

Luke 11:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

Analysis

The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness (Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου. ὅταν οὖν ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ἀπλοῦς ᾖ, καὶ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα σου φωτεινόν ἐστιν· ἐπὰν δὲ πονηρὸς ᾖ, καὶ τὸ σῶμα σου σκοτεινόν)—Jesus shifts from external illumination (lamp) to internal perception (eye). The eye functions as the body's 'lamp,' mediating external light to internal consciousness. Haplous (single, simple, sound) describes an eye functioning properly, with clarity and focus. A 'single' eye represents undivided spiritual devotion, seeing truth clearly.

An 'evil' eye (ponēros) is diseased, envious, morally corrupted. In Jewish idiom, an 'evil eye' often denoted stinginess or envy (Matthew 20:15). Spiritually: perverted desires corrupt perception, rendering one unable to recognize truth. The Pharisees' covetousness, pride, self-righteousness functioned as spiritual cataracts, blinding them to Messiah despite overwhelming evidence.

Historical Context

Ancient medical understanding viewed the eye as actively emitting light to perceive objects (emanation theory), though Luke, as a physician, may have known more sophisticated physiology. Regardless, the metaphor works: the eye's

condition determines what one sees. Jesus diagnoses the Pharisees' problem not as insufficient evidence but as moral corruption distorting perception.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What 'evil' desires or attitudes might be corrupting your spiritual perception —envy, lust, greed, pride?
2. How can you cultivate a 'single' eye that sees God and his truth clearly without competing loyalties?
3. In what areas might you be spiritually blind while convinced you see clearly?

Interlinear Text

ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώμα ἐστιν· ὁ ὀφθαλμός ὅταν οὖν
G3588 **The light** G3588 **body** **is** G3588 **eye** **when** **therefore**
G3088 G4983 G2076 G3788 G3752 G3767

ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ἀπλοῦς ἦ καὶ ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου
G3588 **eye** **thine** **single** **is** **also** **whole** G3588 **body** **thine**
G3788 G4675 G573 G5600 G2532 G3650 G4983 G4675

φωτεινόν ἐστιν· ἐπὰν δὲ πονηρὸς ἦ καὶ τὸ σῶμά
full of light **is** **when** **but** **evil** **is** **also** G3588 **body**
G5460 G2076 G1875 G1161 G4190 G5600 G2532 G4983

σου σκοτεινόν
thine **is full of darkness**
G4675 G4652

Additional Cross-References

Acts 26:18 (Sin): To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Psalms 119:18 (Parallel theme): Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

Colossians 3:22 (Sin): Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

Jeremiah 5:21 (Parallel theme): Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not:

2 Corinthians 4:4 (Light): In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

2 Corinthians 11:3 (Parallel theme): But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Ephesians 1:17 (Parallel theme): That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

Mark 4:12 (Sin): That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

Isaiah 44:18 (Parallel theme): They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.

Mark 8:18 (Parallel theme): Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?