

# “HOW GOD CHANGES US”

**Text:** II Corinthians 3:18

**Subject:** How God Changes Us From The Inside Out

## Introduction

**Question:** How many of you know someone that God has changed?

**Question:** How many of you can say that you have changed because of God's influence in your own life?

**Question:** How many of you know that you cannot change what you do not confront?

**Question:** How many of you want God to change what needs to be changed in you?

## **Verse 18 says:**

*“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord **are changed** (are what?) **are changed** into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”*

## **The Question is:**

How does God change us from the inside out?

## **That's what II Corinthians 3 is all about:**

1. In II Corinthians 3, Paul addresses a counterfeit gospel.
2. It was a gospel mixture of Law and Grace.
3. A zealous group of teachers (called Judaizers) had infiltrated the church.

**Question:** What were they teaching?

**Answer:** That salvation was by faith (plus the keeping of the law, Acts 15:1)

- It was a gospel of legalism.
- It was very popular.
- It was accepted by many because human nature enjoys religious goals to achieve.
- It seems too simple to just “trust Jesus by faith” to be saved.

**Question:** Why does God address this?

**Answer:** Because of two reasons:

1. The old system of the Law of Moses was frustrating the new system of Grace and,
2. The old system of Law just couldn't change the human heart.

## **And Paul answers three questions in Chapter 3:**

**Question #1:** What can't change us?

**Question #2:** What can change us?

**Question #3:** How does the change take place?

## **I. What Can't Change Us?**

- In verse 3 Paul says, “Not in tables of stone.”
- In verse 6 Paul says, “Not of the letter.”
- In verse 7 Paul says, “The ministration of death was graven in stone.”
- In verse 9 Paul says, “The Law was the ministration of condemnation.”
- In verse 13 Paul says, “Moses put a veil over his face.”

**Question:** What is Paul saying in all of this?

**Answer:** He is telling us that the old covenant of Law cannot do what the new covenant of grace can do.

**In other words,**

- When God gave the Law, he wrote it on tables of stone.
- The Law was an external thing, but had no internal power.
- The Law could tell you what to do, but it offered no power to do it!

**Question:** Then why did God give the Law?

**Answer:** He gave us the Law to show us we needed grace.

*“Wherefore the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”*  
**(Galatians 3:24)**

(Verse 25) How does the OT Law differ from the new Covenant of Grace?

1. The Law was written on **stone**, but grace is written on **our hearts**:  
(Verse 3) *“Not in tables of stone but on the table of your heart.”* (Which means)
  - The Law can bring us to Christ, but only grace can make us like Christ.
  - The Law can say “do this and don’t do that”, but only grace can change the heart.
2. The Law brings **death** but the Spirit gives **life**:  
(Verse 6) *“The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.”*

**Question:** What does that mean?

**Answer:** It means that the letter (or the old covenant of law) brings death because of external rules and regulations without an inward change of heart! (Or)

- Outward requirements without an inward change of heart brings guilt and frustration.

3. The Law brings **condemnation** but grace brings **righteousness**:  
(Verse 9) *“For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more does the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.”* **(Which means)**
  - The law can’t save us; it just reveals (like a mirror) how dirty we really are.
  - This leaves us in condemnation because none of us can work hard enough to remove our sin and become righteous by our works.
4. The Law was only **temporary**, but the New Covenant of grace is **permanent**:  
(Verse 11) *“For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.”* **(In other words)**
  - The old system of Law with its temple and priesthood has a glorious past (but it served its purpose).
  - Its glory has faded away, while the glory of grace is ever increasing in our heart.

**Question:** Why can’t the old system of law change anybody? Because...

1. It was on stone, not upon the heart.
2. It kills and doesn’t give life.

3. It condemns but can't make us righteous.
4. It's past history, with no purpose today.

## II. What Can Change Us?

(Verse 16) *"Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."*

- The veil refers to the old system of Law.
- The veil has been taken away (in v. 16)

**Question:** How was the veil removed?

**Answer:** (Verse 16) *"When it shall turn to the Lord."* (Means)

- When we turn to the Lord in repentance, we are enlightened (as though a veil is lifted from our face).
- The veil obscures our vision, but when we turn to the Lord we can see clearly.
- Before salvation we are veiled (blinded) to the joy of salvation.

**Question:** So what is it that can change the heart of any person?

(Verse 17) *"Now the Lord is that Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."*

**Question:** Who is the only one who can change us?

**Answer:** (Verse 17) **The Lord**

**In other words,**

1. We turn to the Lord in repentance.
2. The veil is then lifted and we can see what we've been missing all along.
3. We experience v. 17 which says *"Now the Lord is that spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty."*
  - The word "**liberty**" means "**freedom**".

**In other words – at salvation,**

- There is freedom from the Law that condemns.
- There is freedom from the conscience that's guilty.
- There is freedom from the slavery of sin's power.

## III. How Does Change Take Place?

1. Verse 18, "But we all with open face,
2. Behold as in a mirror (or the Word) the glory of the Lord,
3. Are changed into the same image form degree to degree,
4. Even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

**Question:** How can God change what needs to be changed in me?

**God spells it out clearly in four words:**

**Word #1: Transparency**

- "But we all with open face."
- The words "open face" mean we are not like Moses under the old system of Law.
- Moses covered his face symbolic of the law causing us to be ashamed.
- But now, we have an open face or we've had the obstacle of law removed.
- The veil refers to the heart.

**In other words,**

All of us are invited to unveil our heart and come transparent before the Lord with no pretending whatsoever.

**Word #2: Focus**

- Verse 18, *“Beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord.”*
- The “mirror” is a symbol of the word of God (James 1:22-25)
- When we look into the Word we see Jesus.
- As we see Jesus we prepare our heart to be changed.
- This beholding is your focus; intently focused upon Jesus.

**Word #3: Transformation**

(Verse 18) *“Are changed into the same image from glory to glory.”*

#1 – We come transparent, #2 – We focus on seeing Jesus, and #3 – We are changed from glory to glory (or degree by degree).

**In other words,**

- To the degree we are transparent and,
- To the degree we focus our eyes on Jesus,
- To that degree we will be changed into the likeness of Jesus.

**Question:** What does it mean to be “**changed**”?

**Answer:** The word changed gives us our English word “METAMORPHOSIS”.

- Metamorphosis describes the process that changes an insect from a larva, into a pupa, and then into a fully mature insect.
- The change comes from within, not without.  
...some of you are frustrated in this process.  
...some of you want to skip some degrees, but God knows what He is doing.

**Word #4: Spirit**

**Question:** How does God change us? Verse 18, *“Even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”*

**In other words,**

1. We look into the Word and see Jesus and,
2. As we look into the word and see Jesus, the Holy Spirit transforms us into the very image of God’s Son. (The one we are looking at.)
  - No veil to hinder the process
  - Intense focus on Jesus (not on people).
  - Metamorphosis from the inside out.
  - All a work of the Spirit of God!

**Fact:** It’s the presence of God that transforms us into the character and nature of Jesus.

Amen  
Bill Kirk