

**Pray for your time together in God's Word!**

*Leaders Note: This passage relies on three important concepts. First is that of glory - the kingly majesty that belongs to God as supreme ruler that is reflected through His actions and those who trust in Him. Second, that of covenant - a binding agreement between two parties (much like a marriage covenant or a legal contract.). In this case it is between God and His people. The final concept is that of hope. Unlike our use of the word to mean wishful thinking (e.g. I hope Santa brings me a puppy for Christmas), it means certainty or assurance. Keeping these concepts in mind will help you as you guide your group through this week's study.*

**Read the passage out loud as a group.** Option: Give the group 5 minutes to look at the passage by themselves.

**This Week's Passage**

**Scripture Reference**

2 Corinthians 3:7-18

*New International Version (NIV--2011)*

7 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, transitory though it was, 8 will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? 9 If the ministry that brought condemnation was 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 transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts! 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 prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing 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 all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

**Discussion**

**Ask the Group:** What about this passage stood out to you?

*Leaders' Note: This question gives your group the opportunity to explore their own ideas before leading them to specific discussion. . Caution: Do not let this turn into a debate about personal understandings—keep it more on the “observation” level.*

**Ask the Group:** Paul uses the word 'glory' or 'glorious' twelve times in the verses we are studying today. When you hear the word 'glory,' what do you think of?

*Possible Answers: Honor, majesty, the movie Glory, etc.*

- What is something you have seen that is glorious and why would you describe it that way?

*Possible Answers: The Grand Canyon, a sunset, etc. This question is designed to help your group explore the concept of glory and put words around it.*

*Leaders Note: For the following question—because our primary study is in 2 Corinthians and not in Exodus, we are not dealing with Exodus 34 in depth nor are we covering all that is included in Exodus 34. We felt it was important to allow Exodus to inform our understanding of 2 Corinthians. Feel free to encourage those who are interested in digging deeper into Exodus 34 to do so outside of the context of the small group.*

**Ask the Group:** Paul refers back to Exodus 34:10-35 which tells about the coming of the old covenant. Take a moment to read those verses.

- How did the Old Testament covenant come with glory?

*Possible Answers: Military success, exclusivity (Israel would only worship God and God was setting apart the Israelites from other nations of the world), awesome works done by God among the people, radiance of Moses' face, God's presence among the people*

- What does this say about God?

*Possible Answers: Powerful, righteous, jealous, and caring – for Israel, He is holy, He demands holiness.*

- Optional: What does this say about the covenant?

*Possible Answers: Special, unique, and important.*

**Ask the Group:** Look at verses 7-11. Paul uses the term 'ministry of the Spirit' to both identify the new covenant we have in Christ and to distinguish this new relationship from the old. Why would Paul say that the ministry of the Spirit is more glorious?

*Possible Answers: Not transitory (7b-8, 11) and, it brings righteousness and not condemnation (v9.)*

**Ask the Group:** Verse 12 says that the reality for believers is being very bold because we have hope (confidence). From this passage, what is it that we have confidence or hope in?

*Possible Answers: God is powerful so we can trust Him; He provided a way for us to be righteous through the ministry of the spirit. The permanent glory of the new covenant as opposed to the fading glory of the old. Receiving ever increasing glory as we are made more like God (v.18).*

- Optional: How does hoping in God produce boldness in us?

*Possible Answers: When we understand His power and His care, we rely on Him and not on other things; He redeemed us from death so we don't have to worry anymore.*

**Ask the Group:** Look at verses 13-16. What does the veil symbolize in these verses?

*Possible Answers: Lack of understanding, hardness of heart, inability to comprehend the truth of Christ.*

- From what we see around us, how are peoples' eyes veiled to the truth of Christ today?

*Possible Answers: Consumed with self, full of worry, not willing to be humble enough to accept Christ's help etc.*

**Ask the Group:** Verse 17 says “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

What freedom is this passage talking about?

*Possible Answers: Freedom from death v.7, freedom from condemnation v.9, freedom to righteousness v.9*

- How does this biblical view of freedom differ from how freedom is generally thought of today?

*Possible Answers: Freedom to do what is right rather than freedom to do what I want when I want; freedom to follow the right authority (God) rather than from authority (rugged individualism).*

**Ask the Group:** Look at verse 18. Based on the passage we have studied today, how are we being transformed into God’s image?

*Possible Answers: Moved from death to life; we are no longer condemned; we no longer have the veil over our eyes; we contemplate (think about meditate on) His glory.*

### **Application**

**Ask the group (small or large):** What is one way that you can contemplate (meditate, think about) God this week that will allow Him to make you more like Him?

**Ask the Group (small or large):** What is one practical way that you can exercise your faith in God with boldness this week?

*Suggestion: Send this application question and challenge out through email or The City during the week to encourage your group.*

Last Week’s Application: (Discuss if time)

**Ask the Group (small or large):** As you spread the “aroma of Christ” are you relying on your own ability?

- What are some ways you can rely on God this week as you minister to others?

**Ask the Group (small or large):** Where in your life might God be opening doors for you to be the “aroma of Christ”?