

FREE AT LAST!

2 Corinthians 3:7-18

The Christian life can be pure drudgery if it is attempted in the power of human effort alone. It would be like trying to drive a car without a motor. The car might look good on the outside, but without a motor on the inside, no one would want to drive it. In verses 7-18, Paul describes the power source of the Christian life. Study these verses and discover what that power source is.

I. The Old and New Covenant Contrasted 3:7-11

II. The Results of Being Partakers of the New Covenant 3:12-18

WHAT DOES IT SAY?



Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone,

came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, ⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? ⁹ If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! ¹⁰ For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. ¹¹ And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Why is the Old Covenant called a "ministry that brought death?" (Compare: Rom. 3:19,20; Gal. 3:10-14).

What is the "ministry of the Spirit"? (Compare: John 16:7-15; Rom. 8:1-11).

Consider the following contrasts between the Old and New Covenants:

OLD COVENANT	NEW COVENANT
written on stone	written on hearts
external	internal
outward precept	inward power
ministry of death	ministry of life
transitory	permanent
law	grace
guilt	freedom

What makes the New Covenant superior to the Old? (see Hebrews 3:3 and 8:6)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

¹² Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. ¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. ¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect* the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

* (NOTE: many Bible versions, such as the New American Standard, translate “reflect” in verse 18 as “behold”. Although both are possible from the Greek, “behold” is probably better.)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

What was the “hope” (vs 12) that gave Paul boldness?

Why do you think that Moses put a veil over his face? (see Exodus 34:29-35).

What is the veil that lies over the heart of the Jew? (Read Romans 9:30-10:13)

How does turning to the Lord remove the veil?

“Freedom” (verse 17) - from what?

Verse 18 describes a process known in theological terms as “**sanctification**”. Do some research, find out what sanctification means, and write your own definition:

The Greek word for “**transformed**” (verse 18) is the word we get “**metamorphosis**” from.

“As believers behold the Lord’s glory, now that the veil of spiritual dullness is removed, they are continually being transformed into His image. The word describes a change of form. The true nature of the child of God is progressively revealed, just as the process of metamorphosis transforms a caterpillar into a butterfly.”

Homer A. Kent,

A Heart Opened Wide: Studies in 2 Corinthians

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

In your own words, summarize the main point of this passage.



LIFE RESPONSE

How is God asking you to put this into action in your life this week?



The word “*bold*” in verse 12 can also be translated “*open*”. Is your life characterized by openness and freedom (verse 17)? If not, why not? If so, what has helped you become that way?

“Freedom is being out in the open; it is the boldness of having nothing to hide. The man who is free has no reputation to defend, no image to hide behind, nothing to preserve about himself. He can be himself.”

Ray Stedman, [Authentic Christianity](#)