

From where I sit to read in the mornings I can see the maintenance man clean the glass doors to my office building. Every morning he soaps them up and meticulously wipes them clean. I watch him inspect them once and again making sure he didn't leave any sudsy streaks behind. How clean he leaves them. How clear I can see through them. If only all my views were always that clear. But they are not. Because it is not *through* what I look, it is *with* what I look – – sudsy, smudgy eyes marked with biases, judgments and misconceptions that muck up my view of things, people and circumstances. I have eyes but fail to see. Sometimes I'm as blind as a bat.

Reminds me of that story about a woman who had moved to a new neighborhood and every time she looked out her window she commented to her husband how the neighbor's clothes hanging on a line were not cleaned well. Each week the woman would look through her window in judgment of her neighbor's washing skills expressing how their neighbor needed to learn how to wash her laundry better. Then one day she looked out the window and noticed clean laundry hanging from her neighbor's line. She told her husband that her neighbor had finally learned to properly wash her laundry and she wondered who had taught her. And her husband replied, "I got up early this morning and cleaned the window."

Like the woman in that story, my eyes are sometimes covered with a tainted film that distorts what I look at and causes me to go into those dreaded and dangerous preconceived notions. Mostly due to years of fault-finding I supposed. But gosh how I kick myself every time I catch myself doing that. Only to do it again real soon. Geeze! I recall a scene in the 1989 movie The Abyss, where one of the main characters tells another: "We all see what we want to see….He sees hate and fear. You have to look with better eyes than that." That line has always stuck with me. I realize my perception of people and the world will never be flawless, I know that, but I think that behind my looking there needs to be a perspective of faith. A belief that reminds me that everything on which my eyes rest can, in one way or another, tell me about God and His intentions. A belief that would, despite our world's seemingly deteriorating ways, allow me to trust that there is good in it; a belief that despite what I think and feel when I look at others, would allow me to look through their eyes and exercise tolerance and

compassion.

Yet my frustrations flare up at my inability to achieve that because it is so NOT easy. How do I get rid of that cataract-like film layering my eyes? Like the blind man in the story recounted in the Gospel of Mark [8:22-25] who begs Jesus to give him sight, I too desire to see. To see God clearer in things and in others. I pray He keeps my eyes from turning cloudier and helps me remove that impending crust. And instead helps me to look with better eyes than that – – with humble, fair, forgiving, and loving eyes. So maybe every so often, hopefully more often than not, I may be able to say I was blind but now I see.

I shut my eyes in order to see.
~ Paul Gauguin
All of us are watchers – of television, of time clocks, of traffic on the freeway –
but few are observers. Everyone is looking, not many are seeing.
~ Peter M. Leschak

One ship sails East,
And another West,
By the self-same winds that blow,
Tis the set of the sails
And not the gales,
That tells the way we go.
~ Ella Wheeler Wilcox

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