John 9:24-34 Commentary
New International Version

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Study Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the *International Bible Study Forum*.

(John 9:24) A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner."

The glory of God includes God's nature and character as revealed to us in creation and supremely in the Bible, as the Bible supremely reveals God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit to us. When God glorifies himself, God reveals His nature and character. In John 2:11, we read that Jesus revealed His glory (the glory of God), His character and nature, when He performed His first sign by

changing water into wine in a way that the bridegroom would receive the honor for what Jesus did. God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit (our Advocate), glorify themselves when they reveal the truth about themselves and one another in a multitude of ways throughout time and eternity within and beyond our understanding as humans. Throughout the Gospel of John and the New Testament, we see how the Father glorifies Jesus and Jesus glorifies the Father. Glorifying God includes, but is not limited to, telling the truth about God, telling the truth to God, and telling the truth to those who have a right to know and learn the truth as we see Jesus and the disciples demonstrating in the New Testament as they do God's will.

We glorify God when we worship God and obey God's commands. To glorify God, we must love God, our neighbor, and love others as Jesus loves us. In John 13:34, Jesus declared, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." The Pharisees and hypocrites we read of in the New Testament thought they glorified God, but they did not love God or their neighbors. We must beware that we do not become like the scribes and Pharisees and think we can glorify God while condemning and refusing to love those with whom we disagree.

When the Pharisees told the man that Jesus healed to give glory to God, they wanted him to tell them the truth. But they wanted him to give glory to God as they understood

God instead of giving any glory to Jesus, the Son of God, who healed the man. In Joshua 7:19, we see how Joshua asked Achan, the thief, to tell the truth, “My son, give glory to the LORD God of Israel and make confession to him. Tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.” Joshua had a right to know and learn the truth from him. He used “give glory to God,” as courts sometimes require a witness to swear that they will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

The Pharisees remained spiritually blind, while the formerly blind man could see clearly physically and spiritually. The Pharisees proved they did not know and love God because despite all the evidence before them from reliable witnesses and from the truthful testimony of Jesus about himself, they refused to glorify God. Instead of giving God the glory, the Pharisees said they knew Jesus, the Son of God, was a sinner. They called Jesus a sinner because Jesus obeyed His Father and the Law of God, not the laws and traditions of the Pharisees that made the Law of Love invalid. In their unloving spiritual blindness, they never praised God for the miraculous healing of the man born blind nor did they tell the man they were pleased he had regained his eyesight. They only saw him as a born blind sinner.

(John 9:25) He replied, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!”

The man Jesus healed insisted on the facts he knew to be true. He did not know of any sins that Jesus had committed, and he refused to accept as the truth what the Pharisees said about Jesus. They pressured him to defame the one who had healed him, but he said he did not know of anything Jesus had ever done wrong. He said what he knew to be true in his own experience as an eyewitness. He knew that he had been born blind. He knew that he could see after Jesus healed him Everyone who knew him knew that though born blind, he could now see. He insisted on the true facts of his own experience and refused to speculate about Jesus.

(John 9:26) Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

The Pharisees continued to look for reasons to murder Jesus. If they could create a list of ways that Jesus had violated their laws, then they could bring criminal charges against Jesus before the Sanhedrin or Council, put Him on trial for breaking their rules, and sentence Jesus to death. With their two questions, they admitted that Jesus had opened the man's eyes. Now, it was only a matter of listing the laws Jesus broke when he healed the man. Of course, Jesus did not break any of the laws of Moses. The Pharisees broke the laws of Moses with their rigid and unloving extensions, additions to, and interpretations of God's law contrary to the Scriptures.

(John 9:27) He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?"

The man Jesus healed had courage, wisdom, and spiritual sight. Even as Jesus told the Pharisees repeatedly when they questioned Jesus that they refused to listen to the truth, so also, they refused to listen to the truth from the man regarding his healing. We do not know all that was going through the man's mind when he asked them why they wanted him to repeat what he had already told them, but they took his final question as an insult. They had no interest in becoming a disciple of Jesus—they only wanted to find more excuses to condemn Jesus as a sinner and kill Him.

(John 9:28) Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses!

In reply, the Pharisees accused the man of being a disciple of Jesus. Perhaps they thought Jesus and the man had colluded to convince people that Jesus had healed him. One thing we see clearly: the man Jesus healed spoke and acted as a disciple, follower, or student of Jesus. He spoke with conviction and power regarding all that Jesus did for him, knowing the sure and certain consequences he risked for speaking the truth—he could be cast out of the synagogue and denied access to God in temple worship.

(John 9:29) We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from."

The Pharisees claimed to be disciples of Moses, and certainly not of Jesus. They claimed to apply Moses' laws and teachings as Moses would have wanted them to apply them. From our study of John and the other gospels, we know that God the Father expects the disciples of Jesus to listen to or obey Jesus and not Moses or Elijah as though they were of an equal status with Jesus. In John 1:16-18, we learned, "From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known." Nor does God the Father want Jesus' disciples to blend Jesus' teachings with the teachings or laws of Moses and the prophets to create a new religion. For examples, when they became Christians, Gentile followers of Jesus Christ were not required to be circumcised. Christians no longer need to follow the food restrictions of the Jews. On the Mount of Transfiguration, when Peter wanted to make tents for people to come and learn from Moses, Elijah, and Jesus, God the Father refused his request and told the disciples in Matthew 17:5, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; ***listen to him***!" (see also Luke 9:35).

(John 9:30) The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes

from, yet he opened my eyes.

With divine light and spiritual insight, the man Jesus healed had better reasoning powers than the Pharisees. Though he most probably had never heard Jesus preach, he spoke words consistent with Jesus' words in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 7:16-18, Jesus taught: "You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit" The Pharisees were like the ravenous wolves Jesus preached about in Matthew 7:15. It seemed obvious to the man Jesus healed that Jesus was a good man who had come from God and he would give the glory to Jesus and to God—though he did not yet know all he would soon learn about Christ Jesus.

(John 9:31) We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will.

The man reasoned that Jesus could not be a sinner because God does not listen to the prayers of sinners; that is, to those living a rebellious life against God. God did listen to Jesus' prayer when Jesus healed the man; therefore, Jesus could not be a sinner according to the Law of God. According to the Law of Love, Jesus loved the man and Jesus healed the man. Next, the man told the Pharisees the spiritual qualities a person must have for

God to answer their prayers. First, he must worship God. The Pharisees would claim that they worshiped God, but to truly worship God a person must worship God in God's way instead of man's way, and that involves love of God and neighbor. Second, it seemed obvious to the man Jesus healed that Jesus obeyed the will of God, and that is why God gave Jesus the power to heal him. The Pharisees refused to obey the will of God. They refused to believe or believe in Jesus. They refused to love God even though they claimed to glorify God. They refused to love their neighbor, as we see in the way they treated others unlike themselves, and in the way they treated Jesus and the people Jesus healed.

(John 9:32) Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind.

The man accentuated the goodness and power of Jesus by saying no one had ever heard of anyone opening the eyes of a man born blind. Unlike the Pharisees, who insisted on remaining spiritually blind, the man showed by his testimony and courage that he had received far more than physical eyesight from Jesus. Jesus also gave him spiritual insight and increased his knowledge of God.

(John 9:33) If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

The man continued to declare that if Jesus were not from God, then Jesus could do nothing good. Jesus did not seek a reward or anything selfish from the man He healed.

Jesus only sought to do people good. Some might do amazing things, like Simon the magician, but not for totally unselfish reasons to benefit others as Jesus did (see Acts 8:9-25). In the New Testament, we see Jesus and the disciples of Jesus healing people and preaching the good news of Jesus from totally unselfish motives instead of personal gain. They showed their faith and the obvious presence of Jesus in their lives and work as they helped others.

(John 9:34) To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.

In response to the testimony of the man Jesus healed, the Pharisees showed themselves for the evil people they were. Jesus healed a man to glorify God, to truly help a man born blind, to teach His disciples, and to teach all who would learn about how and why He healed a man born blind. After they learned that Jesus had healed a man born blind, the Pharisees refused to glorify, thank, or praise God. Instead, they attacked the man personally and said he was born in sin. They blamed the man's blindness on his sins or the sins of his parents. Because he was a "sinner," they decided the man was not worth listening to when he taught them truths that they should have known from the Scriptures but chose to disregard. Since they could not refute the truths the man taught them, they condemned him. Judging him a sinner, they would not let him teach them or others; just as they accused Jesus of

being a sinner and would not let Jesus teach them. Furthermore, they did not want him (or Jesus) to teach others about Jesus and Jesus' loving, powerful good works. So, as punishment and to make him an example, they cast him out of the synagogue so no one would be tempted to listen to him for fear they too might be cast out of the synagogue.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What was the problem with Jesus healing someone on the Sabbath?

2. How did the man born blind describe His healing?

3. In what way were people divided after Jesus healed the man born blind?

4. When asked, what did the man born blind say about Jesus? Why did this take courage?

5. When questioned, why were the parents of the man Jesus healed afraid?

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