


Day 1


 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

Servants to the New Covenant

¹Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you?

Q1. What are two synonyms (words that have similar meanings) for “commend”?

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 Definition: com·mend (kə-měnd')

- 1. To express approval of; praise: *commended the volunteers for their hard work.* See Synonyms at praise.
- 2. a. To represent as worthy, qualified, or desirable; recommend: *I commend her book to you.*
- 2. b. To cause to be worthy of recommendation: *There is much about her book to commend it.*
- 3. To commit to the care of another; entrust: *commended the orphans to the care of a guardian.*

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Q2. How do you define a letter of recommendation? And when is it used?

Definition?

Usage?

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Q3. Why might Paul and his companions need a letter of recommendation?

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Q4. What group attempted to discredit Paul and would, therefore, encourage the Corinthians to question Paul’s qualifications, ministry, and devotion to God? What was the motivation of this group? (This group of people was discussed in [Lesson 2: 2 Corinthians 1:12-24 & 2:1-4](#), pages 2, 8, & 13.)


 J U A R S

The group’s motives?

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Lesson 4: 2 Corinthians 3:1-18

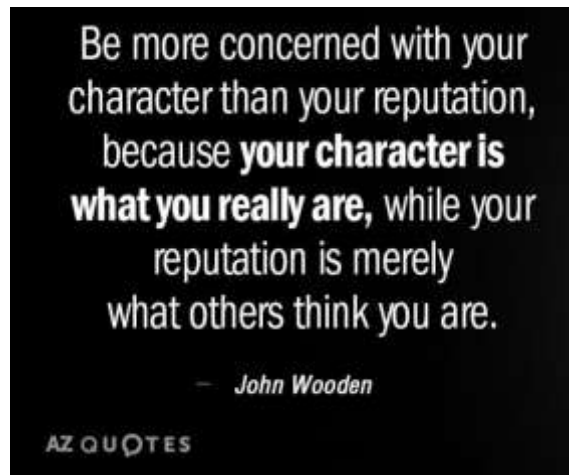
Day 2

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

²You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known, and read by everybody. ³You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

Q5. (Verse 2) ***You yourselves are our letter:***” How might the Corinthians be like a letter (of recommendation)?

Q6. (Verse 2) The Corinthian letter (of recommendation) was not written on paper; how might their letter be ***“known, and read by everybody”***? (Hint: reputation? Example? Charity?)



Quote from Basketball Coach John Wooden.

<https://www.azquotes.com/quotes/topics/character-and-reputation.html>

Q7. (Verse 3) ***“the result of our ministry:***” whose ministry? Is Paul boasting?


Name the human owner of the ministry:

Is Paul boasting? Yes? No? Why?

Lesson 4: 2 Corinthians 3:1-18

Q8. (Verse 3) “*tablets of stone:*” To what does “tablets of stone” refer?

Q9. (Verse 3) “*tablets of human hearts:*” To what does “tablets of human hearts” refer?

 The Old Testament has several passages (Jeremiah 31:33 ↓; Ezekiel 11:19-20 ↓; and Ezekiel 36:26 ↓) in which God promises that He will give His chosen people a ‘new heart’ upon which His love, His law, His attributes will be written.

Jeremiah 31:33 [English Standard Version (ESV)]


³³ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Ezekiel 11:19-20 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

¹⁹ And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

Ezekiel 36:26 [International Children’s Bible (ICB)]

²⁶ Also, I will teach you to respect me completely. I will put a new way to think inside you. I will take out the stubborn heart like stone from your bodies. And I will give you an obedient heart of flesh.

 In the following passages the Bible student is taught that the Holy Spirit is much more active in our lives than we can sense, know, or understand.

Matthew 11:25-26 [NIV-1984]

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure."

Matthew 16:13-17 [NIV-1984]

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven."

Lesson 4: 2 Corinthians 3:1-18

Matthew 12:31-32 [(NIV-1984)]

[The Holy Spirit is a critical member of the Trinity.]

³¹ And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³² Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

1 Corinthians 12:3 [(NIV-1984)]

Therefore, I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

Titus 3:4-8 [(NIV-1984)]

⁴ But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. ⁸ This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

Q10. (Verse 3) "*the result of our ministry, written . . . with the Spirit of the living God . . . on tablets of human hearts:*" what does Paul mean when he writes that God's Holy Spirit wrote/affirmed the results of their ministry?

John 16:13-14 [(NIV-1984)]

[Jesus is teaching His disciples about the work the Holy Spirit will perform within them (and us):]

¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.


Ephesians 1:13-14 [(NIV-1984)]

[Paul writes, through the promptings of the Holy Spirit, this profound promise for we, who believe:]

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.

Lesson 4: 2 Corinthians 3:1-18

Day 3

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

⁴Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. ⁵Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.

Q11. (Verse 4) What is the source of Paul's confidence? What is the source of your confidence?

Source: Paul's confidence?

.....
Source: your confidence?
.....

Psalm 139:16^b [NIV-1984]

All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Q12. (Verse 5) What is the source of your own personal competence and abilities?

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Matthew 13:10-12 [NIV-1984]

[Jesus continues to teach His disciples. In this passage Jesus explains His use of parables in teaching and there is a greater promise in His Words that, when we who believe, exercise our talents, in obedience to Him, more will be given to us — greater talents, opportunities, and challenges. The Lord Jesus wants us to grow in our love, reliance, and obedience to Him; and our example to nonbelievers, with whom we come into contact, is a witness to our ever-increasing faith in Him.]

¹⁰The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?"

¹¹He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. ¹²Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

Give thanks whatever happens. That is what God wants for you in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 5:20 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

Always give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 4:6 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

Do not worry about anything. But pray and ask God for everything you need. And when you pray, always give thanks.

Colossians 3:17 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

Everything you say and everything you do should all be done for Jesus your Lord. And in all you do, give thanks to God the Father through Jesus.

Lesson 4: 2 Corinthians 3:1-18

1 Timothy 4:1-5 [The Message (MSG); a paraphrase]

The Spirit makes it clear that as time goes on, some are going to give up on the faith and chase after demonic illusions put forth by professional liars. These liars have lied so well and for so long that they've lost their capacity for truth. They will tell you not to get married. They'll tell you not to eat this or that food — perfectly good food God created to be eaten heartily and with thanksgiving by believers who know better! Everything God created is good, and to be received with thanks. Nothing is to be sneered at and thrown out. God's Word and our prayers make every item in creation holy [including you].

^{6a} He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant — ^{6b} not of the letter but of the Spirit; ^{6c} for the letter kills, ^{6d} but the Spirit gives life.


Q13. (Verse 6^a) Paul asks about the “*new covenant*”, so that begs the question: what is the old covenant? What is the “*new covenant*”?

What is the old covenant?

What is the “new covenant”?

Q14. (Verses 6^b & 6^c) What is the letter to which the Apostle Paul refers?

Q15. (Verse 6^c) How can “*the letter kill*”?

 It seems strange to us that the Apostle Paul does not go into a detail to explain how “*the letter kills*”. However, Paul has discussed this in other letters (epistles) to the various churches he founded (planted) and undoubtedly believed that no further explanations to the Corinthians were required. The following passages from Paul's other letters help to convey his thoughts on the Old Testament Law, the New Covenant, and the life-giving work of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 15:56-57 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS); a paraphrase]

⁵⁵⁻⁵⁷ It is sin which gives death its power, and it is the Law which gives sin its strength. All thanks to God, then, who gives us the victory over these things through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Galatians 3:10-12 [NIV-1984]

¹⁰ All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

¹¹ Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith."

¹² The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them."

Galatians 3:21-25 [NIV-1984]

²¹ Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.

Lesson 4: 2 Corinthians 3:1-18

²² But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. ²³ Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed.

²⁴ So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

Romans 7:9-11 [NIV-1984]

⁹ Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. ¹⁰ I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. ¹¹ For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.

Romans 8:1-3^a, 5-8, 9-11 [NIV-1984]

¹ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. ^{3^a} For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. . . .

⁵ Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

⁶ The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷ the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

⁹ You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Q16. (Verse 6^d) How does “**the Spirit give . . . life**”?


Ephesians 1:13-14 [NIV-1984]

[Sorry to be repetitive, but this is one of the best passages that proclaims the ‘life-giving’ promise from God.]

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.

Lesson 4: 2 Corinthians 3:1-18

Day 4

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

The Glorious Ministry That Brings Righteousness


^{7a} Now if the ministry that brought death, ^{7b} which was engraved in letters on stone, ^{7c} came with glory, ^{7d} so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, ^{7e} fading though it was, ⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious?

Q17. (Verse 7^b) What “was engraved in letters on stone”?



Moses sharing the God-given Ten Commandments with his Jewish brothers and sisters
[© <https://follow-god.medium.com/ten-commandments-a836d9bcb5d4>]
https://miro.medium.com/v2/resize:fit:640/format:webp/0*b7Ou-JwWJDT0wIqe.jpg

Q18. (Verse 7^a) How did the ministry bring death?

 Definition: min·is·try (mĭn'ĭ-strĕ) n. pl. min·is·tries

1. a. The act of serving; ministrations [ministrations defined: 1. The act or process of serving or aiding.].

1. b. One that serves as a means; an instrumentality.

2. a. The profession, duties, and services of a minister. . . .

[Source: American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition. Copyright © 2016 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved. <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/ministry>]

Lesson 4: 2 Corinthians 3:1-18

Q19. The word “glory” appears at the end of verses 7^c and 7^d. What is the source of the “glory” that is referenced?

Q20. (Verse 7^d) Why couldn't “the Israelites . . . look steadily at the face of Moses”?

Exodus 34:28-35 [NIV-1984]

²⁸ Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant — the Ten Commandments.

²⁹ When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord . ³⁰ When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹ But Moses called to them; so, Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them.

³² Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai. ³³ When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face.

³⁴ But whenever he entered the Lord 's presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, ³⁵ they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the Lord.

Q21. (Verse 7^d & 7^e) Was the radiance of Moses' face permanent? Or temporary?

Permanent? Temporary? Why?

Q22. (Verse 8) Briefly explain how “the ministry of the Spirit [is] even more glorious”?

Ministry of the Spirit:

“This is an argument from the less to the greater. Several things in it are worthy of notice:


“(1) The proper contrast to the “*ministry that brought death*” (2 Corinthians 3:7), would have been 'ministration of life.' But Paul chose rather to call it the “*ministry of the Spirit*” as the source of life; or as conferring higher dignity on the Gospel than to have called it simply the ministration of life.

“(2) by the “Spirit” here is manifestly meant the Holy Spirit; and the whole phrase denotes the Gospel, or the preaching of the Gospel, by which eminently the Holy Spirit is imparted.


“(3) it is the high honor of the gospel ministry, that it is the means by which the Holy Spirit is imparted to human beings. It is designed to secure the salvation of people by his agency; and it is through the ministry that the Holy Spirit is imparted, the heart renewed, and the soul saved. The work of the ministry is, therefore, the most important and honorable in which man can engage.” [©1834, Notes on the Bible by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/3-8.htm]

Lesson 4: 2 Corinthians 3:1-18

Day 5

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

^{9a} If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, ^{9b} 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!

 Sometimes a different Biblical version will provide additional understanding to a specific passage or verse:

2 Corinthians 3:7-18 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS)]

⁷⁻¹¹ The administration of the Law which was engraved in stone (and which led in fact to spiritual death) was so magnificent that the Israelites were unable to look unflinchingly at Moses' face, for it was alight with heavenly splendour.

Now if the old administration held such heavenly, even though transitory, splendour, can we not see what a much more glorious thing is the new administration of the Spirit of life? If to administer a system which is to end in condemning men was a splendid task, how infinitely more splendid is it to administer a system which ends in making men good! And while it is true that the former temporary glory has been completely eclipsed by the latter, we do well to remember that is eclipsed simply because the present permanent plan is such a very much more glorious thing than the old.


Q23. (Verse 9^a) *If the ministry that condemns men is glorious*: What is "the ministry" in this phrase? How is mankind condemned? What makes the "ministry . . . glorious"? Is this ministry permanent? Or temporary?

What is "the ministry"?

How is mankind condemned?

What makes the "ministry glorious"? (Hint: What is the source of this ministry?)

Is ministry permanent? Or temporary? Thoughts?

 The "Law condemns the guilty; it does not save them. It denounces punishment; it contains no provisions of pardon. To pardon is to depart from the Law; and must be done under the operation of another system - since a law which contains a provision for the pardon of offenders, and permits them to escape, would be a burlesque in legislation. The tendency of the Mosaic [of Moses] institutions, therefore, was to produce a sense of condemnation. And so, it will be found by all who attempt to be justified by the Law. It will tend to, and result in, their condemnation." [©1834, *Notes on the Bible* by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/3-9.htm]

Lesson 4: 2 Corinthians 3:1-18


Q24. (Verse 9^b) **How much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness:** What is “the ministry in this phrase? How is mankind made righteous? What makes the ministry more glorious? Is this ministry permanent? Or temporary?

What is “the ministry?”

How is mankind made righteous?

What makes the ministry more glorious? (Hint: What is the source of this ministry?)

Is ministry permanent? Or temporary? Thoughts?

 “The gospel; the promulgation of the plan of mercy. It is called ‘the ministration of righteousness,’ in contradistinction from the Law of Moses, which was a ‘ministration of condemnation.’ The word ‘righteousness,’ however, does not exactly express the force of the original word. . . It should be rendered ‘the ministration of justification;’ the plan by which God justifies people.” [©1834, *Notes on the Bible* by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/3-9.htm]

Revelation 21:1-4 [NIV-1984]

[Is the ministry permanent? Or temporary?]

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

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.

Q25. Why were people attracted to Paul and the message he spoke? (After all, in Paul’s early life he was a blazing zealot for the Jewish faith and persecuted, with prison and physical deprivation, people who believed in the Gospel of Christ Jesus — the early Christians.)

Q26. (Verse 12) What is Paul’s “*hope*”?


Lesson 4: 2 Corinthians 3:1-18

Q27. (Verse 13) Why were the Jewish people afraid of Moses? (Consider the four centuries – prophesied in Genesis 15:13 – of slavery the Jewish people experienced at the hands of the Egyptians. Were the Jews accustomed to, or familiar with, seeking God? Trusting God? Following God?)

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Day 6

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

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.

Q28. What is the Pentateuch? And traditionally, who is considered the author?

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Q29. How would you explain the phrase “the same veil remains when the old covenant is read” or “when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts”?

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Isaiah 25:6-9 [NIV-1984]

⁶ On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine — the best of meats and the finest of wines. ⁷ On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet [or veil] that covers all nations; ⁸ he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The Lord has spoken.

⁹ In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the Lord; we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

Lesson 4: 2 Corinthians 3:1-18

Ezekiel 36:26-27 [NIV-1984]

²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Lamentations 3:65 [NIV-1984]

Put a veil over their hearts, and may your curse be on them!

Matthew 13:15 [NIV-1984]

For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes [definitely, veiled]. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'

Romans 11:7-10 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

⁷ So this is what has happened: The people of Israel tried to be right with God. But they did not succeed. But the ones God chose did become right with him. The others became hard and refused to listen to God.

⁸ As it is written in the [Old Testament] Scriptures:

"God gave the people a dull mind so they could not understand." [Isaiah 29:10]

"God closed their eyes so they could not see, and God closed their ears so they could not hear. This continues until today." [Deuteronomy 29:4]

⁹ And David says: "Let their own feasts trap them and cause their ruin. Let their feasts cause them to sin and be paid back. ¹⁰ Let their eyes be closed so they cannot see. Let their backs be forever weak from troubles." [Psalm 69:22-23]

2 Corinthians 4:1-6 [NIV-1984]

¹ Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Q30. Is verse 16 true for you, who believe in His saving grace?

Yes? No? How?

Lesson 4: 2 Corinthians 3:1-18

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.

Q31. Doesn't belief in Christ Jesus restrict a person's wants and desires, covetousness and selfishness. So, how can this phrase be true: "*where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom*"? Where is the "*freedom*" to do what I want?

John 4:24 [English Standard Version (ESV)]


[Jesus taught the 'Samaritan woman at Jacob's well']

"God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

Matthew 13:11-15 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS)]

[Jesus explained His use of parables to His Disciples.]

"Because you have been given the chance to understand the secrets of the kingdom of Heaven," replied Jesus, "but they have not. For when a man has something, more is given to him till he has plenty. But if he has nothing even his nothing will be taken away from him. This is why I speak to them in these parables; because they go through life with their eyes open, but see nothing, and with their ears open, but understand nothing of what they hear. They are the living fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the heart of this people has grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their heart and turn, so that I should heal them'.

 *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom* [also translated 'liberty']: "This is a general truth designed to illustrate the particular sentiment which he had just advanced. The word "liberty" here (ἐλευθερία eleutheria) refers, I think, to freedom in speaking; the power of speaking openly, and freely, as in 2 Corinthians 3:12 (↑). It states the general truth, that the effect of the Spirit of God was to give light and clearness of view; to remove obscurity from a subject, and to enable one to see it plainly. This would be a truth that could not be denied by the Jews, who held to the doctrine that the Spirit of God revealed truth, and it must be admitted by all. Under the influence of that Spirit, therefore, Paul says, that he was able to speak with openness, and boldness; that he had a clear view of truth, which the mass of the Jews had not; and that the system of religion which he preached was open, plain, and clear. . . 'There is freedom from the dark and obscure views of the Jews; freedom from their prejudices, and their superstitions; freedom from the slavery and bondage of sin; the freedom of the children of God, who have clear views of him as their Father and Redeemer and who are enabled to express those views openly and boldly to the world.' " [©1834, *Notes on the Bible* by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/3-17.htm]

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