



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of March 26, 2017

WEPC small groups meet in homes across Richmond every week to participate in Jesus Christ's mission to Richmond, enjoy fellowship, study God's Word, pray together, and explore the fruit of the Gospel on our lives. Simply put, these groups are small enough to be the church to one another, and they serve as bridges between WEPC and the community where God has planted us. It is a place where the church can go deeper in the worship of God and further in Christ's mission.

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a "worship discussion" guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

II Corinthians 3:1-11 *Gospel Confidence & Glory*

¹ Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? ² You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. ³ And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

⁴ Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. ⁵ Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶ who has made us sufficient to be ministers

of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

⁷ Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, ⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? ⁹ For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. ¹⁰ Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. ¹¹ For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.

- Read II Corinthians 3:1-3. Paul raises the issue of how a true minister of the Gospel is commended to others. What would you expect to read in a typical "letter of recommendation"? What does Paul say commends his authenticity?
- Read II Corinthians 3:4-6. Paul returns to the question he raised in 2:16, "Who is sufficient for these things?" What is his answer? God uses our need of grace to help us hear the message of the Gospel. It is precisely our insufficiency that opens us up to the grace of God. How does the Spirit enable us to have confidence when we feel insufficient to engage in any ministry toward others?
- Read [Exodus 34:29-35](#). What was impressive about the ministry of Moses? How might something like this be attractive to people today?
- Read [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#). The Old Testament prophets saw a more glorious New Covenant approaching, and Paul references those promises. What are some of the qualities of the New Covenant foreseen by Jeremiah?
- Read II Corinthians 3:7-11. What is "glory"? Paul tells us that New Covenant ministry (the ministry of the Gospel) is more glorious than Old Covenant ministry. In what ways is the New Covenant ministry more glorious than the Old Covenant ministry?
- Jesus Christ has made us sufficient to be ministers of His Gospel. Share with the group one place in your life this is a challenge or encouragement to you. Pray for one another and our church that we would know the sufficiency of Christ.

Sermon Notes

This week, Steve Shelby preached on II Corinthians 3:1-11

- What is the purpose of a letter of recommendation?
- The validation of one's ministry is in the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit in people.
- The work of God for me now is internalized, not "out there" on stones, but "in here", in my heart.
- I have confidence because of the finished work of Christ. The sacrificial system of the Old Testament shows that the people of God already stand in grace, even before the sacrifices are offered. God has already told them, I will be your God and you will be my people.
- The New Covenant reveals God in a more glorious way than the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant was not without glory, of course. Moses, who literally wrote the Old Covenant, was left glowing from his encounter with Yahweh. The right take away is not that Moses saw more of God's glory than we do, but the opposite! If Moses, who wrote letters that kill, saw enough of God to glow on the outside, how much more must our inside be radiant with the glory of God? While Moses saw God in a limited and external way, the Holy Spirit indwells us. This concept provokes Paul to ask, "How will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?" (8)
- The New Covenant sanctifies. The Old Covenant could continually expose, convict, and kill. But the New Covenant continually transforms. This is because in the New Covenant the Holy Spirit indwells us. The reality is that God imparts himself to human hearts in Christ. This causes us to be "transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" (18). With the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit, progressive sanctification is experienced. Elders are made, the church is sanctified, and the world is impacted for the gospel.
- The nature of "glory"
- When God demonstrated His determination to rescue us from sin He sent His Son, not words.
- There is great news and a warning here for us.
 - What attracts your eye?
 - What attracts your attention?
 - What validates?