

# Seven Corrective Lenses 2 Cor 5:10

by William MacDonald

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of having good spiritual vision, which is achieved by fitting seven corrective lenses into our lives, including the fact of hell, the love of Christ, the value and eternity of a soul, the purpose of our creation, and the plain command of Christ.*

**Duration:** 36:19

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 5:18

**Topics:** "Correction"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of living a life that serves God's interests. He emphasizes that we should not be focused on worldly possessions or selfish desires, but rather on fulfilling the commission that God has given us. The speaker references verses 18 and 19, which highlight the ministry of reconciliation that God has entrusted to us. He also shares a story about a woman who had to evacuate her mansion during a prairie fire and had to choose which possessions to save, illustrating the need to prioritize eternal values over temporary ones. Overall, the sermon encourages listeners to have a vision of being used by God to make a lasting impact in the lives of others.

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## Transcript

To read in 2 Corinthians, chapter 5, beginning with verse 10, 2 Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 10, 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest unto God, and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God, or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit that God

was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's dead be reconciled to God, for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Now, as I look over the audience today, I notice that several, like myself, are wearing eyeglasses, and no doubt several others are wearing contact lenses, which I cannot detect, and I'd like to speak to you today about this subject of eyeglasses, about good vision, good spiritual vision, of course. Now, every once in a while I have to go to the eye doctor.

He takes me into a long, narrow room and seats me in a chair at one end. There's a chart down at the other end with a light playing on it, and the eye doctor puts a frame over my eyes, and then he puts on the light down at the other end of the room, and he says, now, Mr. McDonald, what can you see on the chart at the other end of the room? And I say to him, what chart is that, doctor? And he says, oh my, this is a very serious case. We must do something about this.

And so then he starts fitting corrective lenses into the frame. He'll sit some in, and he'll say, now what can you see? And I always feel like quoting that verse of scripture to him, I see men as trees walking. That is, I can begin to detect something down there, but everything is still blurred and obscure.

And so he patiently fits more corrective lenses into the frame until finally I can see the top row of letters A, E, D, C, D, F. And then he works on until finally I have 20-20 vision. It's amazing, isn't it? Well, I'd like to suggest to you that in this passage of scripture that we have read, the apostle Paul gives seven corrective lenses to ensure that we have good spiritual vision in going through life. You see, the Bible doesn't explicitly say what you should do with your life, but what it does is give you certain general principles.

And as you pray through the basis of these principles, God gives you light as to your future. All right, now there are seven corrective lenses in this portion. We want to fit them into our frame and see life as God would have us see it.

The first lens I call the fact of hell, verses 11 through 13. The first lens, the fact of hell, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. There's no doubt about it, the apostle Paul was a fanatic.

He was desperately serious about the things of God, about the work of God, and one of the things that spurred him on was the fact of hell. And everywhere he went, he persuaded men to come to God through the Lord Jesus Christ. It's very obvious to me that people accused the apostle Paul of being insane, because in verse 13 he says, for whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God, and whether we be sober, it is for your cause.

He pleads guilty to the charge of being beside himself, but says it's to God, it's unto God that he acts in this way, and if there are moments when he is sober, it's for the sake of men and women around him. It's the fact of hell. The apostle Paul had a corrective lens in his glasses in which he saw the ever-burning fires of hell, and this is a solemn thing, and every one of us should think about it.

Those of us who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, do we really believe that there is a hell for those who die outside of Jesus Christ? Do we believe that there is an eternity of punishment, of suffering for our loved ones, for our relatives and friends who do not know the Christ of God? Some years ago at Bible school, some of the young men became desperate with God about this whole subject. They began to realize that they had never realized before that souls were dying and plunging over the precipice into

eternity without Christ, and so they began selling many of their personal possessions in order to send the money to the mission field. They had what you might call a rummage sale up in the dormitory, and they would put out a lot of these things for sale, and other students would come in and buy these things, and then as the students would carry their loot back to their rooms, it seemed that the Spirit of God convicted them and said to them, well what are you doing accumulating all these things if you really believe that souls are dying? And there was a real moving of the Spirit of God in the dormitory at that time.

Finally they got to the place where sales dwindled off, and they found themselves with a room full of clothing, shoes, radios, jewelry, trinkets, and all the rest, and they didn't know what to do with it, and so one of them decided that they should take it down to a used store, a second-hand store, turn it into cash, turn the cash into gospel literature for the spread of the gospel in the land of Turkey, and so one of these students came into my office and asked if he could borrow my card to take all of this second-hand material down to the store, and he reminded me that he didn't have a license, but perhaps I'd have to drive. On the way down to the second-hand store, this young fellow said to me, Mr. MacDonald, you know the story of the rich man in hell in Luke 16, I suppose? He said, would it be correct to say that that rich man is still in hell? Well, I said to him, if you believe the Bible and take the Bible the way it is, you'd have to believe that. Well, he said to me, would it be correct to say that that rich man has not served a second of his sentence? And I said, well, if you believe the Bible and you take it literally, as I think you should take it, you'd have to believe that.

Of course, what he was saying to me was, look, if this is really true, isn't it time we became desperate about it? Then he said to me, of course, some people say that it is a parable, and what he was doing was opening the back door in case I wanted to get out comfortably, but I didn't want to get out because what he said was true. This young fellow, like the Apostle Paul, had this corrective lens fitted into his glasses, the fact of hell. Day by day, the truth moved him on.

And isn't this true of all the doctrines of the New Testament? Every indicative carries an imperative. God never gave us these doctrines that we might simply store them up in our minds. If God tells us about the fact of hell in the Bible, it's so that we'll be doing something about it and seeking to rescue men from that eternal fate.

Now, the second corrective lens I see in this portion is the love of Christ, verses 14 and 15. The love of Christ, for the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, then we're all dead, and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again. The Apostle Paul, as we've already seen, had one corrective lens in his glasses, the fact of hell, and he saw the flames of hell through this corrective lens.

But there was another one, the love of Christ, and as he looked through his glasses he saw a cross lifted up on Calvary, and on that cross the Son of God dying there in agony and shame for a race of rebel men. The Apostle Paul says, this moves me, this constrains me throughout life. There's a certain logic connected with the death of the Son of God on the cross, and Paul traces that logic in these verses.

He says, we thus judge. Christianity does not tell us to throw our minds away. I believe we use our minds better, more fully as Christians than the men in the world about us do.

Paul says, if you really trace the work of Christ to its logical conclusion, it will lead you down a one-way street, and that street leads you to nothing less than total commitment to Him. We thus judge that if one died for all, then we're all dead. Why did the Lord Jesus die for us? Well, we were dead in trespasses and

in sin.

He didn't die for us because we were able to take care of ourselves, to work out our own problems, to save ourselves. He died for us because we were lost dead in sin, and not only so, He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves. Christ didn't die for us in order that we would henceforth live our own lives the way we think we should live them.

He died for us so that henceforth we would live for Him who died for us. Really, the more you think about it, the more you realize there is no other conclusion. Think of who He is, the Eternal Son of God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

Think of what He did. He died for us on the cross of Calvary. God's lovely Son came down to this earth and poured out His life on the cross of Calvary for people like you and me, people who didn't deserve it.

And think of this, He bought us when He died for us on the cross. The Lord Jesus purchased us with His precious blood. He redeemed us from sin and slavery, and this can only mean one thing.

If He bought me, then I belong to Him, and if I should take my life and use it the way I want to use it, then I am a thief. I'm taking something that doesn't belong to me. The poet said it very well, it seems to me, but he wrote, O Christ, Thy bleeding hands and feet, Thy sacrifice for me.

Each wound, each tear demands my life, a sacrifice for Thee. And there's that other hymn which we sing all the time, but which we might not always realize what we're singing were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small. Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

Well, this is the truth of the Lordship of Christ. The love of Christ constrains us to live for Him who died for us. The third corrective lens in this portion we might call the value and eternity of a soul.

We have this in verse 16. It says, Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. The value and eternity of a soul.

The Apostle Paul is saying here, I don't think of people anymore the way I used to think of them. I used to look at people and judge them and put them into categories and pigeonholed and all the rest, but I don't do that anymore. Paul says, I look upon the men and women around me and I see them as precious souls for whom Christ died.

I see them as potential worshipers of the Lamb of God throughout all eternity. I think of the value of one precious soul. And that is something to think about.

You know, if you were to take all the gold in the world and make a mountain of it, and then add all the silver to it, and all the platinum, and all the money in the world, and all the real estate in the world, and all the title deeds to that real estate, and if you were to keep adding to this mountain all the wealth of the world in whatever form it might be, and then next to that colossal mountain, if you were to take any single person in the world today, that person's soul is of more value than that whole mountain of wealth. Jesus said, What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? When I think of the value of a soul, I don't think of that mountain of gold, silver, and platinum. I think of the cross of Calvary, where God put a price tag on each one of us.

How much am I worth to God? He answers, I'll tell you how much you're worth to me. I'll send my lovely son to pour out his lifeblood for you. That's exactly what happened.

He gave us his own estimate of our value to him by sending his son to die for us. But it's not only the value of a soul, the eternity of a soul as well. Isn't it amazing to think that every one of us is going to live forever, and all the people around us in the world today are soon to be everlastingly happy or everlastingly miserable.

This was one of the corrective lenses in the glasses of the Apostle Paul. The poet has put these words into his mouth, Only like soul I see the folk thereunder, bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings, hearing their one hope with an empty wonder, sadly contented with a show of things. Then with a rush, the intolerable craving shivers throughout me like a trumpet call.

Oh, to save these, to perish for their saving, die for their life, be offered for them all. Paul had the vision of being used of God in doing a work in the lives of men that would go on forever and ever. That is a wonderful vision.

You know, it's a wonderful thing to be, let us say, a dentist and to work on people's teeth and to put silver and gold fillings and crowns and bridges in their mouths. A wonderful thing. It gives a great deal of comfort to the patients and satisfaction to the dentists, I'm sure.

But I think of something more wonderful than that, and that is for that same dentist to be used of God in a spiritual way, in doing something in a person's life that will put that person in heaven for all eternity, singing the praises of the one who loved him and loosed him from his sins through his own precious blood. And so this is the third corrective lens, the value and eternity of a soul. Then the fourth corrective lens is this, the purpose of our creation.

Verse 17. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, or there is a new creation. Old things are passed away.

Behold, all things are become new. I call this the purpose of our creation. The Apostle Paul says that in Christ there is a new creation.

This raises the question, why did God save me? Why am I here? Why was I created in the first place, and why was I converted in the second place? Well, we certainly know that we have only one life, and that it is short at the very best. We have to give it up. Why are we here? We know too that the job is not the main thing in life, but our calling is to represent the interests of Christ down here.

We want to keep this corrective lens in our glasses all the time. Some years ago at the Urbana conference, Billy Graham told the story of a missionary in China who was contacted by one of the great oil companies to be their representative there. They needed somebody to represent them in China, and they heard about this missionary and of his capabilities, and they went to him.

They offered him \$10,000 a year to serve them in that land, and he wasn't interested. Of course, they immediately concluded that the salary wasn't enough, so they promptly raised the offer to \$15,000 a year, and once again he showed no interest at all in their proposition. Well, they felt every man has a price, and all we have to do is raise the salary, so when they raised it to \$20,000, and he still was not interested, they said to him, what's the matter? Isn't the pay enough? And his answer was, the salary is enough, but the job is too small.

God had called him to proclaim Christ in China, and this was the greatest of all callings to him. It reminds me of what Spurgeon said to his son at one time. My son, if God should call you to be a missionary, I should not like to see you dribble down into a king.

Some years ago, there was a Greek scholar in England named William Kelly, and William Kelly tutored his nephew in Greek before the nephew went to the university. Then, when he did go to the university, the professors took notice of him. This young man was really well taught in the Greek language, and they said to him, where did you get your background in Greek? And he said, my uncle William Kelly.

So, when there was a vacancy on the faculty of the university, a committee went to William Kelly and offered him a chair in Greek, and William Kelly showed no enthusiasm or interest in the offer. They talked with him at considerable length, and finally, one of them, in a burst of frustration, said to him, Mr. Kelly, aren't you interested in making a name for yourself in the world? And his answer was, which world, gentlemen? The purpose of our creation. He had the corrective lens in his glasses.

I like the story of a woman who was living in Minnesota years ago, and she had a mansion. One day, a prairie fire started some miles away, and as she looked out the window of her home, she could see the smoke from the prairie fire, and however, the wind was going away from her, and she was not too concerned. But, all of a sudden, there was a change in the wind direction, and the fire started moving toward her mansion.

It got close enough so that she realized she would have to start rescuing her possessions from the house, and so she went into the first room and gathered up in her arms all the things that she thought would have lasting value to her. Then, she went into the second room, and she had to put some something down and pick up other things, and so it went. As she made her tour through the house, she would pick up things that she thought to be of value and discard others which she thought to be of lesser value, and according to the story, when she got to the end of the rooms, and the fire was so close that she had to evacuate the house, she was holding in one hand a bucket of sour milk, and in the other hand a well-worn ham bone.

Perhaps it's only a story, but it has a point to it. The point is this. God has put us down here to represent his interest, and yet, and yet, it's possible for us to go through life serving our own best interests and get to the end of life with nothing but a bucket of sour milk in one hand and a well-worn ham bone in the other.

Now, the fifth corrective lens is found in verses 18 and 19, and we might call this the plain command of Christ. Verses 18 and 19, And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, what these verses say simply is that God, the Lord Jesus, has given us a commission.

He has sent us forth. He's given us the ministry of reconciliation. The Lord Jesus says, Go, go ye into all the world, and teach the gospel.

The same Lord Jesus says, forsake all whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. The same Lord Jesus says, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. It's a plain command of Christ, and yet the tragedy today is that we find Christian men and women who are willing to do for the dollar what they will not do for Christ, willing to cross oceans for a corporation, but unwilling to cross an ocean for the Christ of God.

Well, he has committed the ministry of reconciliation to us. He told us to go forth and tell the world that he was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and he's inviting men and women to come to him. The apostle Paul kept this corrective lens in his classes all the time.

He heard the voice of Christ commissioning him to go. He had to go. The sixth corrective lens is found in verse 20.

I call this the responsibility of those who have the answer. It says, Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us. We pray you, in Christ's name, be reconciled to God.

Dear friends, it's a serious thing to have the answer and not to share it. Jesus said, Let the dead bury their dead, but go now and preach the kingdom of God. He says that no man that wars entangleth himself in the affairs of this world that he might please him who has called him to be a soldier.

Some years ago, when I was in the United States Navy, I was stationed at Kansas City with an air transport squadron. It was a very small group, and life was rather informal. One evening I went into the officer's desk hall to have supper.

There was only one other officer in there at the time. He was a pilot named Max Newton. Max was sitting there.

He had ordered a steak supper, and he was sitting there reading his paper. I went in and sat opposite him, greeted him, sat down, ordered my supper. I also had a paper and started to read it.

There was a very definite impression from the Lord upon me. Why don't you speak to Max about his soul? But I said to myself, I said, Oh, but he's eating his supper, and I don't want to disturb it. And not very long after that, again the Lord seemed to impress upon my heart, speak to Max about his soul.

But I said, Oh, but Lord, he's reading his paper, and all it would be would be an interruption. Well, that night Max left on a flight for the west coast. He and a co-pilot.

There were no passengers in the plane. It was a cargo flight. They landed in Arizona for refueling, and then they took off again, and after they took off, the plane dropped out of sight.

They couldn't find it anywhere. No trace of it. They sent out search parties, but they simply could not find the plane.

A week went by, two weeks, three weeks, a month, two months. At the end of about three months, at the time of the spring thaw, some Boy Scouts were climbing up San Francisco peaks there in Arizona, and they saw the tail section of a plane sticking out from a drift of snow. They sent word down, and a search party was sent up.

They found the plane crashed against the side of the mountain with the bodies of Max and his co-pilot inside. Sometime later, I was walking past the hangar in Kansas City, and as I looked in, I noticed that a chaplain had been spread out on the hangar deck floor, and a chaplain was inventorying the personal effects of Max Knudsen and the co-pilot. Their personal possessions had been brought from the plane, were spread out on the hangar floor, and they would be inventoried and then sent to their next of kin.

And I'll never forget the anguish of soul that was mine that day as I walked by how the Lord spoke to me, and I went back to my room and fell on my knees and cried to the Lord in confession, and asked him that

this might never happen again. Dear friends, it's a serious thing to have the answer and not to use it. As the Lord Jesus Christ is the answer to the problems of men today, we are His ambassadors, and He expects us to be busy for Him.

The final corrective lens, I'll have to go back now to verse 10, the verse with which we started. It says, For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. The Apostle Paul, going through life, had a final corrective lens in his classes which we can call the judgment seat of Christ.

He saw a judgment seat with the Lord Jesus Christ sitting upon it, and he projected himself forward to that time and asked himself the question, what will be important then? And I think we might very well ask ourselves the same question also. 100 years from today, none of us will be here. We will stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

What will count then? Fancy clothing? No, they might seem ever so important now, but they won't be important then. Speedboats? Cars? Hobbies? Jewelry? Sports? Wealth? Will these be the things that will be important? No. When we stand before that judgment seat, the only thing that will count will be a life that has been lived for the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so here we have seven corrective lenses that God has given us to fit into our glasses so that we might see life in its proper perspective, and so that our lives will really count. Let's just go over them once again. The fact of hell.

That's the first one. The love of Christ. The constraining love of Christ.

The value and eternity of a soul. The purpose of our creation. Why are we here? The plain command of Christ.

He said, go. The responsibility of those who have the answer. If you have the cure, don't withhold it from those who need it.

And finally, the judgment seat of Christ. Soon we will stand before it and give account for the things done in the body. Our ministry, our lives will be tested at that time.

Everything that has been done for self will be consumed by the fire. Only what's done for Christ will really last.

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