

Today's Lesson
A Matter of Perception
 PowerPoint notes available at:
www.unityofbakersfield.org

A Matter of Perception

According to the dictionary your ability to perceive is based on...

- : the way you think about or understand someone or something
- : the ability to understand or notice something easily
- : the way that you notice or understand something using one of your senses

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- : it is a result of observation
- : the use of mental imaging to create concepts
- : a state of awareness in consciousness
- : awareness of the elements of environment through physical sensation
- : the capacity to use cognitive and comprehensive reasoning.

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In our study of Practical and Progressive Christianity we are finding is that there is basically one Truth (God).

While seeking to understand, know and experience the Truth (God) we are realizing that there are many perceptions leading to that Truth. And while the perception we hold seems to be true there is always someone else who may have a different one. Who's right? Who's wrong?

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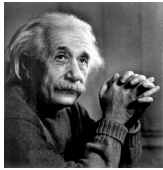
A perfect example is this drawing.

YOUNG WOMAN OR OLD LADY?

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It has been said that we are spiritual beings having a human experience. That our perceptions, based on our human experiences, are simply a series of roadways and byways for our spiritual journey while traveling in a physical world. True perceptions are complementary. Is the glass half full or half empty? Both can be true or both can be false. No matter how you slice the bread, there are always two sides.

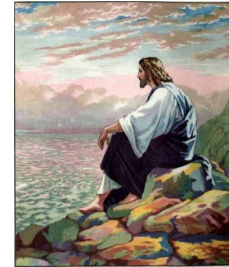
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I believe Albert Einstein understood this when he said,
I am not interested in this or that phenomenon, in the spectrum of this or that element. All I want to know is God's thoughts; the rest are details.

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Jesus understood the power of perception and the how the physical world could effect one's spiritual connection to the Truth.
 For him, prayer and meditation were the gateways leading to God.

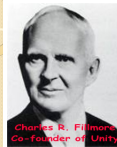


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In Matthew it is written that he taught people to go to God first. And when they did they were to go in prayer.
But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.
 (Matt 6:6)

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There are two kinds of perception:
 1) Spiritual perception - knowledge which comes by the Spirit.
 2) Physical world perception - knowledge which comes by learning and experience.
Spiritual perception is the apprehension of Truth through the intuition, the ability to perceive spiritually; the faculty of seeing spiritual reality in spite of appearances that may suggest the contrary. (Revealing Word)

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Have you noticed that many of our past perceptions about God have changed over the years as we learned to listen to the "still small voice" within.
 There is a wonderful story about a young man being introduced to the Law of Mind Action for the first time and his perception of what he was hearing.
A New Thought minister was teaching about the Law of Mind Action. With great passion, he taught with great gusto that the very thoughts we hold in our minds become our reality. All during the lesson he could not help but notice that a teenage boy was squirming in his seat while he talked.

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And the more the minister got into his message the more upset the young man became. The minister could not wait to get the chance to talk to this young man and ask him what was up.
When he did, the young, teenage boy said sheepishly, "Well, all I think about is girls these days. I don't want to be a girl!"
 This young man was creating a perception about himself based on his limited knowledge of the physical world.

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Today's Daily Word talked about our perception of Infinite Love and how it can show up in our physical world.

The website Positive Thinking Principles also speaks to the question of how we perceive things in our lives.

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1. What is your perception of change? Many of us hold the belief that change is difficult. This locks us into a pattern of catastrophic thinking. We have the perception that any change is going to be bad. Yet, as Buddha taught us; everything is changing form constantly. Which means that to be alive is to be forever evolving. To fear change is to fear life itself. By exploring the true nature of change, you will be able to start seeing it as a positive.

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2. What is your perception of your self-worth? Unless you believe that you are truly worthy of your deepest desires, you won't be able to attract or manifest them. A feeling of unworthiness is simply a tactic employed by the ego to stop you from making big and bold changes in life. Why does the ego do this? Because its role is to protect you and that's why your ego often takes the voice of an over protective parent and instills fear in you.

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3. Your perception of fault. It is realizing that through your thinking, feeling and behaving, you are responsible for many of your life circumstances. It's easy to fall into the trap of avoiding responsibility as we often mistake responsibility for forgiveness. But responsibility isn't excusing another for their negligent actions, it is simply practicing your right to exercise more power over what you create by choosing how you respond in every moment.

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4. What is your perception of self-love? Have you ever wondered what the cost is of not believing in yourself and deserving of love? When you feel unworthy, you push all of life's goodness away from you, without even realizing it. Opportunities pass you by, good luck goes over your head and life's blessings remain a mystery. Attracting greater prosperity into your life starts with learning to love yourself first.

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5. What is your perception of reality and its causes? Learn another way to think about the meaning of perfection and how the Law of Cause and Effect is always working in your life to give you perfect results. If you want to change something in your life or manifest new realities, you need to consider what actions are causing your current results. Through positive thinking, you can cultivate new actions, habits and outcomes that will transform your life circumstances.

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6. What is your perception about your purpose here on earth? Are you living a plan that's already in existence or do you have control, or even a say over who you'll ultimately become? Your beliefs in this area will either inspire you to great action or leave you feeling hopeless. Understanding your perception on your life purpose will clarify your priorities and help you become your best self.

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Helen Keller summed up the idea of perception this way:
The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen, nor touched...but felt in the heart.