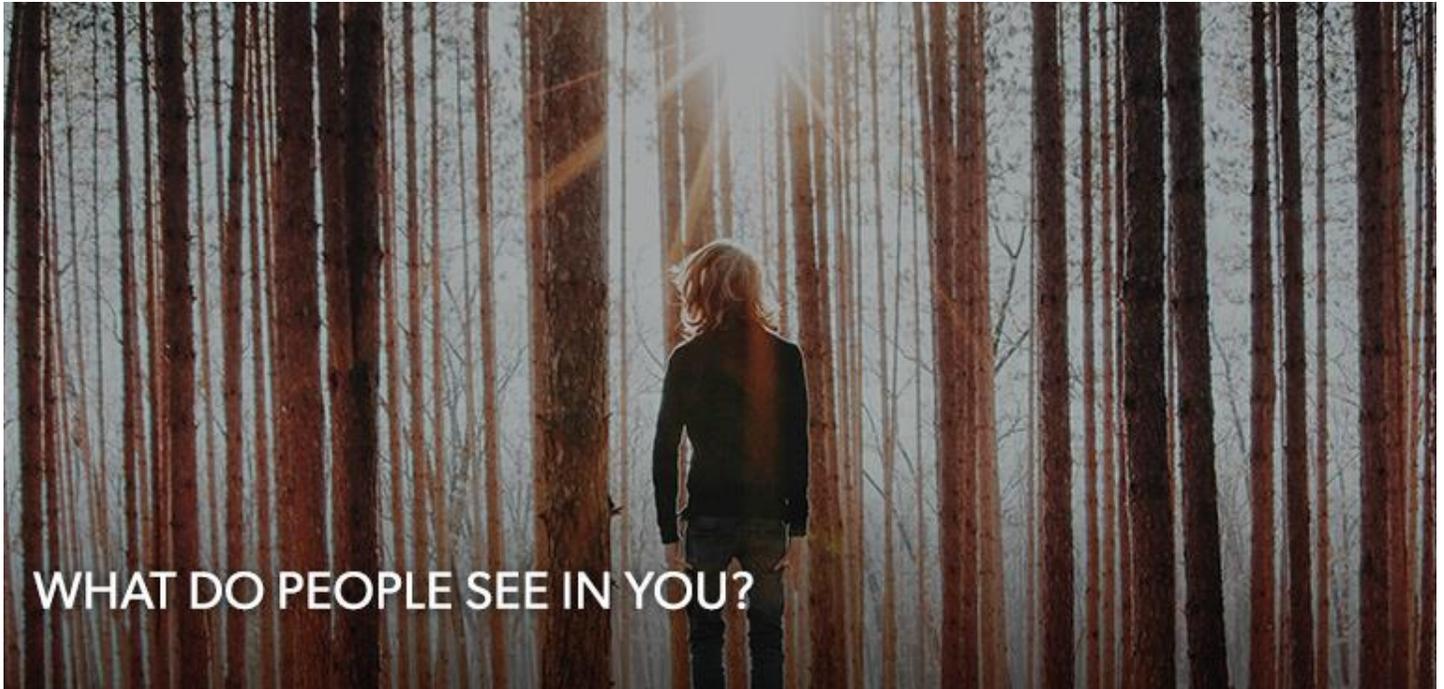


# What Do People See in You?

by Dr. Kevin Carson

July 24, 2017



Have you ever felt like someone was watching you? I have. That eerie feeling when you suspect someone's eyes are on you. Depending on where you are, your experience of this feeling changes. At home when I look up and see a five-year-old's eyes peering down at me in bed, I have sheer joy. This of course is much different than when riding a subway, walking down a dark sidewalk at night, or sitting in an empty house with the windows open and sense someone is watching.

The reality is that people do watch you. On normal days, however, we do not get the eerie sense of it; instead, we move throughout our day with little recognition of when, where, or who is watching. But they watch. As they do, they make assessments of who we are, what we are, and what we do. Paul captured the essence of this in 1 Timothy 4:15, "Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, *that your progress may be evident to all*" (emphasis mine).

What do people see in you?

# Joseph: A Case Study

Genesis records the life of Joseph. His story stands out in Genesis as one of the more pleasant ones to read. He faced challenges from every direction. Although innocent of any wrongdoing, he was hated and sold into slavery by his brothers, accused of adultery by an adulteress, and forgotten by those who could help him. Yet through all of this, Joseph remained faithful to God and those to whom he served.

All the while, people were watching.

As the story goes, Pharaoh has a bad day – actually a bad night. He does not sleep well because he has two troubling dreams (Genesis 41). The chief butler remembers Joseph and tells Pharaoh about Joseph's service to him and the chief chef in prison. Pharaoh calls for him, and in the power of God, Joseph interprets his dream. Read carefully Pharaoh's response:

“And Pharaoh said to his servants,  
‘Can we find such a one as this,  
a man in whom is the Spirit of God?’”  
– Genesis 41:38

This rhetorical question had only one response, “Absolutely not.” Joseph was the man Pharaoh needed to serve under him in this incredibly important position as his prime minister or vizier. He recognized that deity was the source of Joseph's wisdom.

This is of vital importance to the narrative. Pharaoh did not know or have respect for Joseph's God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He did not ask for Joseph's help because of who God is. He called for Joseph based upon his reputation. Upon hearing the butler's testimony and then Joseph's interpretation of the dream, Pharaoh recognized something different. He saw true wisdom.

## Joseph's Character and Conduct

***Joseph was God's kind of man.*** He faithfully followed God, trusted God, and served God even when his circumstances failed to please him. He responded well when sinned against by his brothers, sinned against by Potiphar's wife, and forgotten by the butler. Joseph enjoyed God's presence and experienced God's covenant faithfulness (Gen. 39:21). Regardless of the difficulty of the circumstance, Joseph walked with God.

***Joseph depended upon God's power and wisdom.*** Demonstrated multiple times, Joseph never took God's glory for his own. He never confused God's wisdom for his own. He never sought God's praise for his own. Joseph told Pharaoh, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer” (Gen. 41:16). The wisdom Joseph shared was from God. Joseph pointed Pharaoh to God; further, his attitude and speech demonstrated God's presence in him.

***Joseph spoke truth in love and applied it carefully.*** Often we think of speaking the truth in love as a New Testament command – which it is (Eph. 4:15). However, Joseph demonstrates this type of care and concern. Although there would be a natural fear of man when talking with Pharaoh, God gives Joseph the ability to speak honestly, courageously, and winsomely. Joseph not only gave Pharaoh the interpretation of the dream, he also provided simple, specific, insightful steps forward. Joseph presented more than just a problem to Pharaoh, he provided wisdom for persevering through Pharaoh's impending circumstances.

# Self-Assessment Questions for Counselors

- As you live life daily in the midst of your personal circumstances, do you respond to life in ways that lead others to notice your character and wisdom?
- Do you strive to be God's kind of person, tailoring your ideas and values according to godliness?
- Do you speak in ways that highlight the wisdom of God?
- Do you not only identify areas of needed growth and change in others but also stress biblical solutions and practical wisdom found in Christ?
- Do you have courage in Christ to speak with honesty, integrity, and boldness?
- Are you angry, bitter, and calloused toward God and people *or* are you sensitive, responsive, and kind through Christ toward others?
- When people sin against you purposefully or unintentionally, how do you respond?
- Do you wear your heart on your sleeve, *per se*? Are you easily offended? Do you show your offense to others?
- Do you want the attention and praise of others *or* are you joyfully purposeful in giving all glory to God?
- Do you desire for others to consider your wisdom *or* are you careful to point people to God's Word and wisdom in Christ?
- In considering your past five conversations, would someone respond, "Can we find such a one as this, a man or woman in whom is the Spirit of God?"

## Questions for Reflection

In your opinion, what other character traits would you add to your list for a counselor in whom is the Spirit of God?

*Kevin Carson (D.Min.) is a husband, dad of four, pastor, professor, blogger, author, and certified counselor. He loves serving Christ, his family, the body of Christ, and his community.*