

UNFILTERED

REAL FAITH IN A FAKE WORLD

The Algorithm of Grace: Rewriting Your Heart's Focus

Icebreaker

What is a “must-have” item or skill you once thought would make you cool or successful (like a specific pair of shoes, a certain phone, or being able to do a specific trick), only to realize later that it didn’t actually change anything?

Daily Devotions

Day 1 : Read It

Read 2 Corinthians 3:1–18 and Exodus 34:29–35.

Get It

1. What (or who) does Paul say is his "letter of recommendation"? Where is this letter written?
2. Where do you see Paul using contrasts to make his point? What do those contrasts reveal about the issue he's dealing with?
3. According to verse 13, what physical object did Moses use to cover his face? According to Exodus 34:29–35, why did Moses cover his face with this object? According to verse 15 what is that object covering now for some people?
4. What specifically happens the moment someone "turns to the Lord"?
5. As we look at the glory of the Lord, what is happening to us? Is it a sudden change or a process?
6. What words or ideas seem to repeat or stand out in this passage? Why might those be important to Paul's overall message?

Day 2 — Today's Theme: More Than a Piece of Paper

Read 2 Corinthians 3:1–3.

Eventually, you're going to need a "Letter of Recommendation." Whether it's for a college application, a scholarship, or a first job, you'll ask a coach, teacher, or boss to vouch for you. You're essentially "borrowing" their credibility to prove that you're the real deal.

The people in Corinth were doubting Paul. They demanded to see his "credentials" and asked for official letters of recommendation to prove he was a real Apostle. But Paul turned the tables. He told them he didn't need a piece of paper—he had them. Paul said that their transformed lives were his "living letter." Their change in character, fueled by the Spirit of God, was all the proof anyone needed to see that his ministry was legit. It leads to a big question for us: When people "read" the story of your life, what do they see? Do they see a life that points back to Jesus?

7. If you were applying for your absolute dream job or college today, who is the one person you would want to write your letter of recommendation? Why does their opinion carry so much weight?
8. Paul says these "letters" aren't written with ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God. What do you think "ink" looks like in a Christian's life?
9. If someone who didn't know you were a Christian followed you around for a whole week—at practice, in the hallways, and at home—what "story" would they say your life is telling?

Day 3 — Today's Theme: Who's Really Driving?

Read 2 Corinthians 3:4–6.

For most of us, sixteen is the "magic number" because it means one thing: the driver's license. But you don't just get it for turning a year older; you have to prove you're **competent**. You log the classroom hours, practice with an instructor, and grind through those 50 hours of driving time with your parents just to show you can handle the road.

Paul faced a similar challenge when people questioned his "competency" as a leader. But his response was a total plot twist. He didn't show off a spiritual resume or take credit for his success. Instead, he pointed to Jesus. Paul realized that true competency doesn't come from our own hustle—it comes from what Christ does through us.

We don't have to "white-knuckle" our way through the Christian life on our own strength. Ephesians 1 tells us that the same explosive power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to us right now. The Holy Spirit living inside you is the One who provides the power to live out your faith.

10. "Competency" doesn't come from what we do, but from what Christ does through us. How is that different from how the world tells us to be successful?

11. Read Ephesians 1:19–20. These verses say the *same power* that raised Jesus from the grave is in you. Does your daily life feel like it has "resurrection power" behind it, or does it feel more like you're running on an empty tank? Why?

12. Where in your life are you trying to "drive" entirely on your own strength right now? What would it look like to let the Holy Spirit take the wheel in that situation?

Day 4 — Today's Theme: The Great Exchange: Trading Your "Fail" for His "A+"

Read 2 Corinthians 3:7–11.

To understand your relationship with God, you have to look at two different "systems." First, there's **The Law**. God gave the Law through Moses to show us His perfect standards. It's like a mirror: it shows us the "dirt" (our sin), but it doesn't have the power to wash it off. Because none of us are perfect, the Law only leads to one place: failure in our ability to perfectly obey the Law and separation from God.

Then, there's **The Gospel**. This is the ministry of the Spirit that brings life. We couldn't fix ourselves, so Jesus stepped in. He lived the perfect life we couldn't, died for our sins, and rose again to defeat death and sin forever. When we trust Him, we aren't just "trying harder" to follow rules; we are given a brand-new identity. Through Jesus, our past sins are wiped clean, Hell is cancelled, and Heaven is a guarantee. That is the "greatest glory" Paul talks about—a relationship that actually lasts forever.

- 13. Imagine a teacher gives you a final exam where the passing grade is 100%. Even a 99% is a failing grade. How would you feel walking into that classroom? How would you feel about that teacher?**

- 14. If you have a smudge of dirt on your face, the mirror can show you the dirt, but it can't wash it off for you. In what ways is "The Law" (God's rules) like a mirror?**

- 15. The Law says, "Do this and live." The Gospel says, "It is done, now live." How does that shift change the way you view your relationship with God?**

Day 5 Today's Theme: The Story of Moses and the Veil

The Original Story

After Moses spent time talking with God, his face would literally glow because he met face to face with God and saw God's glory. When he came down from the mountain, the glow was so bright that Aaron and the rest of the Israelites were terrified to get near him. To make them feel comfortable, Moses started wearing a veil over his face whenever he spoke to the people. He would only take the veil off when he went back to speak with God.

What Paul Explains

In the New Testament, Paul looks at this story in a new way. He explains that Moses wore the veil for another reason: the glow on his face was eventually going to fade away. Paul uses this "fading glow" to represent the Old Covenant (the Law). While the Law was good, it was temporary and couldn't save people because no one could follow it perfectly.

The fading light on Moses' face was a sign that something better and more permanent was coming. Paul wants us to see that the "permanent glory" is found in Jesus. While the old way showed us our sins, the new way through Jesus gives us life that never fades.

16. What is the most interesting part of Paul's comparison? Is there a specific part of the "veil" or the "glowing face" idea that makes sense to you, or is there a part that is still a bit confusing?

17. Paul describes the glory of the Old Covenant as something that was "fading away." Why do you think he used the word "fading"? What does that tell us about the difference between the Old Testament Law and the message of Jesus?

Day 6 — Today's Theme: Transformed

Read 2 Corinthians 3:18.

In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul explains that as we "behold" (which is just a fancy word for looking closely or focusing on) the Lord's glory, something incredible happens: **we change**.

Think of it like this:

- **The Source:** The Spirit of the Lord working through us.
- **The Process:** Looking at Him through prayer, reading the Bible, the church, and following His lead.
- **The Result:** We start to look like Him from the inside out.

A Radical Change

Paul uses a specific word for this change: **Transformed**. In the original language the New Testament was written in, this word is *metamorphoo*. It's where we get the word **metamorphosis**—the same word used to describe a caterpillar turning into a butterfly.

This isn't just a small "tweak" to your personality; it's a total makeover of your heart. The word translated "transformed" here is used only three other times in the New Testament, and two of those references are describing Jesus' glorious transfiguration on the mountain with His disciples (Matt. 17:2; Mark 9:2).¹

It's For Everyone

This transformation is not just for a few Christians, but rather for all who turn to the Lord and who have had the veil removed. We are all being transformed into the same image we are beholding. What image is that? The image of the glory of God, the very image of Jesus. The Bible says it happens "from one degree of glory to another." It's a steady, daily growth.

The Goal

So, what are we becoming? We aren't just becoming "nicer" people. We are being shaped into the **image of Jesus**. When people look at us, they should start to see reflections of His kindness, His strength, and His love.

18. "Beholding" means focusing on something so closely that it starts to affect you. If your life had an "algorithm" like TikTok or Instagram, what "content" are you currently beholding the most? How is that content "transforming" your mood or the way you treat people?

19. We talked about metamorphosis—the total change from a caterpillar to a butterfly. A caterpillar doesn't just "try harder" to be a butterfly; it has to be completely changed from the inside out. In your own life, what is something you've tried to "fix" about yourself that you realized you actually need God's help to transform?

20. If we are meant to be reflections of Jesus, what is one "smudge" on the mirror (like a specific habit, an attitude, or a fear) that you want the Holy Spirit to help you wipe away this week so people can see Him more clearly?

This study was written by Pastor Mario Arindaeng, based on the adult study written by the VBC Pastoral Team.

¹ Casto, Trent. 2 Corinthians (Reformed Expository Commentary) (pp. 124-125). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.