

The Lamp of the Body

“The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” Matthew 6:22-23.

The eye is the lamp shining inwards, said Jesus, illuminating inside ourselves. The light fills us up, from the tips of our noses to the tips of our fingers to the tips of our toes. There is a constant input of light into our bodies, and the light enters through our eyes.

There are two kinds of light, said Jesus. One is good. It is wholesome, healthy and clear. There are no lumps, no bits or particles that must be filtered out. The light is crisp, clean and does nothing but good for the body.

The other kind isn't technically light at all. It's darkness. But in Jesus's imagery, this darkness is a blackness that's illuminated into the body from the eye. It's a poison radiating in our bodies, from the tips of our noses to the tips of our fingers to the tips of our toes. There's more of it than we realize, too. That's what Jesus means when He says, “how great is that darkness!” The phrase “how great is that darkness” means “how much/how many is that darkness.” As in: There's a lot of it. There's more in there than there should be. As much as we might like to think we can filter out the bad and keep the good, the truth is that the bad goes in as well. Can a person eat 100 hotdogs and choose for their body only to absorb the good and filter out the bad? Can a person watch 1,000 hours of TV and only choose to absorb the good and filter out the bad?

We must be careful with what we put into our minds, because, whether we like it or not, it goes into our hearts. What we put into our minds affects us as easily as a high-pitched whistle turns a dog's head. We're incapable of filtering out the bad and keeping the good. Both go into our minds. When we think it's OK to put something bad into our minds because we're putting in just a little bit of it, it's still illuminating and shining and magnifying inside ourselves. Even a little bit isn't just a little bit. But the same is true for the good. A little bit of good goes a long way. Just as what goes into the mouth feeds the body, what goes into the eyes feeds the soul. And only one of these is eternal. [DJR]