

Double Spectacles

By Bob Prichard

Patriot and diplomat Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790) was the greatest of the colonial scientists and inventors. He received several honorary doctoral degrees for his experiments, especially his demonstration regarding lightning and electricity.

I benefit from one of his later inventions—double spectacles. Tired of having to use one set of spectacles for distant viewing, and another for reading, Franklin had glass ground in two halves to produce “double spectacles”—what we call bifocals. I will never forget the evening when I knew I needed them. I was installing a ceiling fan, and as I went up and down the ladder to install the fan, I was constantly having to take my glasses on and off, as I dropped screws on the floor.

Bifocals remind us that we need to be able to look both up close and at a distance. Distant vision is certainly important: *“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known”* (1 Corinthians 13:12). *“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ”* (Philippians 3:20). We can say with Paul, *“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing”* (2 Timothy 4:8). Realizing that heaven will be worth it all, *“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling”* (Philippians 3:14).

Not only is that upward look of distant vision important, but I also need the “up close” vision to see my brother and his needs. *“But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?”* (1 John 3:17). *“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”* (1 John 4:20-21). I can’t keep my eyes on heaven without seeing the needs around me. What a blessing it is to have “double spectacles”!

Tychicus

(Excerpts from Bible.org)

Tychicus, whose name means “Lucky,” was a trustworthy servant of the Lord from Asia Minor. Along with some other men, he accompanied Paul on part of his third missionary journey (Acts 20:4). He was one of the men who helped take the collection to Jerusalem. He went to the trouble of going to Rome to be with Paul in his first imprisonment. Paul sent him to Asia with the letters to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon. He also escorted the runaway slave, Onesimus, who had become a Christian, back to his owner, Philemon. Tychicus was responsible to intervene before Philemon so that he would welcome Onesimus back as a brother, rather than punishing him as the law would have dictated. Later, Paul sent either Tychicus or Artemas to relieve Titus on the island of Crete (Titus 3:12). Tychicus was again with Paul in his second imprisonment. Paul sent him to Ephesus, freeing Timothy to try to get to the apostle’s side before he was executed (2 Timothy 4:9, 12).

Paul calls him a *faithful* minister in the Lord (Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7). It means that he was trustworthy. He kept his word. He did what he was assigned with integrity. Paul could entrust him with the weighty responsibility for the churches in Crete or in Ephesus and know that he would be responsible. In a day when it would have been easy to mishandle the large gift for the Jerusalem saints, Tychicus could be trusted to deliver it all without pocketing some of it for himself. He could be trusted to deliver safely the letters of Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon. He didn’t know that they would become a part of Scripture, but we have them in our New Testament today because Tychicus was a faithful man.

Faithfulness is a fruit of the Spirit that should mark every believer (Galatians 5:22), but it seems all too often that is lacking among Christians. It means that if we take on a responsibility, a leader does not need to prod us or check on us repeatedly to see if it got done. We do it “as unto the Lord” and report back to those who assigned it to let them know that it’s done. Faithfulness is a crucial part of caring relationships, because it means that if we say we’ll do something for someone, we do it. Others can count on me.