

**THE EVIL EYE:
WHAT IS IT & HOW DOES IT RELATE
TO THE CHRISTIAN OF TODAY?**

“Eat thou not the bread of HIM THAT HATH AN EVIL EYE...” Prov. 23:6

Although the phrase “evil eye” is rarely used today, it deserves a revival. When viewed in light of the Bible, the expression is not some archaic superstition, but one with deep meaning and substance. The saying encompasses a concept that is in no way outdated but highly relevant to twenty-first-century man. So what about THE EVIL EYE, what is it and what can we learn about it from Scripture?

THE EYE: GATEWAY TO THE MIND

In Scripture, the word “eye” is not always a reference to our literal “eyeball,” but more to the eye as A GATEWAY TO THE MIND. One of the best ways to think of the word “eye,” in these specific instances, is simply as a shortened version of “the mind’s eye.” Our MIND’S EYE constitutes the mental images we “see” in our minds. Thus, to have an “evil eye” means TO HAVE AN EVIL MIND AND TO THINK EVIL THOUGHTS:

“[22] The light of the body is THE EYE: if therefore thine EYE be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. [23] But IF THINE EYE BE EVIL, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” Matt. 6:22-23

When read alone these verses can seem confusing. But when read in context with the surrounding Scriptures, we find them accompanied by the phrases: “by taking thought;” “take no thought;” “take ye thought;” “take no thought;” “take no thought” (see Matthew 6:22-34). This means that

the phrase “if thine eye be evil,” has a direct connection to our THOUGHT LIFE.

THE EYE, THE MIND, & THE HEART

All of the following verses further demonstrate that to have an “evil eye” means to contemplate or entertain EVIL THOUGHTS:

“Beware that there be not A THOUGHT IN THINE WICKED HEART, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and THINE EYE BE EVIL against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.” Deu 15:9

“[6] Eat thou not the bread of HIM THAT HATH AN EVIL EYE, neither desire thou his dainty meats: [7] For AS HE THINKETH IN HIS HEART, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but HIS HEART IS NOT WITH THEE.” Pro. 23:6-7

“[20] And he [Jesus] said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. [21] For FROM WITHIN, OUT OF THE HEART of men, PROCEED EVIL THOUGHTS, adulteries, fornications, murders, [22] Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, AN EVIL EYE, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: [23] All these evil things COME FROM WITHIN, and defile the man.” Mk. 7:20-22

The book of Deuteronomy tells of the blessings Israel would reap if they continued to hearkened unto the Lord (Deut. 28:1-14). But accompanying this we also find God warning of the curses that would come upon them if they refused to obey (Deut. 28:15-68). Part of these curses involved Israel making vile choices due to the dire straits in which they found themselves. One of these choices involved Israel turning to CANNIBALISM:

[53] And THOU SHALT EAT the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of THY SONS and of THY DAUGHTERS, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee:

[54] So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, HIS EYE SHALL BE EVIL TOWARDS HIS BROTHER, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave:

[55] So that he will not give to any of them of THE FLESH OF HIS CHILDREN WHOM HE SHALL EAT: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates.

[56] The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, HER EYE SHALL BE EVIL toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter,

[57] And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for SHE SHALL EAT THEM for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.

DEUT. 28:53-57

These are some of the most stark verses in the word of God demonstrating the meaning of EVIL EYE. One of the curses placed upon Israel for abandoning the Lord and serving other gods, was a state of hunger and starvation. This state would be so severe that Scripture testifies that many in Israel would be tempted to eat their own family.

The temptation to commit such an abominable act is described as having an “evil eye.” This means that any evil thoughts that we entertain in our minds fall under the umbrella of “having an evil eye,” especially when one is determined to follow through with such thoughts.

SINGLE-MINDEDNESS IN OUR SERVICE TO GOD

“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore THINE EYE BE SINGLE, thy whole body shall be full of light.” Matt. 6:22

For an eye to be “single” is the opposite of being “double minded.” Thus, the phrase “thine eye be single” is in reference to a state of SINGLE-MINDEDNESS as opposed to one of hypocrisy. One of the great benefits of, not only salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, but in reading, believing, obeying, and loving the Bible is that IT KEEPS OUR MINDS PURGED of impure thoughts, and in turn, helps prevent the Christian from manifesting an “evil eye.” From this come such verses as:

“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with EYESERVICE, as menpleasers; but IN SINGLENESS OF HEART, fearing God:” Col 3:22 (see also Eph. 6:5)

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and PURIFY YOUR HEARTS, YE DOUBLE MINDED.” Jas 4:8

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are TRUE, whatsoever things are HONEST, whatsoever things are JUST, whatsoever things are PURE, whatsoever things are LOVELY, whatsoever things are OF GOOD REPORT; if there be any VIRTUE, and if there be any PRAISE, THINK ON THESE THINGS.” Php 4:8

In the sixth chapter of Genesis we find that the state of an evil eye was widespread in the days of Noah (Gen. 6:5). The New Testament not only declares that such days will return (Lk. 17:26), but that the evil eye will become more and more prominent prior to the Lord's return:

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. ...evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”
2Ti 3:1 & 13

While “evil eye” is not used explicitly in the above verse, nevertheless, it is evident that “evil men” contemplate and act upon EVIL THOUGHTS – ideas first harbored in their mind's eye.

So, as Scripture has now brought to light, the phrase “EVIL EYE” is not some old, outdated concept that needs casting aside, but quite the contrary. As long as sin exists, such a thing will continue to persist – well into the twenty-first century and beyond.

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