

# Lesson 11 – A Man Born Blind (John 9:1-41)

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This episode in Jesus' ministry is a continuation of his arrival at Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2, 14). It is the last day of the feast, a Sabbath (John 9:14; Leviticus 23:33-36), a consecrated day for the Lord upon which no worshipper should work. However, Jesus informs his disciples that God's work must be done while it is day for the night is coming, when no one could work (John 9:3, 4). Again, like the paralytic man (John 5:6), Jesus singles out a man and observes that he has a profound birth defect. He is blind. His disciples are intrigued by this observation and ask their teacher about the responsibility for this man's condition. Is it because of the man's or his parents' sin that he suffers from blindness? (John 9:2)

What a source Jesus was for all of life's questions. The reader has already been introduced to some profound questions from those who would want to understand God's will more completely. Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel, sought insight from Jesus about the nature of the kingdom of God (John 3:1-10). The Samaritan woman saw Jesus as a source of spiritual truth concerning true worship (John 4:19, 20). The common people gathered around Jesus, at the Temple, to hear him teach (John 8:2). The Jews seized upon this venue to test Jesus, asking a rather perplexing question about one guilty of capital punishment (John 8:3-5). Now, Jesus' own followers, ask the difficult question. Who is responsible for this man's sad condition?

Jesus' answer is surprising. No one is to blame for this man's birth defect. This misfortune is just an opportunity for God's work to be demonstrated in his life (John 9:3). Aside from the great sign that will follow, isn't this a similar statement that Jesus makes to his disciples after washing their feet (John 13:34, 35). God's work is not for him alone, but it is also engaged by his disciples (John 4:32-38). It becomes apparent, at the conclusion of this story, that the blind man understands this (John 9:35-38).

There can be many obstacles to our unwillingness or inability to work for the Lord. Lack of knowledge was the admission of the blind man, which Jesus quickly resolved (John 9:35, 36). Bias towards an unfounded doctrine can hinder some (John 9:16). Our own preconceived conclusion may allow us to dismiss the very truth of a matter (John 9:19-24). Just human nature will persuade us to cower at an unpopular position after seeing the truth of a matter (John 9:22). It requires great courage to speak up and acknowledge your own conclusion (John 9:30-33). It takes even greater courage to stand firm in your belief when others throw darts at your faith (John 9:34).

In this story, Jesus demonstrates through the action of the blind man, the fundamentals of doing God's work. He began this work by accepting the instructions of Jesus and washing his eyes in the Pool of Siloam (John 9:7). Other people noted the change in this man's life and inquired about the reason for it. He was quick to tell others about Jesus (John 9:8-11). Even under public scrutiny, he remained firm in his conviction (9:13-17). And finally, after persecution, he continued to recognize the value of his faith in Jesus (John 9:34-38).

The apostle John here challenges the reader to see the larger picture of this incredible miracle. Jesus is the master teacher. And the writer allows us to examine the affect that Jesus' love for one pitiful soul can cause within a community of supposedly religious people. One who was blind can see much more than those who already should see the truth about Jesus. Tragically, they are blinded by their own prejudice (John 9:39).

Questions:

1. List the facts, the author mentions, which substantiate the truth about Jesus' healing of the blind man.

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2. Does the truth really matter to those who are the leaders of society? Explain.

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3. Ultimately, who were judged to be guilty of sin on this occasion (John 9:2; 39-41)? Why?

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4. Explain why the neighbors and family of this healed man do not support his claim (John 9:8, 16, 20, 22).

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5. Jesus' disciples are only mentioned at the beginning of this story. What does Jesus teach them in answering their question about who were responsible for this blind man's physical condition (John 9:2)?

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6. What is required to truly believe in Jesus (John 9:35-38)?

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7. What is implied by the action of the healed man when he worshipped Jesus (John 4:24; 9:38)?

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