

Getting Rid of Colored Lenses

Seeing reality clearly

Each one of us sees the world through his own eyes. The reality is the same, but everyone sees different details and interprets them differently. That's how our personal view of the world develops. Our view is shaped by our family, culture, and by the things we have experienced. This can cause us to be one-sided in our perception and not even take notice of some aspects of the situation around us. Information can not get through to us, even if it is important. Then we often make incorrect conclusions that may be harmful to us or the people around us.

To use an analogy, we look at situations through glasses, whose lenses filter out some areas and distort others. For example, our view of God can be distorted by a lens of religion. Or our relationships can be filtered through a lens of mistrust: We want to protect ourselves from disappointments, but at the same time this lens prevents close and strong relationships. Often we're not aware of these lenses because we grew up with this view and we don't know anything else. But God wants us to see clearly and know the truth. He wants to set us free from our distorted views and the negative consequences they have for us and other people.

Jesus says in John 8:31-32: "If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth. And the truth will set you free."

Cost and benefit of colored lenses

Each colored lens that we wear has a price that we pay: We don't perceive important things or we see them in a distorted way so therefore we cannot make good decisions. Why do we still wear them?

That is because they also have a perceived gain or personal benefit for us. This gain is always subjective and might not make sense at all from an outside perspective. For example, by wearing "rose-colored" glasses, I may simplify my life by blocking out unpleasant things. Or when I never say "no" to others and wear "glasses of helpfulness", I might gain recognition as a helpful person, but in the long run I'll burn out.

Often we're not aware of these costs and benefits – usually we have been wearing these glasses for a long while and are used to the view. Maybe we have even grown fond of them and are not eager to face reality. Or we just think that this view is "normal" or believe "that's just the way I am." The truth is we don't see reality when we wear such glasses. That means we believe lies in certain areas and are bound by them. It may be uncomfortable to deal with our glasses. However, in the long run, it is always worth getting rid of them, otherwise we will continue to pay a high price for them.

Removing colored lenses

Often we wear more than one lens that shape our view on different topics. God wants to set us free from all of them, and He knows best where to start. By asking Him directly, we give Him the opportunity to speak to us specifically. The process starts by us asking Him questions and then He reveals specific glasses in our lives. Often He will also show us where these glasses entered our lives. With the help of Jesus, we can take the necessary steps to become free from that wrong view and remove these glasses and see reality clearly.

God doesn't usually reveal everything at once because that would often be overwhelming for us. Instead he wants to encourage us and walk with us through this process step by step.

Application guide

Use the support of a good helper! If you feel pressured or somehow uncomfortable doing this please say so! If you're ready to engage in a conversation with God, you can start like this:

Step 1: Asking God

God, through which glasses am I seeing You?

Holy Spirit, when did I first put on these glasses?

Let God show you what happened. If another person was involved: Forgive that person for what they did and for negatively influencing your view (see the worksheet "Forgiving Step by Step" for more details).

You can ask God about specific topics whether you see them through colored lenses. Start with the following question:

Holy Spirit, through which glasses do I see ... ?

Suggestions: relationships; life; myself; my gifts; finances; friendships; church

Step 2: Repenting

God, I'm sorry for wearing these glasses for such a long time. Please forgive me.

If you're ready to remove these glasses you can continue:

Step 3: Removing the glasses and receiving God's view

God, I remove these glasses and hand them over to You. What do You give me in exchange?

Say to Him that you take what He is giving you. Thank God for this new view and ask the Holy Spirit to help you to use this view.

God, I thank You that I now have this new view, and I pray that I can maintain and use this view.