

In this chapter of 2 Corinthians, Paul begins with an argument for his credibility. Throughout the book we see a defense for his ministry. Whether it be over his decision to visit Corinth, his credentials as an apostle, or the purpose of hardships faced because of his mission, Paul continuously points all audiences back to the Lord.

2 Corinthians 3:1-18

Ministers of the New Covenant

I. COMPARING OUR STORIES

MY EXPERIENCE...

YOUR EXPERIENCE...

It's been said the two most influential things in our lives are the people we surround ourselves with and the books we read. Our attitude, worldview, interests, and even speech can take on the characteristics of "where we've been". That said, it's interesting to consider "where we've been" as we assess the process of becoming more like Christ.

II. CONSIDERING OUR STRUGGLES

WHAT are some traits, interests, or hobbies you've picked up from others in your life?

HOW have you become more like others in a negative way?

CAN you identify spiritual lessons you've gleaned from others?

HOW does God use others in our lives to make us more like Him?

WHAT are some specific ways you've seen God change, shape, or refine your character to be more like Him?

2 Corinthians

3:1-17

Ministers of the New Covenant

Read 2 Corinthians 3:1-17

OBSERVATION

What question does Paul present as the chapter opens?

How does he answer his question in vs. 2?

What (or who) is the “letter” Paul refers to in vs. 3 and who is it from, delivered by, written by, and with what?

Where does confidence come from according to vs. 4-5?

According to vs. 6, what are we ministers of?

List all the contrasts made in vs. 7-11.

According to vs. 12, what two things does this new covenant produce?

In vs. 13-18, who does Paul say we are NOT like, and what is different, specifically?

INTERPRETATION

Why does Paul make reference to needing a letter of recommendation? Consider his point made in 2:17.

How do those in Corinth serve as a sort of “letter” (vs. 1-3)?

What does it mean to be *sufficient* in something? Why does this seem to be a big deal to Paul? See 2:16.

What is the Old Covenant Paul references? How does it bring death? See Exodus 19:4-6, and 20 for insight.

How was the Old Covenant being brought to an end (vs. 11)? See Hebrews 8:6-13 for further study.

To what event is Paul referencing when he describes Moses’ experience with the veil? See Exodus 34:29-35.

Why can we now have boldness, freedom, and hope in the New Covenant paradigm? See 1 Peter 2:9-10.

How has God, through Christ, made a way for us to be in His presence, and what does this mean for our future hope AND current character? How does God’s presence in us, by way of His Spirit, change us?

APPLICATION

Where have you been? Who are you spending time with? Who are you beholding (vs. 18)?

Are you walking in freedom and boldness because of it, living in courage, hope, and transformation that comes from His presence, or are you ok with brokenness, sin, fear, and insecurities?