



## The Nourishing Vocation Project Near and Now:

*Holy Tending: the Art of Paying Attention – A Man Born Blind*

### Warm-up Question

*What are some things that you are overlooking because you are rushing to judgment?*



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### Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

## He opened my eyes

Read [John 9](#)

### Bible Story Reflection

A man is born blind. Everyone in the town knows this fact. The disciples of Jesus want to know whose fault it is that the man was born blind. Jesus lets them in on a secret: it is no one's fault. There is no one to blame. There is, however, someone who can give sight to the blind. Jesus causes the man to see as a sign of the work of God. This annoys the religious leaders who demand to know who had the audacity to give sight to the blind on the Sabbath. After much questioning of the man and his parents, the religious leaders are still not satisfied that the man was indeed blind from birth. Their rules are so important to them that they refuse to believe what they already know to be true. The end result is the man being kicked out of the house of worship. Jesus then comforts the man by revealing his identity as the Son of Man who came into this world for judgment.

Blindness can affect the eyes as well as the heart. Jesus came into the world so that those who do not see may now see and those who think that they see, but who really lack empathy and love, may become blind. The religious leaders who overhear this statement do not like it. In their haste to prove themselves righteous, they condemn themselves instead.

Being visually sighted does not make a person better than someone who is not visually sighted. Vision comes in many forms. When one sense is unavailable, the other senses become stronger to accommodate the missing sense. This happens whether the situation is temporary or permanent. Someone who is blind may have an excellent sense of smell or hearing or touch or taste. The other senses are the helpers for the person so that the person can function on their own with the use of some adaptive devices.

The same can be said of someone whose heart is not sighted when it comes to engaging with humanity. People who put law above all else – including grace and love – also need adaptive devices. They need other people to direct their attention to the suffering of creation and their ability to do something about it. The saying “can't see the forest for the trees” reminds us to put together the small moments so that we can have a better understanding of the big picture. Each person helping a person in need adds up to a lot of love being spread in the world. If we focus on the fact that one person can only do so much, then we lose sight of the impact that help had on the person who was in need.

God does not call us to procrastinate on helping each other. There is not one day of the week that is off limits for being the body of Christ. Every day is a day to extend grace and mercy to one another. The church is called to be a place of welcome, hospitality,



help, and forgiveness. All are welcome, and if you run out of room, then build a bigger table.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. In what ways do you identify with the man born blind?
2. Talk about a time when you felt unheard.
3. Where were the religious leaders focusing their attention?
4. Where did Jesus focus his attention in this story?
5. How should religious leaders respond to congregants in need? To people in need who are not a part of their congregations?
6. How do you think the man born blind would tell his own story?
7. Is there ever an occasion when someone should be banned from church? Why or why not?
8. How can you show someone that you believe them?
9. What does love look like in this story?
10. Describe a time you felt welcomed when you were expecting to feel rejected?

### **Activity Suggestions**

Describe your favorite person, season, or moment using only four of the five senses in such a way that makes up for the sense that wasn't used to describe the person, season, or moment.

Make up a wise saying that teaches a person to put the liberation of others above a strict adherence to a list of rules.

Focus your attention on someone who helped you overcome a challenge. Write a note of gratitude to that person.

### **Prayer Concerns**

Those who were not believed, restoration to community, church leaders

### **Closing Prayer**

Open my heart, O God, to pay attention to your work in my life. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

