

## 2 Corinthians 3:1-6; 12-18 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup>Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? <sup>2</sup>You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. <sup>3</sup>**And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.**

<sup>4</sup>Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. <sup>5</sup>Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, <sup>6</sup>who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. **For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.**

<sup>12</sup>Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, <sup>13</sup>not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. <sup>14</sup>But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. <sup>15</sup>Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. <sup>16</sup>But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. <sup>17</sup>**Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is (LIBERTY) freedom.** <sup>18</sup>**And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.**

*“The letter” refers to the Old Covenant Law, while “the spirit” refers to the New Covenant message of grace. Paul was reminding his readers that the Old Covenant Law could not give life; it was a ministry of death.*

### Galatians 3:21 (NASB)

<sup>21</sup>Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.

- *The Old Covenant Law, with its emphasis on external obedience, was preparation for the New Covenant message of grace and the emphasis on internal transformation of the heart. A legalistic ministry brings death. Only the grace of God, ministered by the Spirit of God, can transform lost sinners into living epistles that glorify Jesus Christ.*

### **But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. -----2 COR. 3:16**

1. Moses and his veil illustrate the fading of the old system and the veiling of the Jews' minds by their pride, hardness of heart, and refusal to repent. The veil kept many Jews from understanding the references to Christ in the Scriptures they heard every week.

2. The veil represents the sin that clouds the person's understanding about God's great plan of salvation. The idea of turning implies repentance—a conscious, deliberate rejection of one's old ways and a turning to God and his ways. The image of turning to God in the Old Testament always implies turning away from false gods (2 Chronicles 34:2; Psalm 53:3; Jeremiah 17:5).
3. When Moses turned to God, he removed the veil (Please read Exodus 34:34). In the same way, when a person turns to Christ—God's only Son—the *veil is taken away* by Christ himself.
4. But *in Christ* the veil is miraculously lifted. Just as the Lord had opened Paul's spiritual eyes to the truth about Jesus, the Holy Spirit would also open believers' eyes to how Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures.
5. When anyone *turns to the Lord* and becomes a Christian, Jesus removes the veil, giving that person not only understanding of the true meaning of the Scriptures but also eternal life and freedom from trying to be saved by keeping laws. Jesus saves the person not only from sin but from the ignorance that his or her sin has created.

All Christians can behold God's glory without any *veil* covering them. Unlike the Jews, who had to rely on priests to mediate between them and God, Christians through Christ's saving work on the cross have direct access to the Father (Ephesians 2:18).

The Greek word translated "mirrors" can be interpreted in two different ways:

- It can either mean "to behold oneself in a mirror" or "to reflect as a mirror does."

Some scholars suggest that the primary contrast Paul was making here is that Christians can behold God's glory, unlike their Jewish counterparts who rejected Christ.

- The New Living Translation, however, translates the idea that Christians functioned like a mirror. Thus, under the new covenant, all believers can *reflect the glory of the Lord*. In contrast, under the old covenant only Moses had access to the Lord's presence and thus could reflect his glory. But now all Christians can be like Moses. Thus, when Christians, who are given access to the Father through Christ's work, look at God's glory, **they begin to reflect his holy character in their lives. As a result of this encounter with God, they are forever changed.**

**MONDAY MORNING MOMENT: ACTION STEP** - *"The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to reveal the heart of God within the people of God"*

**EZEKIEL 36:26 - 27 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup>AND I WILL GIVE YOU A NEW HEART, AND A NEW SPIRIT I WILL PUT WITHIN YOU. AND I WILL REMOVE THE HEART OF STONE FROM YOUR FLESH AND GIVE YOU A HEART OF FLESH.

<sup>27</sup>AND I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT WITHIN YOU, AND CAUSE YOU TO WALK IN MY STATUTES AND BE CAREFUL TO OBEY MY RULES.

<b>The Old and New Covenants</b>		
<b>The Old Covenant under Moses</b>	<b>The New Covenant in Christ</b>	<b>Application</b>
Gifts and sacrifices by those guilty of sin	Self-sacrifice by the guiltless Christ	Christ died for you.
Focused on a physical building where one goes to worship	Focuses on the reign of Christ in the heart	God is directly involved in your life.
A shadow	A reality	Not temporal but eternal.
Limited promises	Limitless promises	We can trust God's promises to us.
Failed agreement by people	Faithful agreement by Christ	Christ has kept the agreement where people couldn't.
External standards and rules	Internal standards—a new heart	God sees both actions and motives—we are accountable to God, not rules.
Limited access to God	Unlimited access to God	God is personally available.
Based on fear	Based on love and forgiveness	Forgiveness keeps our failures from destroying the agreement.
Legal cleansing	Personal cleansing	God's cleansing is complete.
Continual sacrifice	Conclusive sacrifice	Christ's sacrifice was perfect and final.
Forgiveness earned	Forgiveness freely given	We have true and complete forgiveness.
Repeated yearly	Completed by Christ's death	Christ's death can be applied to your sin.
Human effort	God's grace	Initiated by God's love for you.
Available to some	Available to all	Available to you.