**how Does god’s spirit transform our lives?**

(2 Corinthians 3:18)

**2 Corinthians 3:12-18 -----** Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech— unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Two weeks ago, I sat in a chair and asked Jadon Scarlett to lift both me and the chair over his head. He couldn’t do it. But once I asked Robert Pressley to come up to the platform, both he and Jadon had no problem lifting me high in the air.

I used this chair illustration to remind us that **the Christian life cannot be lived, and victory over sin cannot be experienced, apart from the power of the Spirit of God.** If we try to do it alone---through our own strength and willpower—we fail.

Ok, so now that we understand that victory over sin is only possible through the Holy Spirit, the question we want to answer today is this:

**How** does the Spirit of God do this?

What does the Bible actually say about experiencing
the work of the Spirit of God personally?

**Title:** How Does God’s Spirit Transform Our Lives?

(Prayer)

Two weeks ago, I quoted Don Lyon from *Leadership* magazine, who said:

Spirit – Word = blow up

Word – Spirit = dry up

Spirit + Word = grow up

This morning, we are asking **HOW** the Spirit of God brings works the miracle of transformation in our lives? What do we need if we are going to **break free** from the sin that so easily ensnares us and **soar high** for God?

**2 Corinthians 3:18 -----** But we all, **with unveiled face**, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

**1. We need an unveiled face**

What does it mean to look into the Word with an unveiled face?

Earlier in 2 Corinthians 3, Paul said that when his fellow Jews read the OT Scriptures they had a big problem---they couldn’t properly understand them because of their unbelief. Spiritually speaking, they had a veil on their minds. (in the next chapter, 2 Cor 4 tells us that Satan is the one who blinds the minds of non-believers.)

Do you remember the Ethiopian eunuch in the book of Acts? He was reading Isaiah 53 and he was asked by Philip if he understood what he was reading, and he replied; “How can I unless someone guides me?”

**The good news**, is that the moment a person is saved, this spiritual veil is removed.

* Now, the person can understand the Word of God.
* Now the person can begin their quest for spiritual change and spiritual victory.

So the first thing a person needs if they are going to overcome the strong, strong pull of sin and bad habits is salvation through Christ---we need a spiritually unveiled face!

 **2. We need a steadfast dedication to the Word of God**

When we read the Bible, according to 2 Cor 3:18, it is like looking at a mirror. And the reflection we see is the glory and majesty of Christ.

**2 Corinthians 3:18 -----** But we all, with unveiled face, **beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord**, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

If you neglect the Word of God---mark it down---you will stay in spiritual kindergarten your entire life. If some sin has a stranglehold on you, one of the first things you should ask yourself is, “Is God’s Word an important part of my life? Am I reading it? Thinking about it? Obeying it? Or is Sunday really the only day I have any contact with it?”

**Illustration---**Swindoll interview (23 years in CA---some of his people heard him for 23 years and they were the same when he left as when he came)

**Other references to the Bible and Christ**

In John 1 the Apostle John said:

**John 1:14 -----** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, **and we beheld His glory**, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, **full of grace and truth**.

So what John saw *personally*, we also see as we get into the Bible---we see the glory of the Lord---the one who is full of grace and truth.

In John 5:39, speaking of the OT Scriptures, Jesus said to a hostile crowd:

**John 5:39 -----** You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; **and these are they which testify of Me.**

In Luke 24:27, Jesus says to the disciples on the road to Emmaus:

**Luke 24:27 -----** And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them **in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself**.

Why is the Word of God so important in the matter of transformation and victory? Because it is like a mirror in which we can see the matchless glory of Christ---the things concerning Himself---full of grace and truth.

But if we don’t look at the mirror, we don’t see Christ. And if we don’t see Christ, we won’t see the transformation and victory we want in life.

I love the Emmaus road passage in Luke 24 because our Lord opens the disciples’ minds as He teaches them:

**Luke 24:44-45 -----** Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms **concerning Me**.” **And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.**

Do you want transformation…victory? Then you need a mirror. And you need to gaze at that mirror. Not a quick look. The Spirit of God can’t open our understanding if we don’t look at the mirror or if our look is superficial.

Has your experience with the Word been a **supernatural** one or a **superficial** one?

So first, we need an unveiled face (salvation). Second, we need a steadfast dedication to the Word of God. And finally…

**3. We need a complete openness to the Word of God**

**2 Corinthians 3:18 -----** But we all, **with unveiled face**, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Earlier, I showed you that an unveiled face was a reference to the fact that as believers, the veil on our hearts has been removed and we can now be taught of the Spirit and understand God’s Word. That is the **interpretation** of this passage.

However, let me say this. I would like to suggest that implicit in this symbolism is also the idea of **openness toward God’s Word**. Allow me to explain.

The background for all of this is Moses. When he would go into the presence of God and talk with Him face to face, Moses’s face would literally glow. He would then deliver the message of God to God’s people. But as soon as he had finished speaking to them, he would put a veil on his face until he went to speak with God again. Here is a key point: whenever Moses would meet with God, he would take the veil off. He went into God’s presence with an unveiled face.

And that is exactly how God wants us to come to Him. As we look into the mirror of the Word, the Lord wants us to come with complete openness and exposure to His glory. He doesn’t want us to hide from Him in any way.

**When we are less than open to His Word,
we hinder God’s transforming work in us.**

If we really aren’t open to God working in our hearts, He won’t.

Years ago, Pastor Steve Brown, who was on the radio, said:

Have you ever seen a little girl get her new dress dirty just before church? Little girls get their dresses dirty sometimes when they really don't mean to, and then they're faced with a number of options. They can try to hide the dirt by folding the dress over and walking close to their mother. Or they can pretend that they don't know about the dirt: ***"Dirt? I didn't know there was any dirt on me!"*** Or they can just try to stay away from mother so that mother can't see the dirt. If mother comes into the living room, the daughter goes into the bedroom. She'll try to get in the car before her mother gets in. **OR**……….she can do what she ought to do if she has a mother who reflects the grace of God. She can go to her mother and say, "Look, my dress is dirty."

Friends, we need to be open. If we say, ***“Dirt? I didn’t know there was any dirt on me!”*** how can God transform us?

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So what is the result of all of this?

If we are saved and the veil has been taken off…if we are dedicated to God’s Word and we are opening our lives up to it, what is the outcome?

**2 Corinthians 3:18 -----** But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being **transformed into the same image** **from glory to glory**, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The outcome of looking at the mirror of God’s word with a true desire to change is that we are transformed into the same image we see in the mirror---Christ’s image---and we are transformed **increasingly---**from glory to glory!

Seminary professor Robert Webber told the following story. He said:

Some time ago I was biking in Michigan and met another biker who, like myself, was a professor of theology. In the course of our conversation by the side of the road he said something I will never forget: **"Bob, all I really want in life is for the Word of God to take up residence inside of me and form me into Christlikeness."** I think this statement hit me hard because my seminary training in the Bible was never that personal. We were always asking "What does it say?" and seldom if ever made the step into a deep personal application of "How can that truth take up residence in me?"

**Application**

Where are you at in regard to 2 Cor 3:18?

---Spiritually defeated, and you know it?

---Lacking the fruit of the Spirit because the
 busyness of life has choked the Word?

---Not victorious over sin at all because you have
 never believed in Christ for eternal life?

(Prayer)