

**II Corinthians: Lesson #24 – Servants of a New Covenant**  
**Notes for Parents to Study with Their Children**  
**For Wednesday, July 11th**

Read II Cor. 2:12 – 4:6 (a simplified explanation of the text is supplied at the end of these notes).

**Memory Verse:** II Cor. 3:2 “You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men.”

**Our Victory in Jesus**

- Sometimes life can be hard. Some things happen to disappoint us or worry us or upset us. We pray to God and ask Him to help us.
- If we will trust God and keep serving Him and living His way, He will help us through our troubles and our problems. It may take some time, but they will get better.
- As we keep serving God and He keeps helping us we get to have a victory. What is a victory? [You may have heard the song “Victory in Jesus”.] Victory is when you win. Like when you win at a game or a contest. When a country goes to war, if they win and the other side loses, they have a victory.
- Paul said that Christ will always help us “triumph”, which means to win a victory. Sometimes when an army wins a battle, the soldiers have a victory parade where they march down the street. Christ will always help us to have victories in our lives. Victories over sadness, victories over sin, victories over the devil, and even a victory in heaven.
- Back when Paul wrote, as these soldiers had their victory march and they would throw good smelling flowers to the people they passed and they would also burn incense (incense makes a smell like perfume in smoke.), Paul compares that good smell to God’s Word. That “smell” is a wonderful smell to those who love God’s Word and obey it.

**Paul Used God’s Word Properly**

- Paul promised the Corinthians that he and men like Timothy would never misuse God’s Word.
- They would teach God’s Word properly. They would never lie to people about it. They would never try to trick anyone. They would preach about how important Jesus was, not how important they were.

**God’s People are Like a Letter**

- Paul told the Christians at Corinth, “You are our letter.”
- Paul meant that people read our lives look at us and see what kind of people we are. We want people to be able to look at our lives and see that we love Jesus Christ, that we study His Word, that we go to church and that we live a good way.
- When we do that, people can learn something about how God wants them to live.
- Everyone should read the Bible, but a lot of people don’t. Your life might be the only thing of God’s ways that they ever look at. So we have to make sure that what they see in our lives shows them God’s ways.
- If we lie, that doesn’t teach them anything about God. If we use bad language, that sure doesn’t help them learn how to act. If we act rude and mean, that won’t teach them about God.
- You are a letter that someone is reading, so let them read about God in your life.

### **The Old Covenant and the New Covenant**

- Paul preached to people about the New Covenant. We know that our Bible is divided into two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament.
- The Old Testament was about the children of Israel, the Jews. It tells about the Law God gave them through Moses.
- When Jesus died and rose again He gave us the New Covenant. The New Covenant or New Testament is about His Laws and what He wants His people to do.
- The Old Testament was a glorious, wonderful thing. There is an interesting story you might remember in Exodus 34. After Moses had been with God receiving the Law, he came down from the mountain and his face was shining from being near God. The children of Israel were afraid to even look at Moses. So when God gave the Old Testament law to Moses, it was glorious.
- But God sent Jesus to this earth and He gave us the New Covenant, the New Testament. That was even more wonderful. Jesus was God's own Son. His covenant could take away sins. He has promised us heaven.
- Paul says the glory of the New Covenant was so much more wonderful, that it made the glory of the Old Covenant fade away.

### **The Veil that Hides the Glory**

- Paul makes another point about that story. Because the people were afraid of Moses' shining face, he put a veil over his head. The veil would hide his shining face.
- Paul says that that is like some people who read the Scripture. They read it but that don't see the wonderful things in it. [Just imagine trying to read anything with a cloth covering up your whole head.] They couldn't see that the Bible, especially the Old Testament was telling about Jesus.
- So some people never obeyed Jesus, they were never baptized, they never went to church, they never worshipped, because it was like they had a veil over their head where they couldn't see.
- If we will start obeying Jesus, we can take that veil away, we can start seeing better what He want us to do and how He want us to live.
- Once we can see Jesus clearly, the Light of His Word can shine in our lives too. Every day as we learn more about Him, we can start acting more like He did.
- 

### **Simplified Explanation of the Text**

**Paul Tells of His Fears.** When Paul left Ephesus, he made his way up the coast to Troas where he expected to meet Titus. He had sent Titus to Corinth to help them with their problems. But when Paul got to Troas, Titus wasn't there. Paul was so afraid that things had gotten really bad at the Corinthian church. It was very upsetting to Paul. He left Troas and went on to Macedonia. When you read Chapter 7 of II Corinthians you find out that Paul finally found Titus there and he reported that things were better at Corinth.

II Cor. 2:12-13 "Now, when I came to Troas for Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me in the Lord, but when I arrived I didn't find my brother Titus there. I was so upset that I left that good opportunity in Troas and went on to Macedonia.

**God Allowed Them To Have a Victory.** When Paul found out that most of the Corinthian church was still behind him and had obeyed the instructions in his first letter, he knew that God had let them win a victory over Satan's influence. He pictures it like Roman soldiers who won a battle. They would march through the streets to celebrate

their victory. In those victory marches flowers were thrown and incense was burned giving off a sweet smell.

14 But the grace of God always leads us to be triumphant in Christ and through us the aroma of the knowledge of the Lord is given off everywhere we go.

15 We are the fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing,

16 To one group (who hears what we teach) we are the smell of death for (the gospel condemns them to) death. To another group (who hears what we teach) we are the smell of life for (the gospel leads them to) life. And who has the ability to do all these things?

17 (We will continue to teach the gospel and everyone will have to respond to it as life or death. We will not stop doing this.) For we are not like many who treat God's Word as if it were a product to be sold (making deals and compromises, bargains, and selling whatever the people want). But we handle God's Word sincerely like it came from God. We speak it knowing that we stand before God in Christ.

### **You are Our Letter.**

3:1 Do you think we are giving ourselves compliments again? Or, do we, like some people, need letters that recommend us to you or letters from you that recommend us to others?

2 You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by everyone,

3 and you show that you are a letter from Christ served by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of the human heart.

4 That is why we have such confidence through Christ toward God.

5 (When we speak of what we are able to do), it's certainly not that we think of ourselves as able to do anything on our own; what we are able to do comes from God.

### **Servants of the New Covenant**

6 God was the One who equipped us to be able servants of the New Covenant. This is not a covenant of letter but of the Spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

7 The (Old Covenant) service (to God) that involved letters engraved on stones was a service of death (That is to say, the Law condemned people's sins, but gave them no permanent pardon from sin). Even though that was true, it still was glorious when it was given. It was so glorious that the children of Israel were not able to keep looking at the face of Moses because of the glory shining on his face, even though it was fading away.

8 (If that Old Covenant service was so glorious,) how could the service of the Spirit (under the New Covenant) be anything but more glorious?

9 If the service (under the Old Covenant) that brought condemnation had glory, then the (New Covenant) service that brings righteousness will have even greater glory.

10 For that (Old Covenant) which had glory, loses its glory because of (the New Covenant) glory that excels it.

11 For if that (Old Covenant) which was done away with was glorious, how much more true it is that (the New Covenant) which remains is glorious.

12 Seeing that (all this is true about the New Covenant,) we have a hope like this, we speak in a bold way.

13 But we don't speak like Moses who put a veil on his face, so that the children of Israel would not have to look intently. They were looking at that which would finally be abolished.

14 But their minds were hardened, and to this very day when the Old Testament Scriptures are read, it is like there is still a veil covering it. But that veil pulled away in Christ.

15-16 Therefore, even now whenever the writings of Moses are read, a veil still covers their heart; but when anyone turns to the Lord, that veil will be pulled away.

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Lord's Spirit is there is liberty.

18 But all of us with an unveiled face look as if we were looking into a mirror at the glory of the Lord. As we look, we begin to be transformed (changed from one thing to something else). As we look into the mirror of the Lord's glory, we start changing to look like that image. His glory transforms us, a glory that comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

4:1 Therefore since we have this service to render to God, having been the recipients of His mercy, we don't let ourselves grow discouraged.

### **Paul Refuses to Misuse God's Word**

2 But we refuse to speak shameful secret things (things that would be wrong in doctrine or morals if you knew the whole truth). We will not conduct our work, trying to trick anyone with underhanded dishonest methods. We will not handle the word of God in a deceitful way (like we are dangling an enticing bait in front of you only to catch you in our hook).

3-4 So if our gospel is covered up with a veil, it is hidden to those who are perishing. Jesus Christ is the image of God whose light should shine on them. But in their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers keeping them from the light of the glorious gospel of Christ.

5 We don't preach about ourselves, but about Christ Jesus the Lord, and about ourselves as your servants through Jesus.

6 For the same God that at creation commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God's glory in Jesus' face.