



## 2 Corinthians: Triumph in Trials

### Week 5: Be Transformed

#### 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

#### Feedback from last week: Our Competence and Aroma

Has last week's passage and session changed you in any way this week? Have you been aware of being the 'aroma of Christ' in the places you have gone this week?

*Share your stories*

#### Read 2 Corinthians 3:7-18 (twice preferably!)

- 1) Is there anything that specifically spoke to you from the Sermon on Sunday?

This is quite a tricky passage and links particularly to the story in Exodus 34:29-35 when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the 10 commandments with his face shining with the glory of God. You might like to read that passage too.

You can find some further background on this passage here (<https://studyandobey.com/inductive-bible-study/2-corinthians/2-corinthians-3-7-18/>)

#### Questions (choose some from):

- 2) How does Paul contrast the Old Covenant in Moses' time and the New Covenant (Ministry of the Spirit) (v7-16). What is he trying to say here do you think?
- 3) Why does Paul call the Old Covenant the ministry of death?
- 4) How can we, like Moses, reflect the glory of God to those around us? (link back to the aroma of Christ last week).
- 5) What do you think it means that 'whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away'? Did you experience this when you first became a Christian?
- 6) Take some time in silence do dwell together on v17 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom.' Ask God to show you what that means for you (and others) today. Share your responses together.
- 7) What does v18 say about how we are being transformed? What do you think it means? How does this happen?

## Respond and Encounter:

Some suggestions:

- 1) Put some quiet worship music on and dwell again in the phrase 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom'. Either together as a big group or in 2's and 3's share where you need God to give you freedom in your own life at the moment and pray for each other.
- 2) Focus on 'Being transformed into the likeness of Christ'  
Take some time as a group to work through either of the two resources at the end of these notes:

**Reviewing your Day ('Examen')** – Let one person slowly lead everyone through this process and invite each person to 'practice' that for themselves each day this week.

**'Put up the Shuttering and let God fill it'** - take some time to work through this together inviting people to identify one area they would like God to transform them in and identify

a) *What steps they need to take (Shuttering)*

b) *What 'grace' they need to pray for God to do in them (Filling).*

Encourage people to take that away and put it into practice this week and come back next week ready to share any changes they have seen.

- 3) Share with each other someone you know who has not yet 'turned to the Lord' and pray that they will 'have their veil taken away' and see clearly.

### **Key verses to meditate on this week:**

**'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 Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18)**

# Put up the Shuttering and let God fill it

an analogy of how God transforms us.

Larry Christenson in his book *The Renewed Mind* uses the following analogy to describe the process of transformation. He describes it as being like putting up a concrete structure. Before the concrete can be poured in, wooden frames ('shuttering') are put up which form the shape that the cement will take and act to hold it in while it is setting. After the concrete has set, the wooden structure is taken away and the concrete remains.



This wooden framework he says, represents *our role*. We are to construct the outward form of Christ, the 'outer temporary framework' into which God will pour his enduring work of transformation (the 'concrete') by his Spirit. We construct this temporary structure by choosing to go God's way (e.g. choosing to 'put on' patience, love compassion etc. and choosing to follow the way of the spirit and not our sinful desires). But it does not end there, for if it did, when we did not keep it up it would all fall down again and we would have to start from scratch. No, into this temporary framework that we 'put on,' God pours his spirit to transform us from the inside in a permanent way. He transforms us and gives us a new heart and new desires (Ezekiel 36:26-7) aligning them with his.

Therefore being transformed to the likeness of Christ is about us co-operating and working together with the Holy Spirit. ***We are called to do the temporary outer work (imitation), for God to pour his grace in, and bring the inner and lasting work of transformation.***

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## Live it out...

### *Using Larry Christenson's analogy*

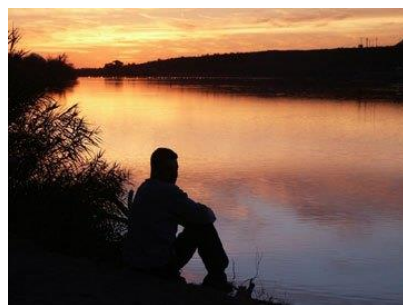
- a) Identify a specific issue that you want to ask God to bring transformation in.
- b) Identify four things that *you* could intentionally do (this is the "wooden shuttering") e.g. pray blessing for my difficult neighbour, speak words of affirmation to my spouse, put on a worship CD when I am tempted to view internet material that is unhelpful etc. and seek to live them out.
- c) Pray each day for the specific 'grace' that you are desiring e.g. 'I pray for the grace to be patient with my neighbour and to love them as you love them.'

# Reviewing your day

*Find 10-15 minutes to still yourself and be silent and attentive to God.*

*Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts as you 'play back your day with God.'*

- What have you to be thankful for? What has been good about your day? Spend time thanking God now.
- Where have you walked closely with God today? Where were you 'in-tune' with God's spirit?
- Where were you 'out of harmony' with God's spirit? Where did you feel negative feelings? What is God saying through these feelings?
- Is there anything you need to confess or ask God to heal and transform in you?
- Ask God for his 'graces' – for his strength and help for the day ahead, and any specific fruit of the Spirit you need to live differently tomorrow.



*“Create in me a pure heart O God and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10)*