

# Depth Perception

The Resurrection Connects Us to Jesus Personally

"Do You See Jesus?" Series, March 28 & 29, 2026 (Palm Sunday) | John 16:25-28

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## Depth perception brings a picture to life.

**With one eye, a leopard would never know how far away a gazelle is.**

One eye gives a leopard or a human what amounts to a picture. When you look at a picture, you can guess how far away things in the picture are, but you don't really know. The second eye gives a second view. And a leopard's brain and a human brain can then see how close something is, and the picture comes to life in three dimensions. With two eyes, the leopard knows when to strike. Sometimes we have a very flat and incomplete picture of God.

**As a teenager, I had a very one-eyed view of God.**

I made a lot of right choices as a teenager. I didn't smoke—which was a big thing with some of my friends. I didn't go out drinking—which was a very big thing with many of my friends. Looking back, though, I realize that many of my right choices were for wrong reasons. I thought that if I didn't obey God, He wouldn't love me. I thought that if I disobeyed Him, He would punish me. I knew that God loved me, but I thought His love was conditional. I didn't see the whole picture of God. Something very big was missing.

**Do you ever look at God with just one eye?**

You may see a divine gumball machine and expect God to give you an uninterrupted string of blessings—one for each quarter you put in. You come to church, you pray, and you're surprised when your dishwasher breaks down. You may see a permissive parent who lets you do whatever you want. If you ever hear that cheating on your taxes is wrong for a disciple of Jesus, it feels like an invasion of your privacy. You may see a God-sized Sudoku puzzle—something that occupies your brain but doesn't have anything to do with your heart. You may see a divine judge who could never love you. You've burned too many bridges.

**Before His resurrection, the disciples saw Jesus with just one eye.**

They saw a preacher who spoke with the fire and clarity of the best of the prophets. A miracle-worker through whom the power of God flowed. The Messiah—the Son of God who had come to usher in God's Kingdom. Still, they couldn't understand when Jesus said He would suffer, die, and rise again. They saw Jesus with one eye—the way we sometimes do.

**Jesus' death and resurrection give us spiritual depth perception.**

Something big was changing. Jesus said it Himself in John 16:28. He had come from the Father into the world, but now He was leaving the world and returning to the Father. He was talking about His death and resurrection. The world before Jesus gave us one view of God. Jesus' death and

resurrection made us see something we had missed before. Suddenly, we had spiritual depth perception. Don't you want spiritual depth perception? It can make God much, much clearer.

## **Spiritual depth perception sharpens our view of the Father.**

### **If you don't immediately understand Jesus' words, you're not alone.**

Jesus spoke in figures of speech. He told parables in which He said that the Kingdom of God is like yeast and spoke of Himself as being like a Door. The crowds didn't understand Him. The disciples didn't understand Him then. Most people still don't get Him.

### **Jesus has been asking us if we see Him.**

Can we see who He truly is beneath the word pictures? We are born spiritually blind and unable to see spiritual realities, but when Jesus saves us, He gives us spiritual sight. We still have a spiritual astigmatism; we have blurred spiritual vision, but God the Holy Spirit comes into our lives to be like corrective lenses that help us to see Jesus' meaning. But there is one more thing that really makes our vision whole:

### **Jesus' death and resurrection open our second eye to see God the Father.**

Before Jesus' death and resurrection, we were looking at God the Father through one eye; we had a flat and incomplete picture of Him. That's why no one was prepared for the kind of Savior Jesus came to be. That's why no one understood Jesus' words about dying and rising again or going away to be with the Father. We had a flat picture of Jesus and of His Father. Jesus' death and resurrection opened a second eye, a second point of view on the same words, same events, and same truths. Suddenly, they had texture and depth. We could reach out and touch them.

### **Now we see God the Father through Jesus' eyes.**

In Jesus' death we see that God is the One who pays for our sin—not us. Sin is the problem—not trouble, toil, or anything we lack now. The goal is forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life—not wealth and power now. In His Resurrection we see that no matter what happens, God is the One on the throne. The Son is not abandoned, and neither are we—no matter what happens now, even death. Resurrection is Jesus' past and our future. That's what we see about the Father from this side of Jesus' death and resurrection.

### **That means I have to let go of my picture of God as a demanding, angry, mean old man.**

I am sinful. Try as I might to be "good," I have lied and lusted and broken commandments I didn't even know were there. That's my problem, and it separates me from God. There is nothing I can do about that on my own. No matter how many Friday nights with my friends I skipped, no matter how many times I went to church, no matter how good my kids grew up to be, I can't fix my sin problem. God is just; He will judge me and the whole world, but He has already paid the price for my sin by sending His Son to die on the cross. He did what I couldn't do—what I can't do. Now all I need to do is receive the forgiveness He has offered me. It's a gift! There is nothing I can do to earn the forgiveness God has purchased for me Himself. And when I accept that forgiveness, there is nothing I can do to take myself out of His grasp again. If I cheat on my wife, kill my neighbor, or lose my house gambling, I am still a son of God myself. My debt is paid; I have new life; resurrection to eternal life is now my future.

## Spiritual depth perception reveals a red-carpet welcome from the Father.

### **We don't need a saint to pray for us.**

Some traditions teach that some dead Christians have special influence with God. We can reach out to them in Heaven and ask them to pray to the Father for us. For instance, they teach that we can ask Saint Christopher to ask for God's favor as we travel. Or we can ask St. Anthony to ask God for help finding something we've lost. That assumes that some Christians amass special merits in this life. It sounds noble, but as we've seen, we are saved by grace alone and not by our works, so we never build up a treasury of merit with God, and we don't need to. And it assumes that special merits give us easier access to the Father. Again, not true as we see in Jesus' words today.

### **God has always had a candle in the window for us.**

In Genesis chapters one and two, God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden every day in the cool of the evening—face-to-face time with human beings! Even in Genesis chapter three when they sinned, God was there looking for them, calling them to Himself, and offering them mercy and grace. On the top of Mount Sinai, God spoke with Moses as a man speaks with his friend. God created us to be at home with Him, and He has had a candle in the window, welcoming us home since we wandered away. But a candle in the window wasn't enough to bring us home to God.

### **Jesus' blood put out the red carpet and made it obvious.**

Jesus' death and resurrection opened a direct path to God that seemed closed. **Hebrews 10:19-20** says,

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh ...

We can pray ourselves in Jesus' name. Why? Because, Jesus says in **John 16:27**,

"...for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God."

There is a red-carpet welcome waiting for us in prayer.

### **Now I can come before the Father and talk with Him myself.**

We can come to God with confidence. We don't need to be good enough. We don't need magical words. We can just talk with God like a friend. We can tell Him that we're sad or angry when a friend dies, ask Him to help us when we're frustrated with a co-worker, and thank Him for the way we always have exactly what we need for today. It's like we have God's private cell-phone number, and He will pick up when we call at 2 o'clock in the morning because we're worried about our children and can't sleep.

## Spiritual depth perception shows us the Father's hand reaching toward us.

### **The Father's hand has been reaching toward us all along.**

God put flesh on a hand in Jesus and reached toward us. Jesus implied in one of His parables that God is like a father whose beloved son has left home; he stands at the edge of his property everyday

scanning the horizon, looking for his lost son to come home. Jesus' death and resurrection show us that God will go to the grave and back again to reach us.

### **Rosaria Butterfield angrily swatted God's reaching hand away for years.**

Here is how she described her contempt for Jesus and His followers, "Stupid. Pointless. Menacing. That's what I thought of Christians and their god Jesus, who in paintings looked as powerful as a Breck Shampoo commercial model." She was a professor of English and women's studies who was dedicated to Freud, Marx, and Darwin instead. She was a lesbian and thought of herself and her community as righteous—advocates for hospitality and social causes—while Christians were contemptible bigots. Then, to understand her opponents better, she started reading the Bible. One Christian pastor invited her to look deeply into the Bible and examine her own presuppositions, a question that intrigued and challenged her. The pastor and his wife befriended Butterfield. They shared meals together and didn't mock her. They became friends and talked deeply and honestly. Butterfield began devouring the Bible asking, "What if it's true?" She felt something reaching out to her. But she counted the cost. She writes, "And I did not like the math on the other side of the equal sign."<sup>1</sup> She swatted God's hand away. Again.

### **You don't have to swat that hand away.**

You may be swatting the hand away because you've been disappointed—God let your mother die, He didn't stop you from getting MS, and He didn't give you the spouse you wanted. You may be swatting because you think it's all a fantasy—not like the material stuff of stardust and starlings that you've come to trust in. You may be pushing the hand back because you want to collect toys, have sex with whomever you like, and spend your days the way you choose—all without interference from God. The hand of God is still reaching for you. Forgiveness, salvation, and new life are waiting for you when you let that hand take hold of you.

## **"Objects in mirror are closer than they appear."**

### **Mirrors mess with our depth perception.**

If you've got a car, you've got mirrors on each side and in the cabin. The mirrors on each side say, "Objects in mirror are closer than they appear." So is God!

### **Rosaria Butterfield finally put obedience and relationship before understanding.**

God's promises kept rolling into Butterfield's world like waves. She heard that the only way she would ever understand God was to come to Him and obey Him. Did she want to know God or argue with Him? The choice was stark. Was she a lesbian and all the other things she had chosen to identify herself by? Or did Jesus see a truer self beneath it all? One day, she finally submitted to Jesus. She writes, "And I was a broken mess. Conversion was a train wreck. I did not want to lose everything that I loved. But the voice of God sang a sanguine love song in the rubble of my world. I weakly believed that if Jesus could conquer death, he could make right my world. I drank, tentatively at first, then passionately, of the solace of the Holy Spirit."<sup>2</sup> That's spiritual depth perception.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2013/02/my-train-wreck-conversion/>

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### **Spiritual depth perception shows us that God is closer than we ever thought and coming closer still!**

God wants to have a personal relationship with you. We don't have to be good enough to get it. There's nothing we have to do and nothing magical we have to say. God makes that personal relationship possible if we will just accept it. That's what Jesus is saying in this passage. God the Holy Spirit has filled us with His presence. God the Son has given His life to forgive us and to reconcile us to God. And God the Father welcomes us warmly and wants to hear from us. We are loved by God and can be filled with God until we are overflowing! That's what we can see in living color and three dimensions on this side of the cross and empty tomb.

### **What does it mean to have a personal relationship with God?**

It means inviting God into our daily decisions; we choose to design aircraft engines because it brings God glory, and we choose to spend our time helping the unhoused find a home because it's God's will. It means engaging in habits that include God in our lives; we start every day reading the Bible and eat lunch once a month with a friend who doesn't know Jesus. It means having an ongoing conversation with God; prayer becomes an urgent conversation with someone we know and love Who knows and loves us. God wants to have that conversation with you!

### **Talk with Him and see for yourself.**

Jesus said that there is a candle in the window, the red carpet is laid out, the door is open, the invitation is sent, and God the Father wants to hear from you. God is getting personal. Will you let Him?