

# HIT RESET

## Jesus is God's Answer to Our Desires

### INTRODUCTION

John 9:1-41

Popular first-century theology explained every disaster as a consequence of sin. Seeing a man born blind led the disciples to ask a puzzling theological question. Since the man was born blind, whose sin had caused his blindness? Did he somehow sin in the womb, as some rabbis argued? Or had a sin of his parents caused his condition?

This strange theology is still popular. When my wife lost a daughter in childbirth, her sister-in-law remarked, "I hope I don't do anything that will make God punish me like that!" Many a Christian friend, come to comfort a person who is suffering, has made a similarly thoughtless remark.

How callous of the disciples, and of us. The man born blind and the devastated mother aren't objects for theological speculation. They are hurting human beings, not riddles for which we have to offer some solution.

Jesus rejected both alternatives. The blind man's plight was an opportunity for God to relieve suffering. The cause was unimportant. This is still the case today. The cause of a person's suffering is not at issue. The reality of suffering is. All suffering is still an opportunity for God – and God's people – to express compassion.<sup>1</sup>

#### Prefer to type your answers?

This study allows you to do that. Just make sure that you save the PDF to your device and open it in Acrobat Reader or a similar PDF program. If you open the study guide in your web browser (Chrome, Safari, Edge) you probably won't be able to save your answers!

### OPEN IT

1. **Close your eyes for a moment and imagine life as a blind person. What are some ways life would be different?**

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<sup>1</sup> Lawrence O. Richards, *The 365 Day Devotional Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), 781.



## APPLY IT

The book of Job is probably the oldest book in the Bible. In Job, we read about a man who was called “a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil” (Job 1:8). Job is a good guy! In spite of this, Job faces some very difficult circumstances. He loses his animals, servants, and even his children. Job gets boils that were painful and covered him from head to toe. Several chapters of the book of Job feature his friends telling him to repent of his sins. They believe Job lost almost everything in his life because he was being punished for his sin. This was called the “retribution theory.” It’s the belief that good people get good things and bad people get bad things.

**8. Read John 9:1-2. How do Jesus’ disciples show that they, just like Job’s friends, believe in the “retribution theory?” Then read John 9:34. What do the Jewish leaders believe about the reason the man was born blind?**

**9. Read John 9:3. How does Jesus turn the retribution theory upside down? Reference your answer to Question #3 above.**

**10. Have you ever found yourself believing that something bad that happened to you must have been the result of your sin? If so, why is it so hard to believe that it may not have been because of your sin?**

Sometimes our suffering is a direct result of our sin. For example, if we are caught stealing at work and get fired, we are responsible. But often our suffering is not a direct result of something we have done wrong. For example, if you have lost a job during the pandemic because your company is closed down, that is not your fault. Jesus tells us the man was born blind so that “the works of God might be displayed in Him.” The man spent many years totally unable to see so that Jesus could someday amaze people by healing him.

**11. Think about a time you have experienced suffering and it clearly was not your fault. Did God use the difficult time in a positive way in your life or the lives of those around you?**

Read John 9:4-5 & 12:35-36. Jesus talks about the time that He was at work on the earth (“day”) and the time that His disciples would be scattered while He was on the cross (“night”). Jesus is still the light of the world today, but there was a special urgency while He was on the earth.<sup>2</sup>

**12. Should we have this same urgency today? As disciples of Jesus, what does it look like to have urgency in doing His work today?**

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<sup>2</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 362.

Read Genesis 2:4-7. In Genesis 1, we read about God creating the sun, moon, stars, water, land, plants and animals by speaking them into existence. But it is different with people. When God creates the first human, He reaches into the ground and forms him out of the dirt. Now, read John 9:6-7. We are not sure why Jesus spits on the ground in order to make mud or why He used mud to heal the blind man. But the word shows up five times in this passage. Scholars have different ideas about the reason, but one that stands out is the symbolism of Jesus using the same substance to heal the man that God used to create the first human. He used dirt to create Adam and, in this case, dirt to heal the blind man. God created Adam out of something insignificant and Jesus uses the same substance to recreate the blind man. He recreates him physically (by giving him sight) and spiritually (by leading him to faith). Romans 8:29 tells us that we are all being “conformed to the image of His Son.” We are being spiritually recreated every day!

**13. Describe some of the ways you are being spiritually recreated?**

**14. In question 7 above, you wrote down all of the words or phrases that the blind man used to describe Jesus in this passage. We see a progression in how the blind man sees Jesus. Describe what this shows us about how we move forward in our faith.**

**15. Read John 9:38. What do you notice about the man’s final reaction to Jesus?**

Belief in Jesus is closely connected to worshipping Him. When we begin to understand who He is and what He has done for us, we are naturally led to worship Him. This can be done when we are all alone, but it is also done when we are gathered together as the body of believers.

**16. During the pandemic, we have not been able to meet together to worship. Write down some of the ways this has been challenging for you. In what ways have you had positive worship experiences during the pandemic?**

**17. Read John 9:39 and look back at your answer to question 6. Spend some time thinking about your testimony of coming to faith in Jesus. Write down some specific ways you used to be “blind” but now can “see.”**

**18. Spend some time in prayer, asking God to show you how seeing more clearly has moved you into a closer relationship with Jesus. Write down your thoughts.**