



The Man Born Blind

Lesson Overview

1. Simulated Blindness Activity

2. Watch a Video

Watch John 9:1-41 at bit.ly/GCEDGospelOfJohn from **1hr 16min 9sec to 1hr 24min 18sec** (8min 9sec).

3. Discuss

Choose questions for discussion.

New Church Concept Seeing What Is True

Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would not have sin; but now you say, We see; therefore your sin remains.' Here 'they who see' denote those who imagine themselves to be more intelligent than others, concerning whom it is said that they 'should be made blind,' that is, should not receive faith. *Arcana Coelestia* 3863.17

Evil coming from the will but not at the same time from the understanding does not condemn a person. *The person does not see it, or stop to consider whether it is evil*, and therefore is not aware of it. Such evil is evil due to heredity.... But seeing and understanding that it is evil and continuing to do it makes a person guilty. *Arcana Coelestia* 9069

FaithBuilder 3 | Lesson 20 | Gospel of John

Simulated Blindness Activity

Cover students' eyes and do a simulated blindness activity such as...

- Prepare a snack from simple ingredients (e.g. spread topping on crackers)
 - Unlock a door with a key
 - Find a water fountain and take a drink
 - Find an exit door to the building
 - Water a plant
 - Write a note
1. What did you notice?
 2. How did being "blind" affect your ability to do the task?
 3. Did visual memories help you do the task more easily? How would the experience have been different if you had *never* been able to see?

Watch a Video

Watch John 9:1-41 the story of a man born blind, from *The Life of Jesus . English . Official Full HD Movie*, at bit.ly/GCEDGospelOfJohn. (Enter link in the web browser bar at the top of your screen.) **Start at 1hr 16min 9sec and watch to 1hr 24min 18sec—watch time of 8min 9sec.**

Discuss

1. Some believe that people are born innocent, free from sin. Others believe that all are born sinners but may be saved by accepting God. What do you think?
2. The New Church teaches that people are born with *an inclination towards evil*—meaning that when people are born they tend to love themselves more than others. Does this mean a new baby is free from sin, or is a sinner?
3. Which sentence agrees with a New Church idea of sin?
 - a. A sin is anything a person does that is wrong in God's sight.
 - b. A sin is something a person does deliberately, knowing it's wrong in God's sight.
4. Is there a relationship between physical disability and sin? If so, what is it?
5. Does the Lord hold us responsible for the sins of others?
6. Being blind literally means not seeing the world around us. What other kinds of blindness are there?
7. Compare scientific reasoning (based completely on the material world) with spiritual reasoning (based on the Word of God). In what way might a person who bases their thinking only on the material world be "blind?"

6. In what way is making quick judgments of others based on what we hear or see without knowing their real motives a form of “blindness”?
7. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.” How does learning revealed truth give us spiritual sight? How does learning *more* true ideas *improve* our spiritual sight?
8. Jesus used saliva (simple true ideas) mixed with clay (goodness) to restore the man’s sight. How does the Lord give us spiritual sight? What must we do for this to work?
9. The Pharisees represent part of our mind that wants to destroy our faith in God. They criticize Jesus for healing on the Sabbath. In what ways have critical thoughts challenged your efforts to make positive changes?
10. Whose blindness is greater—the young man’s, or the religious leaders’?
11. Who do the religious leaders believe is blind—themselves, or others who do not think like them?
12. The man’s parents were afraid to contradict the Pharisees—just as older negative parts of us refuse to abandon bad habits. How can recognizing this voice in ourselves help us change to overcome it?
13. In what way did the young man who was given sight become like Jesus Himself? (See John 9:25-29)
14. People sometimes say that if something feels right, it must be right. Can feelings tell us whether something is right or not? Why or why not?
15. Jesus said, “If you were blind you would have no sin.” Can we be held accountable for committing a sin if we do not know what we are doing is wrong when we do it?
16. What is the Sabbath in our lives? In what way are we supposed to rest on the Sabbath? Does the Lord ever rest?” (See *God Works Continually*, on right.)

Summary taken from *The Gospel of John* by Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman

(unpublished manuscript)

As this episode began, the disciples asked, “Who sinned, this man or his parents?” and Jesus said that neither had sinned. The lesson is a simple yet profound one. We are not held guilty, or punished for the sins of our ancestors, even though we may inherit their inclinations towards evil. Neither are we held guilty for any evils that might become actual in us, as long as we are not aware that these evils are sins. But when we are aware of some evil in ourselves, and have acknowledged in our understanding that it is a sin, it is then that “we see.” And yet, our greatest blindness is to close our eyes after that acknowledgment, and commit that evil anyway. Whenever we do this “our sin remains.”

New Church Concept Spittle and Clay

The clay that the Lord made from spittle on the ground signifies reformation by means of truths from the sense of the letter of the Word. *Apocalypse Explained* 239.19

The word ‘clay’ means the good from which the mind is formed. This too is clear from the Word, as in Isaiah, ‘But now, O Jehovah, You are our Father, we are the clay, and You are our Potter; and we are all the work of Your hands (Isaiah 64:8-9). ‘Clay’ also stands for the person who is being formed. There it stands for the goodness which comes from charity by which the reformation and regeneration of every person is achieved. ‘Like the clay in the hand of the potter so are you in My hand, O house of Israel.’ Jeremiah 18:6

The incident in which the Lord made clay with His saliva and anointed the eyes of the man born blind and then commanded him to wash in the Pool of Siloam, with the result that the blind man was made to see...represents the reformation of man, who is born without any knowledge of truth. *Arcana Coelestia* 6669

God Works Continually

God is continually working to conjoin love and wisdom in a person. *True Christian Religion* 41

The primary end of order is that a person should be an image of God; consequently one should become more and more perfect in love and wisdom, and thus more and more an image of God. God is continually working to produce this result in a person. *True Christian Religion* 500