

The Journey Begins

Perspective

Look at this Glass



Have you ever heard a person refer to their self by saying, “I’m a glass-half-full kind of person”, or “I’m a glass-half-empty kind of person”? This concept has been around for a long time. Who knows where it came from? Not me. So, what would we say about ourselves? Is our glass half full or half empty?

Art Work



At the age of nine years old it was my joy to take my first painting lesson and the picture above was the result. It was always easier for me to paint the picture than it was to sign my name.

When studying art, you learn about perspective. It has to do with how you create the illusion of a three-dimensional view when you're actual working on a two-dimensional surface.

Three Person Illustration

Imagine two people standing across from one another with a third person sitting in a chair in between the two that are standing. The two people standing are facing away from one another. It would look something like this from above:



Do the two people standing have the same perspective of the person sitting? - No, obviously not.

Now let's have the two people standing turn around and face the person sitting.



Do they have the same perspective of the person sitting now? – Yes? No?

Let's continue to move the two standing and ask ourselves if their perspective is the same. It would go something like this:



When standing next to each other, do they share the same perspective of the person sitting? – Yes? No?

Allow me to suggest that in none of the cases above do the two people standing have the same perspective. In fact, if they were to get one behind the other, with one squatting a bit to allow the other person to look over the top of their head, they still would not have the same perspective.

How about if one person could get inside of the other person and look through the same eyes, would they have the same perspective then?

Not long ago while sharing this illustration with a group using real people for the examples their response to this last question was “No”, unanimously. Why?

Their reasoning was that the people looking would still be two different people and so they would interpret what they saw differently. They had my full agreement, and it was the point of the whole exercise.

The interesting thing is we had seamlessly shifted from one definition of the word “perspective” as used in one discipline to another that fit the circumstances. The first definition we used was:

- 1 a: the technique or process of representing on a plane or curved surface the spatial relation of objects as they might appear to the eye; specifically: representation in a drawing or painting of parallel lines as converging in order to give the illusion of depth and distance.

The second definition that we shifted to without discussion about making that mental shift was:

- 2 a: the interrelation in which a subject or its parts are mentally viewed and places the issues in proper perspective; also: POINT OF VIEW b : the capacity to view things in their true relations or relative importance
(definitions from www.dictionary.com)

So, it was clear that perspective is not just about “what” you see, but “how” you see it, physically, mentally, and emotionally.

The Glass is Half-Full



Let's go back to the glass a moment.

If we said that it was half full then we probably fit into the majority of responses. Most people want to appear to be positive even if they are not “feeling” that way, and the “half-full” response is generally seen as a positive response.

We might have responded that it was half-empty and that would have been fine. Are there any other ways to look at the glass? Are there alternative perspectives? Don’t we just want to know what’s true?

What is the truth? Of course, isn’t the glass both half-full and half-empty? It is interesting that most of the time when using this simple illustration with groups “half-full” is the unanimous or majority response. Very rarely does anyone say that it is both half-full and half-empty.

This probably has more to do with the way the question is asked than anything else. The group allowed me to “frame” their reality, or set their perspective concerning the glass of water.

If we want to help make sure the group response remains within the “half-full/half-empty” paradigm then get two people to join in the fun. Just, have them agree that one will respond with “half-full”, and the other with “half-empty”.

“Not fair” we might say. Perhaps not, but this isn’t about being fair. It’s about exposing what happens to us daily. Satan has been shaping people’s perspectives since the Garden of Eden. He does this through the negative systems that he has put into place, affecting our circumstances, and deceiving people. He started with Adam and Eve and now he is using us, whenever possible, and those around us.

Those Sin driven systems have become normal in all societies. Our perspectives hold on to those systems as being the way we must operate in this world. Many of us would probably miss them if they ever stopped. So, we defend them. It’s absurd, but we’ve been thoroughly indoctrinated along the way.

The key concept that our perspectives can be influenced by the circumstances around us is a point to remember.