

## GOOD SINCE

### "SINCE WE HAVE SUCH A HOPE"

#### 2 CORINTHIANS 3:7-18

### This Week's Core Competency

**Hope** – I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ. Hebrews 6:19-20, *We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf.*

Salvation is both a *present* position and a *future* hope. In the first instance, Paul writes in Ephesians 2:8, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith," and in the second, he writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:8, "Since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet."

A generation ago many people believed that salvation, both present and future, was obtained by keeping the Ten Commandments. The commandments are not as well known nowadays, so it's not uncommon to hear the same sentiment expressed in more general terms—do what's right, be a spiritual person, obey the Golden Rule, be true to yourself, and so on. In 2 Corinthians 3:7-18 Paul talks about two covenants, an old one that brings condemnation and death and a new one that brings righteousness and life. Obviously, the new one is in Paul's words "more glorious" than the old one.

The old one was engraved on stone; it was the covenant God made with Israel through Moses, the mosaic covenant or the law. It brings death even

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***Faith and works are two different things, and faith is the only condition of salvation.***

– Shawn Lazar

though it was intended to bring life (Ro 7:10), not because it's flawed but because human beings are flawed. It brings death because no one keeps it, and no one keeps it because everyone is inclined to sin. Nobody's perfect. Paul puts it this way in Galatians 3:21, 22: "If a law had been given that could impart life then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. 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."

The reason the law of Moses does not impart life is because of sin. Human beings are addicted to sin. We're addicts in the womb, born in sin. That's the reason the Mosaic law can't impart life, let alone any other set of moral standards, even those we create for ourselves.

The new covenant is administered by the Spirit. It brings righteousness and life because it doesn't depend on human ability. It depends on God's grace. Calvin writes, "The office of the law is to show us the disease in such a way that it shows us no hope of a cure; whereas the office of the gospel is to bring a remedy to those who are past hope. For the law, since it leaves man to himself, necessarily condemns him to death; whereas the gospel, by bringing him to Christ, opens the gate of life" (cited by Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 104). But if no one can keep the law, how were people saved in Old Testament times? By grace through faith, just like Abraham, who was saved before the law was given, and just like we are today (cf. Ro 3:19-4:25). Other religions teach people to do something to be saved; Christianity teaches people to believe something to be saved (Ac 16:30, 31; cf. Jn 3:16-18).

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Unfortunately, too many today either *front-load* or *back-load* the gospel with works. To do the first is to declare that one is saved by faith *plus* works; to do the second is to declare that one is saved by faith *that* works. In any case, people in both camps lack assurance of their salvation and confidence in the hope that is theirs in Christ. One commentator explains:

"Front-loading the gospel *openly* makes works a condition of salvation. Back-loading the gospel *covertly* makes works a condition of salvation, by subtly redefining faith to include works. People who believe in a back-loaded gospel lack assurance for the same reason people who believe in salvation by works lack assurance. They need to look at their works to know if they 'really' believe. But since they're all sinners, with a mixture of good and bad behavior, they're never sure if they're good enough to be saved" (Shawn Lazar, "A Back-loaded Gospel: The Error of Redefining Faith," *Grace in Focus*, May/June 2017, 20).

The solution to this problem is simple enough. Understand that salvation is by faith apart from works, period! No ifs, ands, or buts (Jn 3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:47; 10:28; 20:31; Ro 5:1; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8-9; Tit 3:5a). Faith and works are polar opposites. The same author writes: "To believe means to be persuaded that something is true. It contains no element of behavior. No work. Of course, our beliefs influence our behavior, but you can't say that works are part of faith itself. Faith and works are two different things, and faith is the only condition of salvation." (23).

## day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

### 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.

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- \* Underline "the ministry that brought death" in v. 7.
- \* Circle "glory" and "glorious" in vv. 7-11.
- \* Circle "fading" in vv. 7, 11, 13.
- \* Box "so that" indicating *result* in v. 7.
- \* Double underline "ministry of the Spirit" in v. 8.
- \* Underline "the ministry that condemns men" in v. 9.
- \* Double underline "the ministry that brings righteousness" v. 9.
- \* Box "therefore" indicating *result* in v. 12.
- \* Circle "veil" in vv. 12, 14, 15, 16.
- \* Box "not like" indicating *comparison* in v. 13.
- \* Box "but" indicating contrast in vv. 14, 16.
- \* Highlight "are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory" in v. 18.

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## day 2

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. In verse 7 Paul refers to "the *ministry* that brought *death*." What ministry?
2. What has Moses' *face* got to do with the *glory* that came with that ministry? (Cf., "ever increasing" in v. 18)
3. Read Exodus 34:29-35. What does the fact that Moses' countenance was fading suggest to Paul? (See v. 11)
4. In verse 9 Paul refers to "the *ministry* that brings *righteousness*." What ministry?
5. Put the point of verse 10 in your own words.
6. So what would you say is the point of Paul's extended *comparison* in verses 7-11?
7. What "hope" is Paul talking about in verse 12?
8. "We are *not* like Moses," he says in verse 13. How are we *unlike* Moses?
9. Explain the *contrast* introduced in verse 16.
10. What do you make of verse 18?
11. **Discussion:** Discuss what you don't understand about this passage.

This passage will challenge your Bible reading ability. Don't be surprised if you have to read it more than once to understand it. Leave it to Paul to pen a document that reads more like a legal contract than a personal letter. Still, be of good cheer; even if you can't understand its every nuance, you can comprehend what he wrote well enough to respond to it. Here's what one commentator has to say about 2 Corinthians 3:7-18: "In 3:6 Paul spoke of his ministry under the new covenant of the Spirit and contrasted it with the ministry under the old covenant. In 3:7-18 the apostle, by means of an exposition of Exodus 34:29-32 and then of 34:33-35, further compares and contrasts the ministries of the new and old covenants so as to demonstrate the superiority of the former. Paul's primary purpose in so doing is to highlight the glorious character of the ministry with which he has been entrusted and to explain why, despite so many difficulties, he does not lose heart (cf. 4:1)" (Colin G. Kruse, *2 Corinthians*, TNTC, 93).

The first paragraph contains an extended comparison between the ministry of the law and the ministry of the Spirit, in other words, ministry under the old covenant versus ministry under the new covenant, or ministry in Old Testament times versus ministry in New Testament times. Paul's point is quite clear. The ministry of the law was glorious, but the ministry of the Spirit is even more glorious. If the meaning of the word "glorious" is vague to you, replace it with the word "awesome." The ministry of the Spirit is so awesome that looking back, the ministry of the law doesn't seem awesome at all. This is due in part to the fact—note Paul's use of *contrast*—that the ministry of the law, which brought death (v. 7), was from its inception coming to an end while the ministry of the Spirit, which brings righteousness (v. 9) will last; it's endless. One author writes: "These verses (7-11) show what a revolution had taken place in the mind of St. Paul since he had exchanged the Law for the Gospel. Christianity is so superior to Judaism that it has extinguished it. Even in its best days, when it also was a Divine revelation to the human race, Judaism had a glory which was

infinitesimal compared with that which was inaugurated by Christ" (Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, reprint ed., ICC, 92).

The first word and the first sentence in the second paragraph are very important. The word "therefore" introduces Paul's conclusion, and the first sentence answers the question "So what?" The ministry of the Spirit is more glorious than the ministry of the law. So what? Well, since we have the hope of righteousness and life based on the new covenant, which is permanent, unlike the old covenant which was temporary, we are very bold. Put differently, we need not fear that the new covenant will be superseded. Unlike Moses who concealed the fading glory of his countenance when he addressed the Israelites, we freely and openly display our faces, which reflect the glory of the Lord more and more as we are transformed more and more into his likeness. In a nutshell, we live the Christian life boldly; we're not timid in our faith. *The Message* paraphrases verse 12 this way, "With that kind of hope to excite us, nothing holds us back."

The rest of the second paragraph contains a comment on the Jewish people. Paul referred to a literal veil when he spoke of Moses, then he referred to a figurative veil when he spoke of his people. "When Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts," he said. "But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away." Commenting on the veil, the *NIV Study Bible* explains, "The veil that prevented them from seeing the fading of the glory on Moses' face is still with them, preventing them from recognizing the temporary and inadequate character of the old covenant—a veil that is removed only in Christ" (see note on 3:14). Like Paul who didn't get it until he was on his way to Damascus, they won't get it until they believe in Jesus.

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## *The Message of the Passage*

*Live the Christian life boldly and share your faith openly  
because you have a glorious hope.*

### day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 *living questions* to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following *living questions*:**

- How is God making himself known to you?

- How does God want to change you?

- How is God calling you to change your world?

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# notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 7 **death** Paul is talking about the ministry of the law. It was intended to bring life (Ro 7:10), but it brought death, but not because it was evil. The exact opposite is true. The law is "holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good" (Ro 7:12), but it brings death because no one keeps it. It brings death in that it brings condemnation and with it a death sentence. No one keeps the commandments because everyone is born in sin with a heart inclined to break the law (Gal 3:21, 22).

v. 7 **engraved** An allusion to the law that was written on tablets of stone (see v. 3; cf. Ex 31:18).

v. 7 **glory** "Glory" is a key word in this section of the epistle. It occurs 19 times in chapters 1-8, and 15 of these references appear in chapters 3 and 4. 'Glory' appears as a noun and a verb 10 times in verses 7-11. Both covenants involved ministry to God that resulted in glory for God" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on 2 Corinthians," 2017 ed., 39, www.soniclight.com). The word "glory" has a number of senses; the nuance of its sense here is somewhat difficult to put into words. The giving of the law was accompanied by astonishing, awesome events, such as thunder, lightning, fire, smoke, and earthquakes associated with God's presence (cf. Ex 19:16-19). These events were terrifying at the time, but looking back it's clear they marked the magnificent inauguration of the old covenant. The coming of the law was accompanied by the glory of the Lord; it was a glorious, earthshaking event that left an indelible impression—the law is really something!

v. 7 **glory** The word is used again in the same verse, this time with reference to the radiant face of Moses. When he came down from Mt. Sinai with the two tablets of stone after being in the presence of God, "the skin of his face shone" (Ex 34:29 NASB)—so brightly that Aaron and the Israelites were afraid to come near him. "How is Moses' face radiant? Is it a brilliant light? A soft glow? Does he have a halo in the popular sense? What contributes to this uncertainty is the Hebrew verb *qaran* in [Ex] 34:29, translated 'radiant' in the NIV. This verb only occurs four times in the Hebrew Old Testament, three times in this passage and in Psalm 69:31. In the latter, it is a verbal noun and means 'horn,' which is the meaning of the cognate noun *qeren*. Because of the close affinity between *qeren*, whose meaning is certain, and the verb *qaran*, some medieval artists depicted Moses as having horns! In actuality, the reference is likely to some sort of glow. Note Habakkuk 3:4, where the same noun clearly refers to 'rays' of light. Moreover, illumination is known from Mesopotamian sources to indicate 'a characteristic attribute of divinity,' typically evinced in kings as a sign of their legitimate authority. This seems to be what is happening in 34:29-35. Moses' glow is actually an afterglow from being in God's presence. As Cassuto remarks, 'something of the Divine glory remained with him'" (Peter Enns, *The NIV Application Commentary: Exodus*, 586-87). Moses was beaming with the brightness of God's glory.

v. 8 **glorious** I.e., "awesome." Although this word is overused and abused nowadays—in descriptions of everything from burgers to jeans—it's truly warranted here.

v. 10 **no glory** "Just as the brightness of the sun altogether transcends and supersedes the brightness of the moon, or the advent of the day causes the brilliance of a lamp to fade away" (Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 105), so also has the surpassing glory of the new covenant overshadowed the old.

v. 12 **bold** The Greek word "originally meant 'frankness or freedom in speaking' or 'fearless candor' but came to denote 'barefacedness,' 'boldness,' or 'confidence' or 'openness' in action as well as word" (Murray J. Harris, "2 Corinthians" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10:339). "Openness toward God and men, and in the gospel, is meant (Eph. 3:12; 2 Cor. 3:12; Eph. 6:19-20). The face that is open toward God is also open toward others (2 Cor. 3:7ff.). This open face reflects the Lord's glory in increasing transformation by the Spirit" (TDNT, s.v., "parrhesia").

v. 13 **veil** Paul uses this term both literally and figuratively in this paragraph. The veil that covered Moses' face was literal. The veil that covers the hearts of the Jewish people whenever the old covenant is read is figurative.

v. 18 **transformed** Cf. Ro 8:29.

### Family Talk

#### Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Share the following stories from [www.kidsofcourage.com](http://www.kidsofcourage.com) with your kids to encourage them to be bold in their faith. (1) Asli is a Christian girl in Turkey. During the summer, she invited her friend Yildiz to go to a Christian camp with her. Like most kids in Turkey, Yildiz grew up in a Muslim family. But happily, her father said she could go to the camp. Yildiz heard the good news of Jesus for the first time at camp. Every evening, she called her father and said, "Dad, I want to belong to the Lord Jesus." "No way," her father answered. But Yildiz kept calling, and finally her father reluctantly agreed. Yildiz was very happy. When she went home, she told everyone that following Jesus was the most important thing in her life. (2) Mary, Sarah, and Anna live in Iraq. Their parents used to be Muslims. One day, their dad, Ali, watched a DVD about Jesus with a Christian friend. He was glad to find out the truth about Jesus, and he decided to accept him as his Savior. Since that time, Mary, Sarah, and Anna have had to move around a lot. Their grandfather kicked them out of his house after Ali became a Christian. They were kicked out of their next home after Ali shared Bibles with Muslims. These are all people who are very bold because of the hope they have!

#### What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read 2Co 3:7-18

1. "Therefore, since we have such a \_\_\_\_\_, we are very \_\_\_\_\_." (v.12)
2. Why would Moses put a veil on his face?
3. What happens to believers in verse 18?

#### What Do You Think

Jesus made a way for us to have a friendship with God when He died for us on the cross. When we trust Him as Savior, we become His friend. Have you done that? If not, make a list of questions you may have. If so, how are you different?

#### What R U Going To Do

Do something bold for Jesus this week! Do you have a friend who is having a hard time? Ask them if you can pray for them! Find a Bible verse that would be helpful for them, write it down and give it to him. Your hope makes you bold!

#### Core Comp

Hope - I can cope with the problems of life and death with the help of Jesus.

#### Memory Verse

John 1:1 - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

### KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse \_\_\_\_\_, completed *Scrolls* \_\_\_\_\_, brought Bible \_\_\_\_\_, brought a friend \_\_\_\_\_.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_ Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.

Questions: [Kids@pantego.org](mailto:Kids@pantego.org)

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

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**Wendy Hollabaugh** (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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