

"The veil no one needs"

2 Corinthians 3: 7-18 NLT

"The old way, with laws etched in stone, led to death, though it began with such glory that the people of Israel could not bear to look at Moses' face. For his face shone with the glory of God, even though the brightness was already fading away. 8 Shouldn't we expect far greater glory under the new way, now that the Holy Spirit is giving life? 9 If the old way, which brings condemnation, was glorious, how much more glorious is the new way, which makes us right with God! 10 In fact, that first glory was not glorious at all compared with the overwhelming glory of the new way. 11 So if the old way, which has been replaced, was glorious, how much more glorious is the new, which remains forever!

"12 Since this new way gives us such confidence, we can be very bold. 13 We are not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so the people of Israel would not see the glory, even though it was destined to fade away. 14 But the

people's minds were hardened, and to this day whenever the old covenant is being read, the same veil covers their minds so they cannot understand the truth. And this veil can be removed only by believing in Christ. 15 Yes, even today when they read Moses' writings, their hearts are covered with that veil, and they do not understand.

"16 But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image."

As you probably noticed, this text is about change.

Change takes place around us.

Our bodies change.

Our loved ones change.

Our surroundings constantly change.

We talk often about changing for the better.

Yet we feel a certain security in having things remain the same.

Change requires extra effort we are not always willing to expend.

Making changes can be a little scary.

Really positive change is rare, isn't it?

Let's take a quick survey.

Don't worry; this is for your eyes only.

I don't ask you to tell me or anyone else the results.

This survey asks your choice of neighbors.

Which of the following would your prefer as neighbors?

In this survey, you choose your prospective neighbors based on their behavior and actions; not on their color, birthplace, parentage, or language.

Would you like the following group of people as your neighbors?

These folks get involved in:

- porno stuff and indecent activities;
- they worship the sun & follow astrology;

- they practice witchcraft;
- they stir hatred and fighting;
- they argue, are jealous and angry;
- money comes first to them;
- they complain, criticize, and think only of their own needs and opinions;
- they are constantly drunk, or high, and hold wild parties.

If would like to have neighbors like this, mark "yes" for your group one preference.

Group two consists of a different type of neighbors and co-workers.

These neighbors and coworkers are:

- loving,
- joyful,
- peaceable,
- patient,
- kind,
- thoughtful,
- humble,
- and self-controlled.

Mark "yes" or "no" for group two.

Most of us live in neighborhoods that have mixes of people, true?

You also know a second truth: The majority of us struggle to be completely:

- loving,
- joyful,
- peaceable,
- patient,
- kind,
- thoughtful,
- humble,
- and self-controlled.

The third truth is:

Some of us like ourselves just as we are.

Yet many of us would like to improve.

How can we change?

Regardless of our age or condition, there's good news: positive change is doable.

**Our text tells us how to bring it about.
Real change involves topics that few people ever link together:**

Did you ever connect these three topics: laws, veils, and an apocalypse?

You heard it right: laws, veils, and an apocalypse

Our text strongly connects this trio.

1. Jesus spoke often about laws.

We tend to use laws in two different modes.

Most Christians seem not to know the distinction between the two ways.

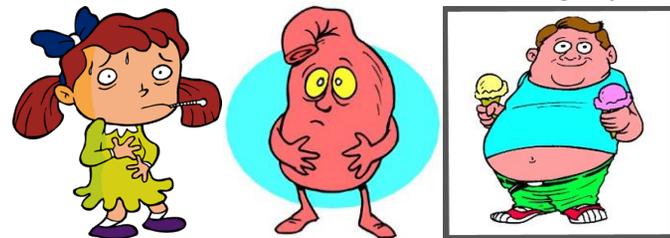
One way frustrates you.

The other method strengthens you.

The Corinthians once knew correct way.

They either forgot it.

Or someone talked them out of living by that mode.



It's as if 95% of Christians have a huge bellyache.

They consult doctors and take mega medicines.

No medication or advice cures the pains.

This agonizing, almost universal stomach

soreness among Christians seems incurable.

Someone finally discovers a simple explanation for all the pain.

Germs, viruses, rotten food, intestinal problems, or bad medicine do not cause the bellyaches.

Christians suffer pains because they wear their girdles and belts too tight.

The solution is that simple.

Loosen the belts and girdles; the pain stops.

How do I know this?

For years I suffered bellyaches of that sort.

Trying to obey Christ the wrong way—as if I wore a super-tight belt—that caused the problem.

Would you like to hear what mistake I made?

You know the law related word “covenant.”

A covenant is a formal agreement between two parties.

Marriage is a “covenant.”

Recall those covenant vows?

“Will you take him?”- “Will you take her?”

“Yes, I take him.” “Yes, I take her.”

In 2 Corinthians, Paul mentioned two covenants:

First is the love covenant God made with Israel.

It was like a marriage covenant

He would be their God.

Israel would be his people.

According to that covenant, the people had to:

- “Date” no other God.
- Treat one another right.

The Ten Commandments specified those goals.

- Don’t be “going out” with any other God.
- Treat one another fairly.

Experience proves: laws slightly control behavior.

Yet laws rarely make people better.

Hundreds of thousands of laws and statutes have been passed to control our behavior.

On some laws, this land’s greatest jurists split 5-4.

At times a law’s legality is decided by politics or money—I’m not sure there’s always a distinction.

Does evidence show that people are changing for the better as a result of a million laws?

The Lord clearly specified the conduct he wanted.

Yet the 10 Commands did not make Israel good.

- The Israelites cheated on God.
- They cheated one another.

- They cheated in their marriages.

The Israelites broke the vows they made to God.

So the Lord revoked his covenant with them.

“‘The time is coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant . . .’”¹

No law or set of laws, not even the Ten Commandments, ever made anyone better.

2. Our next word is “veil.”

Veils usually hide something.

Oft-times brides wear veils today.

The veil we’re talking about is one a guy wore.



For a time Moses wore a veil.

Kind of weird—a guy wearing a veil, right?

When God gave Moses the covenant rules, Moses

¹ Jeremiah 31: 31, 32 NIV, Exodus 34: 28 identifies this covenant as the Ten Commandments: “And he (Moses) wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments.” According to Hebrews 8:7-13, the Ten Commandments are obsolete.

spent a lot of time with God.

Moses spent so much time with the Lord, his face glowed.

God’s glory glistened in Moses’ face.

He probably looked radioactive.

“Moses, you look scary. Wear a veil!” people said.

The glory wore off.

So Moses quit wearing the veil.

Moses temporarily wore the veil.

Like makeup to hide your flaws.

God’s glory in Moses’ face lasted about as long as Israel’s faithfulness to God.

It lasted about as long as a hair permanent.

Let’s summarize to this point.

We know that we and the world need to change.

Laws don’t always make us better or even act better.

On that point, I ran into trouble.

Jesus brought God’s new covenant...

Jesus is God’s New Covenant.

Many preachers view the New Covenant as a new set of laws that Jesus gave—the New Testament.

“Follow the laws of Jesus and the Apostles” they

say. In addition, each church creates its own set of laws. Church leaders write thousands of them.

The New Testament does not teach this and neither did Jesus.

Church leaders who teach this wear veils and attempt to veil us.

Veils cover and hide things.

If they try to bind the Ten Commandments on us, they put us in double jeopardy

See v. 16 in our text: "Whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away."

- **In which direction are you "turned?"**
- **Have you removed your "veil" and turned fully to Jesus so you can imitate him?**
- **Is your head turned and "veiled" by allegiance to a political party, a professor, a church leader, or some eminent person?**
- **Is making money your number one goal?**
- **Is your ambition to make a name for yourself or to do your own thing?**

Fear, anxiety, and bitterness turn many folks.

Most of us keep expecting the world and the people around us to change.

Most politicians promise to transform (change) society.

Jesus looks each of us in the eye insisting: "Follow me," i.e., "You must change."

He expects us to follow his standards: "For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord."

Until we turn to Jesus and concentrate on him, we can't become what God planned for us.

By focusing on Jesus and modelling him, we attain our full potential.

Do your actions and thoughts reflect Jesus?

"18 So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image."

Did you notice the change that takes place as we see and reflect the Lord’s image?

The word metamorphosis comes from the term in the original here.

The new Merriam-Webster Dictionary fittingly defines that as a “change of physical form, structure, or substance, especially by supernatural means.”

As God transforms us, He works wonders in us.

We don’t try to keep a bunch of laws.

We work to become like Jesus.

When we believe in Christ, trust him and follow him, he removes all veils.

The six Greek words below all derive from the stem meaning “conceal” or “cover.”²

καλύπτω, κάλυμμα, ἀνακαλύπτω,

κατακαλύπτω, ἀποκαλύπτω,

ἀποκάλυψις

Our 2 Corinthians text uses the second word

² *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Volume III, p 556. article by Albrecht Oepke, Leipzig

pronounced kaluma (head covering or veil).

The last two of the six words begin with a prefix, which reverses their meaning.

They mean “reveal” or “uncover”

The word “apocalypse,” comes from these words.

“Apocalypse” simply means to unveil something—the opposite of cover or hide.³

When the veil comes of, what is revealed?

In a true apocalypse (v. 18), we get rid of all the things that veil our eyes and minds from Christ.

When we put Christ’s love, purity, and forgiveness, wondrous things happen.

The apocalypse of Jesus will be a great moment for those who love him and have tried to become like him.



This is not an accurate apocalyptic picture.

³ *Ibid.*

Enhance your understanding of today' text by reading on.

(2 Corinthians 4:1-7 NLT):

"¹ Therefore, since God in his mercy has given us this new way, we never give up. ² We reject all shameful deeds and underhanded methods. We don't try to trick anyone or distort the word of God. We tell the truth before God, and all who are honest know this.

³ If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing. ⁴ Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.

"⁵ You see, we don't go around preaching about ourselves. We preach that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we ourselves are your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, 'Let there be light in the darkness,' has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

"⁷ We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves."

God bless as you become like Jesus.

Survey for your eyes only.

Would you like to have Group One as your neighbors and co-workers?

Yes__

No __

Would you prefer to have Group Two as your neighbors and co-workers?

Yes__

No __

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