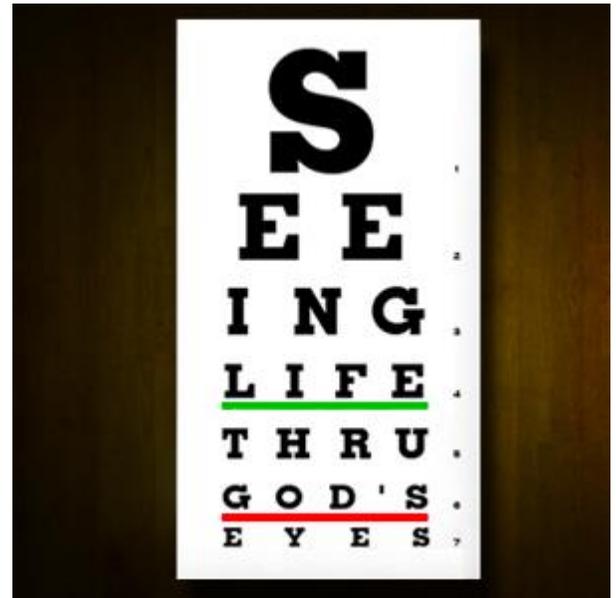


How Do You See Life?
February 28, 2017

While I present a very optimistic outlook for people publicly, I would have to see I am a pessimist by nature (or, in an attempt at rationalizing my negativity, I say I am a realist). This poses real problems for me in my journey of life (both with God and with my wife and others close to me).

As many people know, my wife, Daylene, has been diagnosed with a very severe heart ailment that has significantly affected her life and our life together. Additionally, we have moved in with her father (who is 91 in May 2017). I have often found myself brooding over the life that we had expected to live in contrast to the life that we currently live because of health constraints and family obligations.



I often find that, as I look at life, I see the things that I do not have. As a result, my frame of mind is a bit negative, feeling less hope and, if I am perfectly honest, opening myself up to persistent resentment.

For instance, I was doing the wash the other day and putting some clothes up after folding them. Daylene got up and helped me fold some of the wash. As I was putting them away, I was struck by my usual way of thinking – I usually feel a little angry that I am doing the laundry, she helps me fold one load but leaves the others for me to do myself. I thought to myself, “WHAT A JERK!”

Instead of thinking about the loads of laundry that I have done that Daylene was not able to help me with, I needed to spend a few moments celebrating the fact that Daylene was well enough to help with the load that she did. Instead of focusing on what she can't do, I need to celebrate the things that she can (and we can do together).

I have found that same is true for my relationship with God. I often think about the things that haven't happened in my life (or the horrific ways people have treated me in the past) and dwell on the things that I think God should have done, but didn't. In this way, I find myself dwelling on what I didn't have instead of the things that he had blessed me. I find myself thinking and reminiscing on the injustices that have been done rather than reflecting on the blessings God has presented in my life.

Too often I dwell on the negative and forget that not all is bad – in fact, there is a lot of good in my life.

So I was reminded, in a very practical way, to pause and thank God for the good things in my life.

- I thank God for the days Daylene is well enough to get out with me and drive with the top down;
- I am grateful for the moments Daylene is strong enough to be out on her own and renewing her own spirit in the journey.
- I have great gratitude that I can preach on a regular basis to a group of people who have been open and affirming toward me.
- I remember those individuals who I have had a very positive impact and they have reflected that back to me positively.
- I celebrate the life I have now because it reminds me of how very precious life (and my relationship with God is).

So how are you looking at life today? I know I see it a bit brighter because instead of seeing the things I don't have, I see the things with which God has blessed me!

How about you?