schemes across our path to redirect our focus and divert our progress. According to “Britannica Online,” diabolical means devilish; it features characteristics of the devil. From the Greek word *diabolos*, it literally means one who throws something across the path of another.¹⁹ The Septuagint usually translates *diabolos* as slanderer.

Satan attempts to distract our attention from God’s presence and purpose. He attacks our mind with suggestive hints and alluring baits. Throughout the week, powerful forces attempt to tear us down, rip us apart, and strangle our faith to death with a false sense of reality.

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Being tempted to eat an entire pie in one sitting does not render us a glutton. Being tempted to steal, kill, or fornicate does not make us a thief, murderer, or adulterer. In and of themselves, temptations do not define us. Diabolical enticements serve Satan’s agenda to distract, diminish, and destroy us. They exploit our mortal passions and undermine our desires with inordinate ambitions—all in the presence of God.

Temptations remind us that we have other choices—better choices. As we pursue and choose God’s choice provision, temptations provide an opportunity to verify and fortify our devotion to Christ. They validate our allegiance and strengthen our resolve to remain faithful. Mindful of God’s presence by activating our spiritual senses, God’s options become more persuasive—offering superior long-term satisfaction.

Sin masquerades as a formidable fortress. It poses as an impenetrable barrier. By confessing our sin, we transform remorse into repentance. And repentance thrusts us before God’s throne of grace where mercy and truth absolve our past and determine our future.

At the cross, Jesus defeated the power of sin along with its menacing death sentence. He redeemed us. Now we can tear down strongholds that pose as separation barriers between us and Him. The Holy Spirit reigns supreme as the Master Communicator; His voice resounds with impeccable clarity and distinction. Jesus said:

“\textit{I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.}” (John 16:12-13 NKJ)

God knows how to communicate with His children, even though at times we may be intellectually flawed, spiritually impaired, and emotionally compromised. As the gold standard for enunciating truth, God has something to say, and we need to hear every word. To those who are listening, the Spirit of Truth conveys an accurate testimony of Jesus.
His voice remains as clear and effective as ever: “Today if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion”.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{20} Hebrews 3:7 NKJ; repeats in vs. 15