

# **BLINDNESS: Enemy of Learning**

J.J. Turner, Ph.D.

Have you ever gone into a restaurant, Post Office, department store, or emergency room at the hospital and almost immediately observed things that needed to be changed or improved for better customer service? We all have. Why is it that an outsider with no training or experience in management can see these flaws? Blindness is the reason.

As a leadership and educational consultant I experience this all the time. As an outsider I can see things others cannot see. The challenge is to get acceptance of new approaches to solving issues; which most are reluctant to accept because they have been blind to the needs.

The longer you have been associated with a practice, become comfortable with the environment, or believed “this is the way we have always done it”; you have developed blindness to reality. This is why someone from the outside can quickly spot needs and weaknesses in a company, organization, school, home, etc.

I dress myself in what I think are matching clothes, which I feel comfortable in, but my wife can spot the flaws in my choices. After a brief discussion I acknowledge my blindness. We are used to seeing what we want to see or have been used to seeing; with status quo feeling comfortable.

The Pharisees in Jesus’ day were blind (Matthew 15:12-14). They were blinded by their traditions (Mark 7:7, 9), which led them to bind heavy burdens on their fellow-countrymen (cf. Matthew 23). They had a warped (blind) view of the Messiah and the coming Kingdom. Their blindness was so powerful that they “killed the messenger.” Change is difficult for most of us.

Blindness is an enemy of learning. When one is content with trying to minister in a changing world with “yesterday’s methods”, he will find his ministry suffering. The minister who dares to be on the cutting edge of ministry (e.g. methodologies) in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must be a lifelong learner. This means that he will not be blinded by shallow “great lesson” comments or the renewal of his contract because the members “are pleased with his level of sameness.”

The minister in today's growing church must be equipped with: (1) dynamic exegetical skills, (2) counseling skills, (3) leadership skills, (4) communication skills, (5) global awareness, (6) family dynamics, (7) answers to tough questions, and (8) impeccable character. While there is an entry performance level of these skills; they must be continually improved for cutting edge performance in a changing world. This is movement from good to great.

Our Graduate Leadership Diploma program in the School of Ministry is designed to help you continue the development of your entry level skills in ministry. It will make a positive contribution to preventing ministry blindness. You owe it to yourself and those to whom you minister to check it out: 1 Corinthians 15:58.