

# Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear Brethren:

Greetings from the Island of Mindanao, Philippines!

I am privileged once again to reach you through this letter. Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:3).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is at hand, and so we must be ready for the observance of the Feast, as God has directed.

## **Spiritual Blindness**

God commands His children to examine themselves yearly before partaking of the symbols of the flesh and blood of the Lord so that they will be ready and that they do not celebrate the Feast unworthily.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body (1 Corinthians 11:28–29).

After our self-examination, when we take the symbols of Christ's sacrifice and rededicate ourselves to overcoming, we see many faults and shortcomings are still there. But the question is, what about the one that we have not seen? Could we perhaps have a spiritual blind spot—an area where you or I just cannot see? The Word of God tells us that this is precisely the situation. King David the Psalmist wrote: "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Psalm 19:12).

What did King David mean by his "secret faults"?

King David was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). He did not show a hostile attitude toward God. The Holy Bible tells us that from the time that Samuel the prophet anointed David, the spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward. In all his dealings with his brethren, King Saul, and the people, David displayed a courage borne of his faith in God. He showed an obedient attitude toward God, and he tried his best to change whenever he could see that he was wrong. Yes—whenever he could see that he was wrong—but the sorry side is he could not always see it.

In Second Samuel, chapters eleven and twelve, we can read the miserable episode which shows that David had some serious blind spots in his character. This chapter tells us that one evening while King David was relaxing on the roof of his palace, he saw a beautiful woman taking a bath.

Although David knew that Bathsheba was married, he took her to the palace and made her pregnant. In order to avoid the consequences, he ultimately connived with his trusted captain, Joab, to place Uriah in the battlefront. And Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, was killed in battle.

Incredible as it seems, David did not see how terribly wrong he was until the prophet Nathan rebuked him and brought him to his senses. But we must not judge King David too harshly; for perhaps you or I have some spiritual blind areas, when we just cannot see how, where, and why we are wrong. So how do we go about overcoming those spiritual lapses, which we cannot discern or see? King David wrote:

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Psalm 139:23–24).

In other words, we must ask God to show us the things that we cannot see. How will God do this? Let us study some effective ways of discerning spiritual blind spots and how to overcome them.

## **Bible Study**

God can teach us through personal Bible study.

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

The stories and examples in the Bible show how God dealt with the thoughts and intents of many men and women, both righteous and unrighteous.

The great Elijah, we are told, was a man who had the same human nature that we have (James 5:17). Sometimes Elijah showed great faith, but he was also—from time to time—the victim of discouragement. Moses, the meekest of all men (Numbers 12:3), had moments of stubbornness and even bad temper. The prophet Jeremiah, more than once, felt like giving up. Paul and Barnabas quarreled. Yet all these will qualify for the Kingdom of God.

Let us study the examples in the Bible. Let us ask God, through His Holy Spirit, to teach us about ourselves as we read. But we must remember this: If we start to see something wrong, admit it. A main characteristic of a converted person is the willingness to admit when he is wrong and then repent. If we intend to justify our faults, we may as well not bother to look for them.

Can we see ourselves as others see us? We can. The Apostle Paul wrote:

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things (Romans 2:1).

We can often recognize our own weaknesses more clearly in other people. Think about this: If there is a certain type of behavior that we find especially irritating in others, we may have that same problem ourselves. It is just that we cannot see it when we do it.

When God sent Nathan to show David his sin with Bathsheba, Nathan reported a case in which a rich man who owned many sheep had stolen a poor man's pet lamb and killed it for dinner (2 Samuel 12:1–4). King David was outraged that anyone should be so greedy and selfish! Such a man must be put to death, David pronounced (verse 5). Then Nathan quietly pointed out that this was precisely what David had done when he stole the wife of Uriah and then caused Uriah's death.

What kind of behavior in others angers us most? Is it greed? Selfishness? Aloofness? Or maybe laziness, prejudice, stubbornness, or gossip? Let us think carefully, for in our answer may be a clue to our own blind spot; "for thou that judgest doest the same things."

## Beware Hypocrisy

When we think about putting sin out of our lives, it is good to consider what the Lord Jesus Christ warned His disciples about—the leaven of the Pharisees.

In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy (Luke 12:1).

Christ had much to say to the religious leaders of the first century. In Matthew 23:16, He called them "blind guides," for in their self-righteousness they had indeed become blinded to the real needs of those they should have been serving. Time and again, Christ hit the blind spots of these men. When we read about it today, their mistakes are obvious. But they could not see them at the time.

Christ needs to be certain that those He is training to be leaders in the world tomorrow do not make the same mistakes. The leaven of hypocrisy did not die with the Pharisees. Does Christ see some of it in us today?

Are we beginning to see that we may indeed have a spiritual blind spot? When we see it and we realize that others have seen it—and perhaps have suffered because of it—all along, it is embarrassing. Perhaps we finally begin to understand something that our family and friends have been trying to tell us for years. The natural reaction is to hide it. But do not give in to that temptation. Keep the problem in the open, where we can fight it.

David, when shown his sin, told God, "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me" (Psalm 51:3). Although David never forgot that he was capable of such behavior, the Bible does not indicate that he ever made a mistake like that again (1 Kings 15:5).

We should not just be content with a quick review of the faults we know we have. Let us ask God for help in seeing our "secret" sin as well.

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mario Y. Roque', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mario Y. Roque