

UNVEILED  
*Faces*



*study number three*



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# UNVEILED

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## *Faces*



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### A Study of 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

*Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 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 (2 Corinthians 3:17-18).*

Lesson One - The Lord is the Spirit

Lesson Two - LIBERTY!

Lesson Three - Veils and Mirrors

Lesson Four - Wonderful Transformation

## *Lesson One*

### **The Lord is the Spirit**

*Now the Lord is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17a).*

I don't know about you, but some days I don't feel very bright. There are just some days when I don't bounce out of bed with a song in my heart, praise on my lips and a skip in my step. Those of you who know me may find that statement difficult to believe. I've lost count of the number of people who have told me (and some not so jokingly) that I **really** should stay away from all forms of caffeine.

Be that as it may, those less-than-bright days happen. They happen to all of us. It could be attributed to our circumstances or stress load. At other times, it's a heaviness of the soul or a specific spiritual battle. However, those less-than-bright days thankfully do not define our perpetual spiritual state.

In His divine wisdom, God has given us His Holy Spirit to be our intercessor, comforter and power source. When we find ourselves less than bright, the Holy Spirit gives us the spiritual vision to see God's hand in any circumstance. We may be feeling **off**, but the Holy Spirit is always **on**.

Take a moment to write out 2 Corinthians 3:17-18:



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Now read these verses aloud. They represent our memory verses for this study. I encourage you to write them on index cards and place them in various locations where you spend the most time.

In this first lesson, we focus on 2 Corinthians 3:17a: *Now the Lord is the Spirit*. That may seem too simple to spend an entire lesson on, but it is packed with deep meaning for us. The Greek word for **Spirit** used each time in 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 is *pneuma*, which primarily denotes the wind or breath.

The Spirit is the person of the Trinity who is literally the breath of God in us. We come to know and love God through the work of the Holy Spirit within us. We gain a glimpse of God's character through Jesus, but it is the Spirit who enables our relationship with Him. The Lord comes to us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

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In our humanity, we cannot live without oxygen. In our spiritual lives, we cannot live without the breath of the Holy Spirit in us. Just as oxygen gives life to our body, so the Spirit gives life to our soul:

2 Corinthians 3:6 \_\_\_\_\_

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John 6:63 \_\_\_\_\_

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The Spirit is **life** in us. As the Apostle Paul penned these words for us in 2 Corinthians, he points out that, as New Testament believers, the Holy Spirit sets us free from the veil that hides God from us. The Spirit has set us free!

Before Jesus' death and resurrection, there was a curtain (literally) that separated man from entering into the Holy of Holies in the temple. Once a year, the high priest would enter that sacred place to offer sacrifices for the people's sin. But with that veil removed because of Jesus' sacrifice, we now have unveiled access to God. What significance does that freedom have for you today?

Who exactly is the Holy Spirit? Learning and attempting to understand the Holy Spirit's work and ministry has been a long road for me. How do you explain the breath of God? I believe I'm not alone in having difficulty, so through the rest of this lesson we'll really dig deeply in order to better understand the Spirit's work in our lives.

(Pause here for a moment to pray and ask God for clarity of mind and a teachable spirit as we continue in our study.)

The historic and prevailing doctrine of the Christian Church, in accordance with the Scriptures, has been that the Holy Spirit is a person distinct from the Father and the Son, though united to both in the mysterious oneness of the Trinity. He is not simply a personification or figurative expression for divine energy or operation, but an intelligent agent, possessed of self-consciousness and freedom.

The Holy Spirit is the author of our spiritual vision who enables us to see the powerful working of God in, through and among us. He is the sole author and creator of our faith. Scripture is clear that believers alone possess that incredible privilege.

Ponder each of the following Scripture passages regarding our spiritual vision:

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Job 42:5 \_\_\_\_\_

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Isaiah 29:18 \_\_\_\_\_

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Matthew 5:8 \_\_\_\_\_

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John 14:19 \_\_\_\_\_

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The ministry and work of the Holy Spirit is of paramount importance in every believer's spiritual walk. Although there are others, let's look at three specific ministries and works of the Holy Spirit:

**1) The Spirit bore an important part in the coming of Christ in the flesh and anointing Him for His work:**

Luke 1:35 \_\_\_\_\_

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John 3:34 \_\_\_\_\_

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The Holy Spirit was the one who visited Mary to bring about the birth of Christ. God sends the Holy Spirit to us to convey His power, instruction and strength, so that we can follow the path that He has ordained for us.

**2) The Spirit is the revealer of all divine truth. The Scriptures are especially the product of the Holy Spirit:**

Micah 3:8 \_\_\_\_\_

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John 16:13 \_\_\_\_\_

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2 Timothy 3:16 \_\_\_\_\_

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2 Peter 1:21 \_\_\_\_\_

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Through the Holy Spirit, God enables us to hear, understand and teach His truths in His power. Aside from the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we would be utterly lost. The Holy Spirit translates for us the words of God.

- 3) The Holy Spirit moves upon the hearts and consciences of all men, revealing truth with His power wherever it is known, and even where it is not known, affording some measure of divine light and gracious influence:**

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 \_\_\_\_\_

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John 16:7-11 \_\_\_\_\_

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These verses affirm that we do not become wise about the truths and commands of God without the power of the Holy Spirit moving in us. He is our Counselor. The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin, so that we understand our need for a Savior. He continually encourages and draws us back to God.

In your own words, what have you come to understand in light of these passages about the ministry of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and graciously aids us in repentance and faith. He regenerates, comforts, and sanctifies believers. In this particular age, from Pentecost to the Second Coming, the Holy Spirit performs a special work in every believer the moment he or she receives saving faith in Christ.

When we receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at our baptism, we are sealed unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30) and given the spiritual vision to behold God's miraculous movement in our lives.

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How have you seen God moving in your life this week?

As we go forward over the next three lessons, I pray that this week's study has laid a foundational understanding of the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

To that end, write in your own words the Holy Spirit's identity and His work in your life (see 1 Corinthians 12:3).

Let's review our Bible memory verses for this study. Write out 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 once more:



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The reality of God's presence is brought to God's people by God's Spirit. That's one reality we literally cannot live without.

***Close with prayer:***

✠Father, thank You for sending Your Spirit to me. I pray that You continue to lead and guide me through Your Spirit to accomplish every good work that You have ordained for me. In Jesus' name, Amen. ✠



## *Lesson Two*

### **LIBERTY!**

*And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom*  
(2 Corinthians 3:17b).

On March 23, 1775, Patrick Henry uttered these immortal words, “Give me liberty or give me death”! That phrase has rung out over the centuries as a call to arms to risk everything for freedom.

As Christians, that phrase takes on a whole new meaning. Without Jesus’ saving work on Calvary to proclaim freedom for the captives, we would indeed have death - eternally. So, rather than a call to arms, it’s a call to praise. We were captive to sin, but in Jesus we are free from its bondage. FREEDOM.

There are few words in the English language that contain such rich and passionate meaning. We are no longer destined to be confined or defined by sin. Our identity is in Christ – and Christ is LIFE, LIBERTY and FREEDOM. Hallelujah!!

Take a moment to write our study’s memory verses from 2 Corinthians 3:17-18:



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In this second lesson, we turn our attention to 2 Corinthians 3:17b: *and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom*. The King James translation states, *and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*. **Liberty** - another wonderfully powerful word. We are blessed to live in a country that affords us incredible liberties. But those liberties came at a price. That price tag included war, loss of life and families torn apart.

In our spiritual lives, Satan loves war. Spiritual warfare is not something to be taken lightly. The day we were baptized, Satan placed a target on our backs. His specific goal is our ultimate destruction. Period.

He tempts us over and over throughout our lives to lure us away from God and His ways and into false belief, despair and other great sins. Satan’s goal is to trick us into believing His deceitful lies that we have sinned too great and have no right to be recipients of God’s grace and favor. He tempts us, tricks us, and then tells on us in the hope that shame will cause us to never approach God again.

You see, Satan is into slavery.

Jesus is into freedom.

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Jesus volunteered to be our one-for-all sacrifice so that we could experience life and liberty in Him. He removed our veil, so that we can behold His majesty.

One of the main missions of Christians is to proclaim spiritual liberty for those who do not believe that Jesus lived, died, rose again, and has gone to prepare a place for all believers in heaven:

Galatians 5:13-14 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Revelation 1:5-7 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The liberty that Jesus' sacrifice provided was a spiritual liberty. Freedom from the oppression that Satan shoves our direction every time we turn a corner. There are many aspects of spiritual liberty for those who believe in the saving work of Jesus:

- **The bondage of sin is broken.**

Acts 13:38-39 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Romans 8:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- **God's truth has set us free.**

John 8:32 \_\_\_\_\_  
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Romans 6:22-23 \_\_\_\_\_

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This freedom that Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 3:17b is the kind of freedom that comes with salvation in Christ. The Greek word for **liberty** or **freedom** is *eleutheria*, which refers to the liberty to do or omit things having no relationship to salvation.

The political concept of freedom in the Greek world was partly fashioned by the contrast to slavery. Slaves belong to others, not themselves. God's children are free because we are no longer slaves to the prince of this world. We have a kingdom focus and calling.

In Hellenism, the philosophical concept of freedom takes the form of independent self-determination. Finding freedom required an exploration of one's inward nature.

As Christians, retreating into inwardness does not bring freedom. Our sin causes us to be inwardly defective, so inward self-examination without God as part of the equation is simply to grasp a defective existence. But when, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we grasp the divine, He guides and directs us towards true freedom in Him.

When I looked up the word *liberty* in the Vine's Dictionary, it says: "*see* **FREE.**" Sweet! In Christ, we can behold and see our freedom.

What affirmation does Galatians 5:1 give us?

God has set the captives (us) free! Since we have been set free, does that mean we have free reign to do exactly as we please regardless of consequence? Absolutely not. Jesus did not set us free to simply have a party.

We have freedom for a specific purpose:

Galatians 5:13 \_\_\_\_\_

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1 Peter 2:16 \_\_\_\_\_

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In our freedom, we are to live lives that serve God and lead others to Him. Our lives are to reflect His glory in us. We are not meant to blend in with the indistinct masses. We are to live distinctly godly lives that draw others to desire the love, peace, and freedom (liberty) of God.

What are some ways that the Holy Spirit enables you to live distinctly for God?

The presence of the Holy Spirit secures spiritual liberty for us.

What does Romans 8:9-10 tell us?

So let's break this down to where the rubber hits the road and take time pondering some tough questions. We all struggle with sin. Yet even when we wrestle with a particular sin (and all signs point to it), we still have trouble at times admitting it and giving that struggle over to Christ.

What area of your life do you most struggle with allowing Christ's freedom to direct your life?

What is stopping you from turning that struggle over to God?

We battle our sin nature every single day, but we don't have to battle it alone. Whether we struggle with an addiction, attitude or pet sin, Christ in us provides the strength to overcome.

We are called to trust in Christ for **all** things at **all** times. Does that make it easy? Absolutely **not**. Saying that we've given our struggles over to Christ is a whole lot easier from the throat up than living it from the soul

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up. It's easy to profess many things, but honestly living them out requires trust and faith in Christ. That's why the cross was so critical. The cross is the ultimate picture of God's love and grace towards His beloved children. Christ died to set us free from the sin struggles that separate us from Him.

(Pause here for a minute. Ask God to identify clearly your greatest spiritual struggle toward freedom that you identified above. Take some time now to lay down that struggle before God in prayer. Ask for His power to prevail over it once and for all.)

Let's review our Bible memory verses for this study. Write out 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 once more:



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Freedom. Liberty. It is for **freedom** that Christ set us free. We have been freed from living a defeated life of captivity. You and I are not destined to be confined or defined by sin. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we have the incredible privilege to live lives of freedom and praise for our King. Hear the words of the hymn "Lead On, O King Eternal" as we close out this lesson:

Lead on, O King eternal, till sin's fierce war shall cease  
And holiness shall whisper the sweet amen of peace.  
For not with swords loud clashing, nor roll of stirring drums,  
With deeds of love and mercy, the heavenly kingdom comes.

### *Close with prayer:*

✠Father, a simple "thank you" seems so inadequate for the freedom that You have given me. The price of my freedom was Your Son's life. I am speechless at so great a love demonstrated to me. Remind me that the power to defeat the enemy lies not with me, but with You. Help me to take refuge and courage in that wonderful truth. In Jesus' name, Amen. ✠

## *Lesson Three*

### **Veils and Mirrors**

*and we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory*  
(2 Corinthians 3:18a).

Did you spend some time in front of the mirror this morning? As I was getting ready to head to work this morning, I checked the mirror to ensure that my hair was fixed just so, my makeup was even, and my clothes actually matched.

However, have you noticed that on days we don't have to be anywhere in particular (other than puttering around the house) we don't take quite as much care with our physical appearance? I have pants that I **love** to wear around the house or while I'm working in the garden. You know the ones I'm talking about. Worn in just right, maybe a spot or two of paint on them, and slightly faded after all the trips through the washing machine.

However, I stop short of wearing them out amongst the general public. Why? On some level you and I care about how others perceive us. That's why we all spend time in front of the looking glass (to use a term from my grandmother's era).

But there is something else. Something God's children have that cannot be seen in a simple mirror: His glory. Scripture tells us that we have **become** the mirror that reflects the glory of the Lord living in us. That's a wonderful yet sobering truth. Sobering because others glimpse Jesus through our words and actions.

Take a moment to reflect on your behavior towards others over the past 48 hours. What did others perceive in you? In the midst of life's hustle and bustle, do we consistently reflect His glory to others?

Take a moment to write our memory verses from 2 Corinthians 3:17-18:



In this third lesson, we move on to 2 Corinthians 3:18a: *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory*. There's something about the word **unveiled** which causes most of us to hesitate. It's not a word that fosters a sense of security, does it? Rather, it tends to raise up a certain level of insecurity and vulnerability.

Webster's defines unveiled as, **revealed to public knowledge or scrutiny; to make evident**. Personally, there are some things that I would prefer not be made known publicly. We all have certain thoughts and actions that would cause us great shame were they to be displayed on the HD screen in Times Square. What thoughts or actions would you not want to be unveiled for public scrutiny?

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The King James Version of 2 Corinthians 3:18a says, *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord.* Significantly, **this** is the **only** time in all of Scripture that the phrase **beholding as in a glass** occurs. It means that we are to be mirrors that reflect God's glory. I don't know about you, but that causes me to pause and think about what exactly my mirror reflects.

In the Greek, the KJV word **open** (*anakalypto*) means "to unveil, to uncover by drawing back the veil." The purpose of a veil is to conceal or cover. Where there is a veil, God's glory cannot be reflected.

How many times a week do we veil or conceal the amazing ways that God moves in our lives because it's not a **cool** conversation in a crowd? When we veil His glory and take credit for His working in our lives, we rob God of the glory He rightly deserves.

What does 1 Chronicles 16:24 mandate? \_\_\_\_\_

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In the Old Testament when Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments, his face radiated the Lord's glory after their encounter. In fact, the Lord's glory was so bright that Moses had to wear a veil so that the people wouldn't be afraid. Write down what stands out to you as you read Exodus 34:29-35:

Did you notice that beholding the glory of the Lord caused Moses' face to literally radiate? The Israelites were fearful when they saw the glory of the Lord reflected in Moses' face.

Why?

In light of the Lord's glory, they were acutely aware of their sinful state. And they weren't even getting the full impact of the Lord's glory! They were getting a reflection that was quickly dimming or fading and still they begged Moses to veil himself.

When people get a glimpse of God's glory, they also get a glimpse of how far they fall short of His goodness. Just bring up God or how He's moving in your life in a secular crowd and watch what happens. Fidgeting. Averted eyes. Outright glares of anger. The subject is quickly changed. No one likes to see themselves through

God's eyes because we see every blemish, flaw, and failure.

But God looks at His children through the blood of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. He sees us holy and without blemish!

As New Testament believers (who live by grace through the Gospel of Christ), we can be bold in, not afraid of, the glory of God revealed in Jesus.

**Read 2 Corinthians 3:7-16.** What differences do you see in those verses from those in Exodus 34 above?

Do you remember the song, "This Little Gospel Light of Mine?" It refers to the light of the Lord's glory that we are to reflect as His children. Here are the main lyrics (omitting the repeated phrases):

This little Gospel light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
Hide it under a bushel? No! I'm gonna let it shine.  
Don't let Satan blow it out, I'm gonna let it shine!  
All around the neighborhood, I'm gonna let it shine.  
Let it shine till Jesus comes, I'm gonna let it shine,  
Let it shine, let it shine, all the time.

Do we let His light shine **all** the time? Honestly? The busyness of our days and the pressures of living in today's culture sometimes dims that shine, doesn't it? It takes a lot of focus to get that light out from under the bushel where we've hidden it. It takes courage to take that lampshade off and let His light shine.

We are called to be God's light in a dark world to reflect His glory to those around us – not to cause fear, but to foster hope. The hope that what our eyes see is *not* all there is to life.

In our verse for this lesson, the word **beholding** (Greek – *katoptrizo*) refers to beholding, reflecting, or looking at in a mirror. So what is it that others behold in us? The Lord's glory living in us or something else? The glory of the Lord is often described as splendor, brightness, excellence and grace. What amazing things to behold!

What does Matthew 5:14, 16 tell us?

How do your actions and deeds reflect His glory to the world?



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God's glory is indeed quite something to behold. If you've seen it, you know what I mean. When the light and working of God is so bright in a person that we no longer see the person. Our gaze is directed straight into the throne room of God!

The glory of the Lord is often referred to in Scripture as *Shekinah* -- the visible manifestation of God's presence. The *Shekinah* is the supernatural light (or cloud) which appeared on the mercy seat or atonement cover of the ark of the covenant; the place where God's presence rested when He guided the Israelites in the desert. List where you see God's *shekinah* shining in the following verses:

Exodus 13:21-22 \_\_\_\_\_

Exodus 40:35 \_\_\_\_\_

Leviticus 16:2 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 2:9 \_\_\_\_\_

There is another veil recorded in Scripture. It was the veil or curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (or Most Holy Place) in the Old Testament tabernacle.

We see in Exodus where God directed Moses regarding the precise construction of the tabernacle. He instructed Moses to shield His presence (or glory) from the people by a heavy curtain. Take a moment to read about this veil or curtain in Exodus 26:30-34. What strikes you in these verses?

The ark of the covenant was the only item inside the Holy of Holies where God's presence would rest. From there, God imparted instructions to Moses. The ark was the heart of the tabernacle. The most sacred place.

In Exodus 39:21-40:35, God lined out with great specificity how the tabernacle was to be constructed and set up. And when the items for the tabernacle had all been completed according to God's exact specifications, and after Moses inspected and blessed the workers' final products, Moses began the process of configuring the tabernacle. And when it had all been set up just as the Lord commanded, the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

Notice that Moses started configuring the tabernacle with the ark. He started with the heart of the tabernacle and configured everything else around it. God does the same with you and me. He works from the inside out.

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God starts with our heart and works His way out as He molds and shapes us into the likeness of His Son through the power of the Holy Spirit. He doesn't start by rearranging our furniture. He starts by reprioritizing our heart. Changing external things in our life only takes us so far. Transforming our hearts takes us to Him. And then His glory is RADIANT in us!

That veil, which separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the world, was in place right up to Jesus' crucifixion on Calvary. When Jesus willingly made the sacrifice on our behalf to take upon Himself the sin of the world, the temple curtain was torn from top to bottom. (Matthew 27:50-51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:44-46)

The veil no longer separates us from God's presence. We have full and glorious access to God through our Lord and Savior - our Veil Lifter.

Read and be encouraged by the wonderful words of hope in Hebrews 6:17-20.

We are the heirs of God's promise. Because of Jesus' atoning sacrifice, the veil was removed and we are able to see God's glory personally. But we are not simply to see it. We are called to reflect it. Through the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit, we can do just that.

Then by the Spirit's Gospel call, we are given the incredible privilege of being gathered close to our Savior. The closer we get, the more gloriously radiant we become. I sometimes wonder what Moses' face looked like as he radiated the glory of the Lord. My prayer for us is that we radiate His glory so intensely that others are irresistibly drawn to the light of the Lord like a moth to a flame.

As we close, I ask that you pick up your Bible and take a walk with me.

Go to the largest mirror in your home and stand in front of it. Look closely at your reflection. That amazing person looking back at you was created and knit together by God Himself in your mother's womb. He knows the number of hairs on your head. He knows everything about you because **He made you**. And He loves you more than you can **possibly** imagine.

As you look at your reflection, don't look at the imperfections that you normally try to veil. Look at the Word of God you hold in your hand and see yourself through that Word.

Turn to Psalm 139. Slowly and clearly read those verses out loud to yourself in the mirror.

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Do you see it? The Lord is there. His glory is in you and reflected by you. (2 Corinthians 5:16-21) **You** are the beautiful mirror, beloved! Let His light shine!

Let's review our Bible memory verses for this study. Write out 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 once more:



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Our lives as His redeemed children are to reflect the glory of the Lord with an open, unveiled face. By His grace alone, the glory of the Lord resides within you.

The question is: Will I allow this little Gospel light of mine to shine, or will I choose to hide it under a bushel?

### *Close with prayer:*

✠Father, thank You for starting Your work in me from the inside out. I pray that through the power of the Holy Spirit that You continue to draw me closer and closer to You. My deepest desire is to reflect YOUR glory - not to "fit in" and reflect what the world considers glory. When I look in the mirror, let me not miss the wonder of Your glory shining in me - for Your praise, honor and glory alone. In Jesus' name, Amen. ✠

## *Lesson Four*

### **Wonderful Transformation**

*Are being transformed in his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18b).*

The Queen Alexandra's Birdwing is the largest butterfly in the world. It has a wingspan of up to one foot across. This very rare (and endangered) butterfly is only found on a small strip of lowland coastal tropical rainforest in northern Papua, New Guinea. It takes about a month for this magnificent creature to transform from egg to pupa to adult.

However, once these beautiful butterflies reach adulthood, their growth and development stops and they only live three months. Even though this stunning butterfly is the largest and most magnificent of its species, there's no future potential. Four months. That's it. That's as far as they go.

You and I have a different future potential. Because of God's great love for us, shown in Jesus' redemptive work on the cross in our behalf and the constant working of the Holy Spirit in us, we are stunningly and graciously offered incredible future potential. He created us to be conduits of His grace, love and mercy. He transforms us from the inside out to show **His** beauty and shine His hope into a dark and hurting world.

In Him, we have the amazing opportunity to affect and infect lives with the Gospel message. And there's no limit on that potential.

Take a moment to write our study's memory verses from 2 Corinthians 3:17-18:



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In this final lesson, we conclude our study with 2 Corinthians 3:18b: *are being transformed in his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.* When you hear the word **transform**, what do you think of?

Do you remember the "Transformers" toys and cartoons? Transformers are toy robots with moving parts, which convert from a robot to a vehicle and back again. Any time the action scene called for the robot to get moving, the Transformer would convert to a vehicle of some kind and take off toward the action. When the action subsided, they would convert back to a robot.

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As Christians with the Holy Spirit working inside of us, we are living Transformers. We are called to **get moving** toward Jesus and the good works that He has prepared in advance for us to do. As we continue to move toward Jesus, Scripture promises that we will be gradually transformed in His likeness.

The amazing aspect of spiritual transformation is that it never subsides or stops. We don't have to go back to being robots.

Living in the light, love and transforming power of Jesus is life on the edge, friends! There is nothing that will thrill or bless you with more heart-pounding action, vivid color, and soul-healing drama than living the surrendered, worshiping, transformed lives to which He has invited us. **Nothing. NOTHING. He is LIFE!**

The King James Version of 2 Corinthians 3:18b states, *are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* The words **are changed** translate from the Greek word *metamorphóō*, which refers to change into another form; to transform; or to transfigure.

We get our English word metamorphosis from this Greek word. Metamorphosis is marked by profound and complete change or transformation.

Have you ever known someone who became a Christian late in life? Over time, as God works in and through them, they become profoundly and completely different as they allow God to work in their lives. Their desires and focus change. Their goals and direction in life take a new direction. Their attitude and mannerisms begin to look more and more like Jesus. It's truly amazing to watch.

*Metamorphóō* occurs only four times in all of the New Testament. Each time it refers to transformation. Take a moment to write down the three other occurrences of this amazing word:

Matthew 17:2 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Mark 9:2 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Romans 12:2 \_\_\_\_\_

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The words **transfigure** and **transformation** are translated from *metamorphóō*. What transformation did you notice in each passage?

In Romans 12:2, *metamorphóō* refers to the transformation of our minds. That passage is critical to us. Our thoughts dictate our actions. When God transforms our mind, our actions follow. As we study Scripture, He renews our mind by His truth, grace and love. Consequently, our actions reflect that to others. We love more easily,

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forgive more readily, and extend grace more willingly. One mind radically transformed by God can touch millions of lives.

Think upon the Apostle Paul. On that God-appointed day when Paul was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians (Acts 9), Jesus met him and began the work of renewing His mind. Paul no longer thought about persecuting Christians. He thought about Christ. He thought about Christ's saving work on the cross. He thought about the freedom and hope that work provided to every single person, and he made it his life's goal to get that message out.

Over time, Paul transferred those thoughts to paper. As a result, Paul is one of the most profound examples we have of a life completely transformed by God in order to touch millions of lives over thousands of years with the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Both Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 refer to the transformation (a process of sanctification over time, not an instantaneous change) that takes place in us as the Holy Spirit draws us closer and closer to Jesus. Even though we were created in God's image (the only part of creation made in His image), that image was lost after the Fall (*see* Genesis 1:26-27; 2 Corinthians 4:4; also 1 John 3:2). But on this side of heaven, our souls are regenerated into the image of Christ where His grace is wrought through the Holy Spirit.

We are inevitably transformed to the likeness of Christ:

1 Corinthians 15:49 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Colossians 3:10 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 John 3:2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We are constant works in progress in God's loving hands. I know there are some days that we may prefer to be left alone in our comfortable cocoons. We like the look of where we are. We're used to how it smells. We've put the furniture just where we like it. We find peace in the mundane - the routine.

But, beloved, God has specific plans for us. And His plans result in glory for Him and amazing spiritual progress for us that is anything but mundane or routine:

Psalm 84:7 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Proverbs 4:18 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 Timothy 4:15 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The gradual change into Jesus' likeness is expressed by the phrase **from glory to glory**. Not from the glory of the law to the glory of the Gospel. Not from the glory of Moses to the glory of Christ. Rather from the glory that is a present reality through grace in Christ to the fullness of glory in heaven above.

In 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, glory begins here, in grace, and grows to perfect glory hereafter when this image will be completed, both in soul and body. The saints perfectly bear the image of Christ and see Him as He is.

As we truly believe and live in the truth that Jesus died, rose victoriously, and went to prepare a place for us in heaven, others should be able to tell a difference in the way we live:

Psalm 34:5 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Daniel 12:3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Philippians 2:15 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

There are many examples throughout Scripture of those who shone radiantly from the glory of the Lord, but Moses offers us the most powerful glimpse:

Exodus 34:30 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This glory, which comes from the Lord and resides in us, is the work of the Holy Spirit within us. The Spirit removes the veil from our hearts so that we, with unveiled faces, may have the astonishing privilege of beholding the Lord's glory. It is the Spirit that gradually conforms our soul into the likeness of Christ. Throughout our lives, the Holy Spirit carries on the work of grace upon our souls, increases faith, and enlarges our views of the glory of Christ. The work of the Holy Spirit is crucial in every believer. We can choose to block it, or we can embrace it and live in the fullness of God's potential.

What has been the most significant thing you've learned about the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit over these past four weeks?

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How will that change your current spiritual walk?

Let's review our Bible memory verses for this study. Write out 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 once more:



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The reality of God's presence is brought to God's people by God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the breath of God in us. He enables us to live lives of **freedom**, regardless of Satan's love for spiritual warfare and captivity.

Remember that each time you look in a mirror, that you have been given the amazing privilege of reflecting the Lord's glory in a dark world. Recite Psalm 139 to yourself over and over. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, let your radiant, beautiful, unveiled face shine into this world, so that others may be drawn to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

***Close with prayer:***

✠Father, I am humbled beyond words at how You continue to reach out to me in love. I pray that Your light shines so brightly in my life that people cannot help but be drawn to You. In Jesus' name, Amen. ✠



*Notes*

*Prayers*

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# About the Author

## Donna Pyle



An engaging speaker, author, Bible teacher and worship leader, Donna has a passion for studying and teaching God's Word. She has authored 18 Bible studies, several Bible studies published in the *Lutheran Women's Quarterly*, numerous devotions, and magazine articles. Donna's DVD-based Bible study series, *Your Strong Suit*, launched nationwide through LWML in November 2011. Her new full-length, small-group based Bible study, *The God of All Comfort*, is available from Concordia Publishing House. Her next DVD-based Bible study series for the LWML, *Overflowing Abundance*, is scheduled for release at the Pittsburgh LWML Convention.

Donna attends Salem Lutheran Church in Tomball, Texas, where she loves serving in the worship ministry. She is passionate about partnering with the Lutheran Women's Missionary League in mission work and providing new avenues for women to get into God's hydrating Word.



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