**Eyesight – Week 1 – The World**

**May 8-9, 2021**

**We are starting a brand new series called Eyesight. Now, in order for us to have good eyesight for this series, we are DEFINITELY going to need some cool glasses to wear!**

**(Leaders Note: Hand out glasses and have the students put them on)**

Our eyes can play tricks on us from time to time. I don’t know about you…but there are times when I feel like I see something, but then I don’t. We go to the eye doctor and they ask us, “Which one do you like better? Number 1 or Number 2?” We need to be able to see close-up and far away. Eyesight is obviously very important.

I thought it would be fun to start with some optical illusions…who has heard of those?

**(Leaders Note: Show 5 pictures/slides of optical illusions)**

Now, just like those optical illusions, we all have a different perspective, don’t we? Some of us saw COMPLETELY DIFFERENT THINGS even though we were looking at the same picture! It all depended upon where we were focusing our attention and our perspective.

In this Eyesight series, we are going to have a very consistent THP every single week. Our THP will be a little unique because it will be in the form of a prayer. It will start out like this: **God, help me to see \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the way You see \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We will use these THPs to focus us each week on how to have better “Eyesight” as followers of Jesus Christ.**

**SO, here we go! Here is our first THP of the series…**

**THP: God, help me to see THE WORLD the way You see THE WORLD.**

Now, we know from the Bible that God loved His creation. God made the entire world and everything in it and He loved it! Look at Genesis 1:31: *“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”* In particular, he looked at Adam/Eve (the first two human beings created) and he said they were very good.

God absolutely LOVES people! Every single person who has ever lived, is living now, and will ever live. He thinks you are incredible. Each of us bears the image of God and so when we look at the world…full of people…each and every one of them bears the image of God.

**(Leaders Note: Share a story from an experience – mission trip, cross-cultural experience, etc. – where you saw someone as made in the image of God even though they were different from you.)**

Here’s what an experience like this can teach you: people can experience God’s love anywhere because God has a heart for the nations! God loves the world and we’re called to love and see the world the same way!

This is very important! If we keep our eyes (not just our physical eyes…but the eyes of our hearts) focused on God, we will see EVERYTHING around us differently.

**Here’s what Psalm 16:8 says: *“I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.”***

When we keep our eyes on God, we begin to see the world as He sees the world. Think about that…how would you view the world differently if you saw it from God’s perspective? It would be just like the optical illusions. We could be staring at the people in the world, different cultures, people that think very differently than us or look differently than us…and we might totally miss God’s way of looking at them!

However, we also need to look at the world around us like God sees it and that includes people who live here in our own community…

**(Leaders Note: Show picture of the state of Indiana)**

You know many of the people who live here. You go to school with them. You live next to them. You go to the same church or youth group. God wants you to see them as He sees them.

Here’s how I would like to close the message today…I would like to give you an opportunity to put this prayer into practice.

**(Leaders Note: Share about the Sock Drive we will be doing for the next three weekends! For Carmel/Fishers/Westfield/Binford, the socks will go to Circle City Relief. For Anderson/Lafayette/Kokomo, the socks will go to one of your local partnerships. Check with the Outreach rep at your campus to confirm!)**

Socks seem like such a simple thing to buy. You probably have a sock drawer at home full of socks, but yet there are people in our own community & state who can’t always afford the most basic of things that we sometimes take for granted. We are going to donate new white socks to Circle City Relief so they can give them to families who need them!

Maybe you can raise the money as a small group at your table or maybe you can get a few friends together and say, “Let’s give up Starbucks for 2 weeks or not spend money on snacks for two weeks and use that money to buy a pair of socks.” Maybe you want to go back home today and immediately tell your family so that they can also get involved.

As I close this message out, I have two challenges for you: I want you to commit to pray this prayer every day this week: GOD, HELP ME TO SEE THE WORLD AS YOU SEE THE WORLD. I think your heart/mind will begin to focus more on God’s view of people rather than your own. Try it!

**Pastor Jon Weece from Southland Christian Church in Kentucky says it this way: “Love doesn’t assume. Love asks, “What do you need?”**

Guys, in order for us to have good EYESIGHT in this life, we need to…as it says in Hebrews 12:2… “*fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.”* We need to love people and ask them “What do you need?” How do we show God’s love to them in a practical way? God wants us to see the world as His precious creation and I guarantee you that if we pray this prayer and we live this out, people will definitely take notice. Jesus told His disciples that people would KNOW they are Christians by the way they love others. We will show love, respect, and grace for the world and we will do our very best to take care of it. **God, help me to see the WORLD as You see the WORLD. Let’s pray.**