

Calvary Chapel of El Cajon Women's Bible Studies

2 Corinthians 3

Lesson 4

Wherever you find the genuine, you will find somebody promoting the counterfeit. Soon after the gospel of grace began to spread among the Gentiles, a counterfeit gospel appeared. Those who promoted this gospel were called the Judaizers, men who tried to mix the demands of the law with salvation given freely by grace. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 3, points out the utter fallacy of their doctrines.

DAY ONE: Read 2 Corinthians 3

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheets and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?

- a. Chapter 3 of 2 Corinthians has been divided into three paragraph divisions. List below the subject(s) covered in each section.

Verses 1-3

Verses 4-6

Verses 7-18

How would you title each section? Record your titles on the **Chapter & Paragraph Division Titles Chart** provided with your Observation Worksheet. Now record a title for the third chapter of 2 Corinthians.

2. At the right-hand side of the same chart are columns labeled **Key Word** and **Symbol**. They have been provided for you to record the key words and the symbol you have chosen to represent each one. Record the key words listed below and their symbols on the chart.

God, Jesus, Spirit, sufficient/sufficiency, glory/glorious, veil/unveiled

Now, using the symbols you have chosen, mark each of the key words each time they are used in 2 Corinthians 3. Remember, as you mark the key words to mark any personal pronouns that refer to them. You do not need to mark every word that refers to them - only those that you feel are significant.

3. Choose one of the key words above and make a list of what the text reveals about it.

DAY TWO: Read 2 Corinthians 3:1-3

1. The Judaizers often boasted that they carried letters of recommendation from the “important people” in the church in Jerusalem. They were quick to point out to the believers in Corinth that Paul had no such papers, challenging the validity of Paul’s calling. Write verse 1 in your own words (or use another translation).

2. Verse 2 begins, *You are our epistle* (letter)... Using both verses two and three, describe the kind of “letter of recommendation” the believers in Corinth were.
 - a. What do you think Paul meant by this?

 - b. What do you think of when you think of being *written on someone’s heart*?
 - 1.) Read 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 and describe the importance of the believers in Thessalonica to Paul?

 - 2.) Why do you think the people Paul ministered to meant so much to him?

3. In spite of their carnality, they were still witnesses of the power of the Holy Spirit. They had witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit working through Paul in their own lives. Why should that be better than a letter of recommendation from another man?

4. What do you look for in a person’s life as proof that they are called of God?
 - a. What are some “red flags” that might indicate that someone is not called of God?

Christians' lives are the only religious books the world reads

-IGNATIUS

DAY THREE: Read 2 Corinthians 3:4-6

1. *Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God* (2 Corinthians 3:4 NIV). The word *trust* as used in the NKJV version can be translated “confidence” or “reliance”. Read Philippians 3:4-6 and record the things Paul could have placed his *confidence* in.
 - a. Continue reading verses 7 and 8 of Philippians 3. What place did these accomplishments have in Paul’s real *confidence*?

2. Scan through 2 Corinthians 3:4-6 and record the word (that begins with “s”) that is repeated in some form three times.
 - a. Define *sufficiency*.

3. Paul knew that it was God who was really doing the work. Paul was simply a vessel through which God worked. Although man can preach the gospel, what can he **not** do?

4. Fill in the blanks from verse 6: *who also made us sufficient as ministers of the _____*

 - a. The old covenant was the law of Moses. The new covenant is eternal life through Jesus Christ. The *letter* represents the law, or the old covenant to us; the *Spirit* represents the new covenant. What words does Paul use in verse 6 to contrast the *letter* and the *Spirit*?

Challenge: Explain how the *letter kills*.

Explain how the *Spirit gives life*.

5. What difference did it make in your life when you discovered that God was not requiring you to keep the law to be saved?

DAY FOUR: Read 2 Corinthians 3:7-11

1. Both the *ministry of death/condemnation* (the law) and the *ministry of the Spirit/righteousness* are from God. They are both *glorious*. Which *exceeds much more in glory*?

2. According to verses 11 the old covenant is *passing away*. What does Hebrews 8:13 say about this?
 - a. 2 Corinthians 3:11 also tells us that the new covenant remains. What does Hebrews 13:20 say about this?
 - 1.) How long is *everlasting*?

 - 2.) What does it mean to you that God will never change His mind about promising to save those who come to Him by faith in Jesus?

3. Some of those in the church in Corinth were considering the claims of the Judaizers – that they must add the law to grace. The church in Galatia was experiencing the same problem. Read Galatians 3:2-5. Record Paul’s challenge as you might say it to someone who has fallen into believing that salvation is *achieved* in some way by their own efforts; that Christ’s work on the cross was not sufficient.

This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight.

This is accomplished from start to finish by faith.

As the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.”

- Romans 1:17 NLT

DAY FIVE: Read 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

1. *Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech* – (2 Corinthians 3:12). Why was Paul bold?
 - a. What *hope* did he (do we) have? What *glorious* news did Paul have? See Romans 3:21

2. Paul's references to Moses putting a veil over his face are taken from the Old Testament account in Exodus 34:29-35. Upon coming down from Mt. Sinai with the Ten Commandments Moses' face was radiant, as it would be each time he entered in to the LORD's presence in the Holy of Holies. According to 2 Corinthians 3:13, why did Moses *put a veil over his face*?

3. For many, there is still a *veil* over the law. They cannot see that its glory and purpose has passed away and is no longer the covenant that God has with His people. Who took the *veil away*?
 - a. What did Jesus say about Himself in Luke 4:18-19?

4. When is the *veil taken away*? 2 Corinthians 3:16
 - a. Contrast the spiritual blindness you had before you *turned to the Lord* with after you *turned to the Lord*.

5. According to verse 17, *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is _____*.
 - a. How does Romans 8:2 confirm this?

 - b. Define the *liberty* that a Christian has.

6. Read 2 Corinthians 3:18. As Moses, we, as believers in the new covenant, can shine with the Lord's glory. This glory is displayed not so much outwardly in the face, but inwardly in our character. As we grow in the Lord, the glory increases until one day we will receive our glorious new bodies. This transformation of character is done by whom?

... 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.

-Zechariah 4:6

DAY SIX: Review 2 Corinthians 3

1. In what ways does a person's life reflect the teachings of those he/she receives teaching from?

2. The *ministry* of the old covenant was obedience to an external standard, but this obedience cannot change human character. The *ministry* of the new covenant is Christ likeness, a change brought about from the inside by the Holy Spirit. Why can't a person change themselves from the inside?

3. Why do you think people sometimes follow doctrines that put the burden of being right with God on man?
 - a. What is wrong with those kinds of doctrines?

4. Write down one thought you have when you think about the *veil* of blindness being taken from you?

5. What have you learned from this lesson about what your expectations should be for those you receive teaching from?

*But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit
the righteousness for which we hope.*

-Galatians 5:5 NIV