

# GROWTH GROUPS WEEK 3

WEEK OF JANUARY 29TH

## EXPRESSING HOPE

*THE SPIRIT OF  
THE CHURCH*

### GROWTH GROUP WINTER 2017 – EXPRESSING HOPE WEEK 3 – JANUARY 29, 2017 - 2 CORINTHIANS 3:7-18

#### GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

1) Share about a time recently when you had an “a-ha” moment in your life. It may have been something someone said, or some realization you came to. This does not have to be related to your faith story.

#### SETTING THE CONTEXT

Our text begins with Paul contrasting the old covenant and the new covenant. The old covenant was based on the 10 Commandments which were given to Moses. Paul wanted his readers to see and understand that although the old covenant was important, it was ultimately inadequate and temporary. The Law helped people to see how they were doing and how faithfully they were living, but it could not bring salvation. Jeremiah 31:31-34 begins to point to the new covenant that God will establish one day through Jesus.

Paul makes it clear that what happened at Mt. Sinai, while certainly impressive, was nothing compared to what had happened with Jesus. The new covenant in Jesus was what really mattered to Paul because it could transform your life. To be transformed means to take on a new or different form or appearance, and it refers to both outward, as well as inward changes.

We must understand that transformation is not just something that happens once. The transformation that Paul is describing is one that is more of a lifelong process where more and more of God’s glory is revealed to us and through us.

In the days of Paul, mirrors were flat circular pieces of metal that had to be polished constantly to provide a clear image. There was a lot of work involved to keep away corrosion. Paul appears to be saying that our lives are like mirrors that are in constant need of polishing so that we can reveal the glory and wonders of Jesus.

This process happens through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who helps make this transformed life possible. This new life is one that steadily grows in reflecting the glory of God, whereas the glory that Moses had revealed was always short lived.



Paul tells the Corinthians that as they follow in the ways of Jesus and give themselves to his teaching and as the Holy Spirit works in their lives, a transformation does take place. And as that transformation takes place, they reflect more and more of God's glory, and less of their own glory.

## EXPLORING THE TEXT

### Read 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

*<sup>7</sup> 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, <sup>8</sup> will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? <sup>9</sup> If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! <sup>10</sup> For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. <sup>11</sup> And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!*

*<sup>12</sup> Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. <sup>16</sup> But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. <sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup> And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate[a] the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

- 2) Why do you think the old covenant (Exodus 34:27-35) had to be replaced with the new covenant (Romans 3:19-24)?
- 3) In verses 12-16 the apostle Paul contrasts followers of Jesus with followers of Moses. What are the differences? Do you see any similarities between followers of Jesus and Moses?
- 4) Paul says that part of being "transformed" involves boldness (v.12) and freedom (v.17). Why do you think he chose those characteristics to describe what our transformed lives ought to reflect?
- 5) Have you ever felt like your faith was "covered by a veil?" That you were unclear on something that God was trying to teach you or show you. Was there someone who helped you "see" things more clearly?
- 6) Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." What sort of things do you think Paul means when he talks about the "pattern of this world?" Is there an area of your life where you find yourself conforming to the things of this world? Why do you think this happens? What can you do about it?
- 7) As you think about your life over the past year, can you see some ways that God has been at work in bringing transformation? If so, where have you seen God at work?

## BRINGING IT HOME

- 8) Where in your life do you feel like you need to do a better job of reflecting the "likeness and glory" of Jesus Christ?