

# THE VIEW FROM THE TOP

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As I sit on my futon eating breakfast and reading my daily verse and it's a take-off of Isaiah 2:3. "Come up to the high places, the view is better." As I think about that I look out the window and see a bird sitting in the very top of the tree, clinging to a small branch. Out of a bazillion places this bird could be sitting it has chosen the highest point possible. I love that! I want to be that bird, he must have read my verse before I did.



As Christians we have a physical view and we have a spiritual view. The physical view is from the earth and the spiritual view is from where we're "seated in the heavenlies" with Him,<sup>1</sup> or what John called the "third heaven."<sup>2</sup> Our viewpoint determines our attitudes, perspectives, and how we perceive our day-to-day lives. We have the option of seeing through our physical eyes what WE perceive as reality or seeing God's reality, which is from the spiritual viewpoint.

For example, this week Terry and I were walking and talking about which of the four choices we'd rent as a location for our business, as they all have advantages and disadvantages. After a twenty-minute discussion we made a decision: we'd take the one in Irvine. It was just the all-around best choice, even though we no longer needed or wanted to be in Irvine and the commute was too far. The minute Terry made the statement that we're taking the one in Irvine his phone rang, and it was the woman with the building in Irvine, telling us that she had just sold the building. She's been trying to sell this building for over a year and she has no idea that she actually sold it because God doesn't want us to use it. We were ecstatic over the news, because it tells us as clear as handwriting on the wall that God is still orchestrating this business and making it happen His way. If we'd been sitting at the bottom of the tree with a physical perspective we would have been discouraged and wondered why "everything always goes wrong."

Where are you sitting in the spiritual tree—the top, bottom, or comfortably in between? Are you safely against the trunk or out on a limb? I've seen many a bird come and go on that tree out my window but I've never seen one sitting on the highest branch before. The view from the heavenlies is much different from the view we have in the physical. What might physically appear large and overwhelming becomes small and no big deal when looked at from the top of the tree. **From that perspective, not only does your focus change but your attitude changes, and that makes a huge difference in your ability to joyfully walk the Adventure.** Instead of being bogged down in today's tunnel vision your focus is on the big picture.

What would life look like for Terry and me if we hadn't learned to sit at the top of the tree? It would be hard and discouraging. Without the third heaven perspective our perception of "reality" would be what we see with our physical eyes, including everything from politics to finances. Seeing through spiritual eyes is what keeps us going in the face of six years of waiting on our business to take off. It's what enables us to ride the waves of life not only without sinking but in a fully equipped lifeboat. It keeps me from killing my neighbors. I lay in bed last night and thought how they're just a different culture and self-centered people. My life could be a lot worse than neighbors who sit inside their open garage and play cards all night, laughing and yelling and talking nonstop at the top of their lungs. And making ape noises followed by crazed laughter. But about 3:30 AM when I asked Terry if we should call the police (this happens every so often) he said let's wait and see if winter makes them shut the garage door. So I lay there and chose to change my perspective. I thought about the book I'm reading about a nun who lives in a Mexican prison helping the inmates, and after that I couldn't very well whine about my hard life.

**Having a view from the top is to see everything through a spiritual filter.** And this isn't a "discipline," this is not only loads of fun but it makes life much more livable. We're told in second Corinthians: *So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*<sup>3</sup> The view from the top is the eternal, the big picture. Unless we're looking at life through God's eyes what we perceive to be reality is often skewed, because we see through our personal filter, interpreted by wherever our head is at the time. For example, as I washed the lunch dishes I sneezed several times, bringing about the need to go blow my nose. I hated to have to dry my hands and take off my gloves before I finished the dishes so I gave a cursory glance to see if I could finish what

was left first but there were too many. After putting my gloves on again I washed two things and to my surprise that was it! I was done! I could easily have finished without stopping. My assessment of dirty dishes was wrong, I'd interpreted what was lying on the counter as to-be-washed. But it was fresh tomatoes and the makings of iced tea, not dirty dishes that cluttered the counter. My perception of "reality" was wrong.

Last weekend Terry and I spent the afternoon at Kentucky's largest Food Show, and being "foodies" we not only looked forward to getting out and tasting food but we were excited about learning some new cooking techniques and seeing some innovative gadgets. On the way to the Food Show Terry and I both had the same idea, to look at the physical Food Show as a spiritual representation and see what we learn. So we said, "Hey God, we're going to a Food Show, give us new spiritual food to chew on, show us new spiritual tools that we can use to impact others for you, and teach us new ways to know you better."

Afterwards we talked about what we found at the Food Show and how it applies spiritually. In spite of our high expectations, what we found is a good analogy of our search for more of God. Out of unlimited possibilities of food, nearly everything there was a variation of the same two things, beer cheese and barbecue sauce. We went expecting to experience new tastes and foods, but we were disappointed. It was the same old thing, just with different packaging and seasonings, each with their own "special" twist, but still barbecue sauce or beer cheese. We'd hoped to learn some new cooking methods but no one was demonstrating any, they only had the same prepackaged stuff, nothing fresh and new. Sure, they had a variety of ways for us to try the sauces and cheeses, whether it was Triscuits, celery, crackers, or the most popular one—pretzels. Some actually had you try theirs off a spoon, with nothing to "pollute" the taste.

There was only one new idea, which I not only liked but found intriguing, and it was cooking and serving on a stone of Himalayan rock salt.<sup>4</sup> It was versatile, as you could cook everything from meat to dessert on it. You could heat it and cook on it like a grill or chill it and use it to keep food cold while being served. It was beautifully marbled pink and white. It gave a subtle flavor of salt. The Bible says we're to be the salt of the earth, and this was a good picture of how that would be true: subtle so as not to overpower the food, beautiful, and adaptable to any situation.

It wasn't long before we began to choke on sampling the same things, until we no longer bothered even sampling because eventually they all tasted the same. For years Terry and I searched for more of the deeper things of God, of the practical everyday living in the spiritual realm, but no matter how excited and expectant we were for new and fresh manna, inevitably we'd find barbecue sauce and beer cheese.

Then, as we walked around the Food Show we unexpectedly made another discovery—insoles that slip into your shoes and massage your feet while you walk.<sup>5</sup> Walking from the third heaven is walking on clouds, while walking in the physical realm (especially on concrete) makes your feet tired.

This week Holy Spirit used a dream to again make His point of the difference the view makes. For a while Terry and I were involved in a ministry that we eventually left because we began to see some major issues going on. However, since then we've wondered about the anointing that was upon that ministry, how could such a broken person have such a great anointing to minister to others? Over the years that question has stayed with us. In this dream Terry and I were at a place where this person did shows, and it involved someone climbing up high and jumping into a large tub of water that splashed everyone sitting in the audience. This person offered to let me try it, and I dutifully climbed up to the top. But as I prepared to jump I saw that what everyone thought was a lot of water was just a trick, it was only a tiny cardboard box about six inches square that held water. Everyone in the audience thought there was a lot of water but the reality was that it was a trick; this person made a little water appear to be a lot. Also relating to this dream and giving it substance for us is an article I've written called "Cardboard Christianity."<sup>6</sup> In this dream God showed us how the physical view from the audience wasn't reality, only by looking from the top through our spiritual eyes could we see the truth.

Last November I received an email through my subscription to *The Elijah List*, and I liked Garris Elkins's<sup>7</sup> analogy of the third heaven perspective. Referring to a vision he'd had he wrote:

*I saw someone standing inside a castle-like, stone building looking out through a large circular window. This person was looking towards a distant horizon. The dawning of a new day was just beginning.*

*The reflection of the early light was illuminating their face. The window was high up in an elevated position, many levels above the surrounding terrain. Because of where this person stood they were able to see the coming dawn before those who were still sleeping in the darkness at ground-level. ... God desires to position His people in a higher place of revelation so they can see what is coming. This higher place would change their perspective. ...*

*(God says) "There is coming a fullness of joy for My people that will be as bright as the noon day sun. This new dawn of joy will be seen by you while the world still sleeps in a lingering night of despair. The sounds of your joy will be heard in the camps of darkness before the new day is realized. You will begin to dance in the approaching dawn. Come up and stand in the window of Heaven and see what I am about to do."*

I challenge you to come on up to the top of the tree so that you can be one who dances in the coming dawn instead of being discouraged by the darkness below. Look at your life and circumstances through God's perspective, He sees the big picture and the big picture is always good!

As I finish writing this article, several days later, that bird is back, once again sitting as high as possible in the tree. Today it's breezy and it's a struggle for him to stay on that tiny twig, but he's clutching on and swaying with the breeze. He's determined to keep his view from the top. Are you?

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 2:6

<sup>2</sup> II Corinthians 12:2

<sup>3</sup> II Corinthians 4:18

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.saltrox.com/category/products/salt-blocks-products>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.massaginginsoles.com>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.brendacobbmurphy.com/Resources/Cardboard%20Christianity.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.elijahlist.com/words/display\\_word/8182](http://www.elijahlist.com/words/display_word/8182)