

Peter tells us that God has provided us with everything we need for growth in spiritual life and godliness. This puts us under the responsibility of working to move forward toward spiritual maturity, by laying hold of God's promises with active faith, and by adding and developing godlike qualities in our character and conduct. But what will happen if we are quite satisfied to remain as we are?

That brings us to the first question of this lesson:

## I. WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF WE DO NOT DEVELOP CHRISTIAN CHARACTER AND CONDUCT?

What will happen if we do not add to our faith these seven qualities that Peter mentions? Then Peter wants us to understand that failure to add godlike qualities will result in spiritual nearsightedness, spiritual blindness, and loss of spiritual awareness.

Peter uses the sense of sight to convey his thought. In Hebrews 5 the writer uses the sense of hearing to convey a similar problem. In Hebrews 5:11-14 we read:

We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. 12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Notice! Here are professing believers who have not moved forward to spiritual maturity, but have regressed to spiritual infancy! It is curious but nonetheless true, that we simply can't stand still in the Christian life. Either we progress or regress, either we move forward or fall back, either we grow in grace and holiness or backslide into sin, either our spiritual faculties become sensitive and able to judge righteous judgment or they become dull and incapable of discernment.

But what do spiritual nearsightedness, spiritual blindness, and loss of spiritual awareness refer to? I would suggest that we understand these three qualities as three progressive phases, rather than as simultaneous aspects. A nearsighted person can see things that are close, but not things that are distant. A spiritually blind person cannot see at all, or can see very little, no matter whether the object is near or far. So I don't believe that nearsightedness and blindness mean the same thing.