

**June 3, 2007**

**“Freedom: From A Veil To A Mirror”**

**2 Cor 3:16-18 NLT**

But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, then the veil is taken away. 17 Now, the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, he gives freedom. 18 And all of us have had that veil removed so that we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more.

We Americans interpret freedom as being able to do anything we want. That does not define freedom that defines selfishness. That does not define being free, that defines seeking my own happiness. A critical issue in our journey with God is not “Am I happy?” but “Am I free?” Biblical freedom means doing what I ought not as I please. We are free to be what God wants us to be, not free to sin. The question is, “Am I growing in the freedom God gave me?”

We are saved by faith in Jesus. This salvation is freedom. What are we saved from, and therefore free from? We are saved from sin. We are saved and free from the power of sin (having to give in to temptation to sin). We are free from the fear of death because we are saved from sin’s punishment in death. We are free from having to keep laws and rules and superstitions in our effort to please God. Religion is not what we do, it is what Jesus has done for us. Faith in Jesus has set us free from the cycle of trying to please God in our own strength, failing, feeling guilty, then trying harder, to make up for our failing to please God.

When we accept and put our faith in Jesus, God forgives the sins of our past and gives us His Spirit to help us in the future.

We are free to live our lives, to marry, to experience joy and sorrow. We are free to buy and use things, but with the awareness that these things in themselves are not our lives. We are marked to live in heaven for eternity and this hope frees us from the dominating power of things.

Do you want to know the secret of real inner peace? The secret is detachment. We get attached (literally “nailed to”) behaviors, habits, things, and people in unhealthy ways. We rarely realize how attached we are to something until it is removed. Ever have a power struggle with God because He wants to remove something or someone from your life? I have. And I’ve learned that going through difficult times (the darkest times in our life) has a way of cutting off our attachments to who we think we ought to be, or have to have.

Jesus was the freest person Who ever lived. First of all He was without sin. Everything He did was motivated by pure and unconditional love. He was free to be Himself. He spoke the truth boldly and lived truthfully. He was free from pretending to be someone

other than who He was, free from having to please people. He was free from the dominating power of things. And we are free to be like Him.

### **1. Remove The Veil**

Our Scripture today says (v16) “But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, then the veil is taken away.” A veil is a covering or mask used to conceal or hide something. What is your veil? Is there something you are trying to hide from others? This “veil” prevents us from being free to be who we are. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, and by the Lord, Paul means Jesus, then the Lord Jesus makes it possible for the veil to be taken away. You must honestly face the fact that you are holding on to the veil. You must pay attention to and admit what your veil or veils are. If we are not honest before God of what is really going on above and below the level of our lives (what can be seen and what can’t be seen), then we lose something. We aren’t whole people and we are not spiritually full. Churches are full of “leaking” Christians. Still not completely detached from certain things of this world and so not completely free. What is needed?

### **2. Receive the Spirit**

(v17) “Now, the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, he gives freedom.” We must detach from the things that enslave us and attach more fully to the Spirit of the Lord for “wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, He gives freedom.” As we pay attention to and are honest with who we are ...and as we seek God most earnestly we will be free.

We will be free to live in truth and stop pretending to ourselves, others, and God about what is truly going on inside us.

We will be free to live the unique life God has for us.

We will be free to admit our brokenness and vulnerabilities rather than trying to cover them over.

We will be free to discover God’s mercy and grace.

We will be free from being attached (“nailed to”) accomplishments, things, other people’s approval, to feel good about ourselves.

We will be free to believe and receive the gift of being God’s child and receive His love.

We will be free to break from generational patterns of our family and culture that negatively shape how we relate and live today.

We will be free to love and to be loved

We will be free to live authentic Christ-like lives

We will be free to realize that things are not as they appear to be and true perspective of life comes in Christ.

We will be free from the illusion that we will live forever on this earth, we will face the shortness of life, and the reality of eternity our hope.

We will be free from selfish desires that move us away from God to do our own will not His. And therefore free to mirror Christ.

(The above is based on Peter Scazzero thoughts in *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*).

### **3. Reflect (as a Mirror) Christ**

(v18) “And all of us have had that veil removed so that we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more.”

The Greek word translated "mirrors" can be interpreted in two different ways. It can either mean "to behold oneself in a mirror" or "to reflect as a mirror does."

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Mirrors are to help us behold ourselves and a mirror can reflect or reproduce accurately, something else. Veils are removed from our lives when we see ourselves as we really are as in a mirror and when we begin reflecting accurately the glory of the Lord.

All this talk about veils goes back to the time of Moses. After Moses had been in the Lord presence his face glowed because he had spoken to the Lord face to face. Moses put a veil over his face so that others would not see that glow fading. Christians today want to hide the fact that their glow of the glory of God is fading and so they wear masks or veils as we have described.

In the old testament only Moses had access to the Lord's presence and only he could reflect the glory of God. But in Christ all Christians can be like Moses. When Christians, who are given access to the Father through Christ's work, look at God's glory, their lives are transformed. They begin to reflect God's holy character in their lives.

As I said earlier Jesus was the freest person Who ever lived. And (v18b) as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like Him (free) and reflect His glory even more.