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CATCH THE VISION,

Seeing with spiritual eyes enables us to develop an eternal perspective, fulfill our divine potential, and share the gospel with those around us.

I'd like to talk with you about spiritual vision. Spiritual vision is necessary for progress and critical to the fulfillment of our highest potential. I'll begin with some personal experiences.

Despite Challenges

My oldest sister was born with cataracts. She was legally blind from birth. When she was 15 months old, she got her first pair of tiny glasses with thick, heavy lenses. First thing in the morning, she would put them on. She refused to take them off until she was ready to sleep at night. The glasses didn't give her 20/20 vision, but even at 20/400, it was a vast improvement.

Although she was bright intellectually, because of her poor eyesight she missed visual cues, and some of those things affected her social development. For example, she was never able to clearly see facial expressions. Gaps in understanding caused her to



My sister when she was one year old



SHARE THE VISION!

misunderstand situations, which sometimes created challenges for her and others.

Despite these challenges, she learned to play the piano and organ. She graduated from college with a degree in education, and for many years she has used her skills as a special education teacher to help struggling students. Her spiritual vision allowed her to see beyond her mortal limitations.

From Blurry to Clear

In contrast, I've had adequate vision most of my life. Recently, however, I found myself struggling to read anything smaller than large print. Everything was a little blurry and uncertain. Details disappeared. Colors were muted. Distracted by having to work to simply see what was being shown, I sometimes missed important points in meetings. I tried using magnifying

reading glasses, in addition to contact lenses with increasingly stronger prescriptions. But despite my best efforts, my vision continued to deteriorate.

Then, thanks to an expert ophthalmologist and his highly trained staff, I learned I had developed cataracts. But unlike my sister, for me there was a relatively quick fix. A surgeon replaced the defective lens with an artificial lens. Afterward, I was astonished. With my near vision restored, now I can read just about any size print. Colors are clear and vibrant, and details are sharp rather than indistinguishable. I feel more confident. I can focus on the important things, and I actually feel more joy in life!

Seeing from Afar

Besides near vision, the surgery also restored my far vision, or perspective. Let me provide some examples.



When I have been on the upper floors of the Church Office Building in Salt Lake City, Utah, I have found that on a very clear day it's possible to see mountain peaks that are miles away.

Our home is about a mile up on the foothills. From that vantage point, we can see across the valley to mountains bordering the valley to the west, part of the range beyond that, and also the mountains in the distant north. That's about 50 miles or so in those directions.

From the hills, we can see many details—buildings and fields dotting the landscape, roads with their traffic flow, airplanes flying to and from the airport, and smoke from fires. We can even see weather changes coming and prepare for them.

But my view is still limited compared to other vantage points. For example, when I have been on the upper floors of the Church Office Building in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, I have found that on a very clear day it's possible to see mountain peaks more than 100 miles away. That's an even greater distance than I can see from my vantage point at home.

Our Need for Spiritual Vision

So how does this relate to us as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? Just as physical vision is important in this life, spiritual vision is critical in our quest for eternal life. Proverbs 29:18 tells us, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." The truth is, we all need help learning to see clearly with our spiritual eyes.

My sister, born with a visual disability, needed help from others to learn and progress physically and socially. As Church members, while we are developing spiritual vision, we may need help learning to discover eternal truths. Such truths will open up marvelous new vistas we can scarcely imagine. But first we must find a vantage point that gives us a view of eternity.

When my own eyesight was gradually diminishing, I needed others' help to regain the vision I previously enjoyed. In a similar way, members



From the top of the building, the view (above) is much different than what you see from the sidewalk below (left).

who once enjoyed clear gospel vision but whose circumstances have clouded their vision over time are like I was. They have lost sight of the joy the gospel brings to everyday life. Our efforts can bless them as they seek to regain that perspective.

As members of the restored Church, we have a responsibility, first of all, to improve our own spiritual vision. As we do so, we will find that our spiritual vision improves as we encourage our families and fellow Saints to do the same. And as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, we invite all people to come unto the Savior so that they also may gain a clearer vision of their purpose here on earth. This is part of the “gathering of Israel” in which President Russell M. Nelson has invited each of us to participate.

Prophetic Vision

One of our great blessings as members of the Church is to be led by prophets, seers, and revelators. The President of the Church, under the direction of Heavenly Father and the Savior, sees from a perspective that is both eternal and celestial. Choosing to follow his counsel will help us stay on and move along the covenant path that will bring us back to our heavenly home.

As “watchmen on the tower” (see Doctrine and Covenants 101:44–46), the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles see from high spiritual ground. Their unique vantage point enables them to see dangers “afar off” (see Doctrine and Covenants 101:53–54). We are wise when we appreciate their perspective and act on their counsel as they strive to help members live righteously and prepare for future challenges. As we sustain them, we increase in sensitivity to the Spirit and are better able to reach out in love to others.

That We Might Have Joy

So, here are two questions for each of us to ask:

- What am I doing in my life and in my calling to help myself, my family, and my brothers and sisters see more clearly and feel more deeply the joy of the gospel of Jesus Christ?
- If I am not experiencing that joy right now, what do I need to do to regain spiritual vision and establish eternal perspective in my life?

“Men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25) is not just a quick scripture for youth to memorize in seminary; it is the whole point of our earthly journey and what we hope for in our eternal progress. It is the spiritual vision we need to obtain.

Without clear spiritual vision, our potential is limited. Just as clouds can obscure our physical vision, the darkness of disbelief can cloud our spiritual vision, making us hesitant to step out and move towards the grand possibilities for which we were designed. But the more we understand the plan of our Heavenly Father, the more we are able to fulfill our full potential as His sons and daughters.

Let us each strive to live according to clear and distinct gospel truth, so that we can open our spiritual eyes to the beauty, joy, and divine potential our Heavenly Father sees in each of us. May we each look in the right direction—to our prophets, seers, and revelators—and encourage our families and friends to do the same as we “call on the name of the Lord” in preparation for “that great and notable day” of His coming (see Acts 2:17–21). ■

Members whose circumstances have clouded their vision over time need our efforts to bless them as they seek to regain that perspective.

