

Right Before My Eyes

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:2 ESV)

A brilliant summer sun was setting over Vermont's Green Mountain majesty, flinging a splendor of colors across the evening sky. As viewed through my sunglasses, the effect of the colors was even more striking—subdued, shifted slightly, and free of glare. A quick snapshot with my phone's camera recorded a great photo, but I wanted an excellent one. I wanted my camera to capture this moment as seen through my sunglasses.

So, I positioned the sunglasses directly in front of the camera and clicked. To my dismay, the camera refocused itself and took a picture of my sunglasses. I struggled with my camera over and over trying to get it to understand that it should think of my sunglasses as a filter, an extra lens, a camera attachment. But it insisted that the sunglasses themselves were the object to be photographed.

Exasperated, I had to concede that it was unable to distinguish lens from object. It obsessively kept on focusing on what was right in front of it instead of seeing the big picture and just using the sunglasses to color its view of the real object – that glorious sunset. Happily, after much struggling I did manage to trick it into focusing on the sunset and photographing through the sunglasses.

That's when I chuckled.

“Okay, Lord. I get the picture.”

Sometimes we are so focused on the immediate that we miss the long view. The Lord shows us far-off glories, and we miss them in our obsession over what lies immediately before us. Like the camera, we only focus our energy on the immediate, while missing what lies off in the distance. We focus on earthly things, instead of seeing them in the light of glory.

C.S. Lewis tells us that on the other side of the grave the power of heaven will work backward, redeeming and reshaping and glorifying all our earthly sorrows, turning them into joys. If we truly believe that and truly grasp that image, it sheds a totally different light on what we are enduring now for the sake of the gospel in this life.

The ultimate tomorrow shall one day indeed cast its splendor on the humdrum of today as well as the painful memories of days gone by. The apostle Paul accurately viewed his life through the lens of eternity; he called it “light affliction.”

We should too.



—J. James Mancuso
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