

“THE HOLY SPIRIT CHANGES US”
2 Corinthians 3:6-18

INTRODUCTION

Paul explained to the Corinthians that rather than letters of commendation, the Corinthians themselves were epistles of the Holy Spirit's work written on the hearts of individuals rather than on stone tablets. This vindicated Paul's apostolic authority. It was the stamp of God's approval. This chapter emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit: 1) gives life, 2) gives righteousness, 3) gives liberty and 4) changes us to be more like Jesus.

THE SPIRIT GIVES LIFE

“**For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life**”, v.6. Here, the “letter” means the law written on stone tablets, the Old Covenant. The law states what “good” is. It is also called, however, the “ministry of death”, v.7, because it points out what sin is, for which death results.

In **Exodus 34** Moses spent time with the Lord and reflected the glory of God on his face. This glory faded away over time, showing that the law was temporary. The 10 Commandments are the standard of God's righteousness. There is no way that we can fully obey the law. If we keep it and err in only one point it is as if we have missed it all! **James 2:10**, cf. **Luke 18:18-25**.

Paul knows that the law kills us. It doesn't have the power to change anyone. The purpose of the law is to point us to Jesus, **Galatians 3**. When individuals are “born of the Spirit”, the Holy Spirit works on the inside! They now have the desire and ability to do what He says. (The false teachers, Judaizers, presented a false gospel of works which led to self-righteousness and ultimately despair. Those who go that route fight a losing battle!)

Righteousness is imperative! It is either based on man's performance or God's performance. The law says, “You do it”. The gospel says of Jesus, “I have done it!” We need to trust in the finished work of Christ, rather than our own ability and works! The Commandments are like train tracks, indicating the way we should go. Without the engine you are not going anywhere! **Galatians 2:20**. Jesus, through the gospel, is the engine!

THE VEIL TAKEN AWAY

Some are blinded to the truth! There is a veil which hinders understanding. However, when someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away, v. 16. The Holy Spirit will then work in the life of the believer to transform that person! Christians are being changed into the image of Jesus! **Romans 8:29**. This transformation process includes things *we* need to do: 1) Behold Him - reflect, contemplate on Him, 2) Worship Him, cf. **Ephesians 5:18-20**, 3) Read the Word of God - cf. **Psalms 89:15**, 3) Fellowship together - Let the conversation be about Him, and 4) We need to pray!

CONSIDER

Can we hinder this process? Yes, by avoiding or ignoring the above! Binge watching TV doesn't help us. Complaining about church doesn't help either. Paul told the Philippians that had confidence that God would complete the work in them, **Phil. 1:6**, cf. **Heb. 12:2**. We need to trust the process! *In what ways may you be hindering this process for your life?*
(Scripture references are from NKJV).

PRAY

- * Pray for the mission trip to Serbia.
- * That we would follow the Lord's leading in the August outreach at Jefferson Park in Canandaigua.
- * That God's Spirit would refresh the pastors at our East Coast Pastors' conference in September.