

Join us in being on mission with God!

OUR VISION

To continually mature and grow as a united body of Jesus-imitators who live out God's greatest commandment to "Love" by exalting God and serving one another, and His greatest commission to "Go" by reaching into and shaping our local, regional, and global communities.

"Steps to Genuine Liberty"

2 Corinthians 3:7-18

Getting Started

After an introductory time, discuss the following questions in your group or class.

Americans celebrate freedom from the British on the 4th of July. The event looks back to the days when life in the New World colonies was dictated by the King of England and the British Parliament. The colonists had little say over the laws that impacted their taxation and shaped the course of their lives. Their yearning to shape their own destiny resulted in a revolution that created a new nation that would radically change the face of Western society.

People everywhere show a willingness to risk their lives for freedom. But many of those who are politically free are not yet living in true liberty. This week we will explore the liberty that only Christ can give.

1. What are some of the freedoms that Americans take for granted that others in the world may not enjoy? Why do you think we take freedom for granted sometimes?

Sometimes we do things with our freedom that are dangerous or damaging. A teenager can crash flying 90 mph along a rural road. An employee can blast their boss on Facebook and risk losing their job.

Most of the Jews in the first century believed that following the regulations passed down from Moses was the key to life with God. They falsely assumed that the law was the doorway to freedom from sin and a right standing with God.

2. In 2 Corinthians 3:7 the Bible describes the law given to Moses as a "ministry that brought death." In what way does depending on laws and regulations "bring death" to people?

3. Paul is not arguing that the laws God gave Moses are bad. Paul tried to fulfill all of them in his early life. What do you sense from Paul's attitude about the law in Galatians 1:14?

4. 2 Corinthians 3:7-14 looks back to the time of the Exodus. In Exodus 34:28-35 we discover that Moses met with God in a special tent set aside for that purpose. When he came out from meeting with God, his face glowed with a reflection of the shekinah glory that marked the presence of God on earth. Why do you think God caused this to happen to Moses' face. What message did this convey?



2 Corinthians 3:7-18

⁷ 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, fading though it was, ⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? ⁹ If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! ¹⁰ For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. ¹¹ And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts! ¹² Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. ¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

5. In verses 7 and 13 we are told that something happened to Moses' appearance over time. What changed? Why do you think God altered Moses' appearance this way?

God seems to be representing the reality that the law, and the lawgiver, were a fading reflection of his total revelation. There was more to come. And what would come later would be more lasting and would eclipse the revelation of the law to Moses.

The Jews glorified the law as the means of living right with God. They thought that the road to freedom was found in obeying the demands given to the Jews at Sinai. It is the "old covenant" Paul writes about in verse 14. But their ability to find freedom in the law was blocked by something.

6. What interfered with their ability to fully understand and comprehend the Old Testament laws and regulations, according to verses 14-15?
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7. Today we think of a veil as something a bride wears. Paul uses the image to describe how our understanding of God's message is obscured. What did the Jews not see or understand in their search for freedom through obedience?
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8. We all know people who stubbornly insist that they can somehow be reconciled to God through the good deeds that they do. What reality are they blind to when they come to this conclusion?
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9. Verses 14 and 16 insist that there is only one remedy for the blindness that this veil brings to our thinking. What removes it? How should this influence the way you pray for people who are not yet Christians?
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10. In the text to the left, circle the times the word *Spirit* occurs. What do you discover about the ministry of the Spirit from this passage?
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11. We also discover something new He wants to do for us in verse 18. What does he desire to do for us once our eyes are open? Where does he want to lead you?
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