

***“The Gifts Of God!”***  
***2 Corinthians 3:17-18***

**Introduction:**

1. Please Turn With Me In Your Bibles To:
  - 2 Corinthians 3 - Where We Have Been Looking At:
    - The Great Power Of The Gospel:
      - Or The “New Testament” - As Paul Describes It:
        - In 3:6!
    - And This Is An Important Lesson:
      - Because There Were Some False Leaders & Teachers:
        - In The Corinthian Church:
          - Who Said The Power They Needed Came From The Old Testament Law & From The Old Testament Way Of Doing Things!
    - But They Forgot:
      - That In The Old Testament:
        - God Himself Promised To Inaugurate:
          - A New Testament - Through His Holy Spirit!
      - As Jeremiah Prophesied:
        - In Jeremiah 31:31-33 - “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant – I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people!”
2. Now - How Does This Happen?
  - How Can A Person Have This Inward Change:
    - Take Place In Their Lives?
      - As We Looked At Last Week - 3:16 - You Must “Turn To The Lord” With All Your Heart!
        - He Alone Can Take Away Your Hard Heart Of Stone & Give You A Soft Heart Of Flesh - To Seek After The Things Of God!
  - And You “Turn To The Lord” By:
    - Trusting In The Lord Jesus Christ Alone:
      - As Your Savior From Sin!
        - And When This Takes Place In Your Life:
          - When You Become A Christian:
3. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 - Reveals:
  - Some Very Special Gifts:
    - That God Gives To Every One:
      - Who Turns To The Lord!
        - The First Gift He Gives Is:

**1. *The Gift Of God’s Life!***

- When You “Turn To The Lord” You Have:
  - The Gift Of God’s Life!
    - See This In 3:17a - “Now The Lord Is That / The Spirit!”
      - Before We Move On - We Need To Understand What Paul Is Talking About Here!
  - Who Is The Lord According To This Verse?
    - Whenever Paul Uses The Word “Lord” In 2 Corinthians:
      - He Always Refers To The Lord Jesus Christ!
        - Beginning In 1:2 - “Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ!”
    - But In 3:17 - How Else Is Jesus - The Lord:
      - Described?
        - As “That / The Spirit!”
  - So - Who Is The Spirit According To This Verse?
    - I Believe He Is Referring To:
      - The Holy Spirit - Who Is First Mentioned:
        - In 3:3 - “Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart!”

- And Since The Holy Spirit:
  - Is The “Spirit Of The Living God” - What Does He Provide?
    - 3:6 - Life - “The Spirit Giveth Life!”
- So If The Lord Refers To Jesus:
  - And The Spirit Refers To The Holy Spirit:
    - What Does Paul Mean When He Says:
      - “The Lord Is The Spirit”?
      - It Means That:
- Their Nature Is The Same!
  - When Paul Says - “The Lord Is The Spirit!”
    - It Is Very Similar To What Jesus Said:
      - In John 10:30 - “I And My Father Are One!” / And In John 17:20-22 - “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; / That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. / And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one!”
  - So - As Jesus & His Father Are One:
    - So Is The Lord Jesus & The Holy Spirit!
      - They Are The Same - They Are One:
  - Even Though They Are *Not* The Same In Person!
    - They *Are* The Same In Nature!
      - The Relationship Between The Lord Jesus & The Holy Spirit Is So Intimate & So Close:
        - That Whatever Can Be Said Of The Lord Can Be Said Of The Spirit!
    - **IE:** Have You Ever Known A Married Couple That Has Such An Close & Intimate Relationship That They Start To Think The Same Way & Say The Same Things & Sometimes Even Start To Look Alike? It Is Interesting Because Even Though A Husband & A Wife Are Two Separate People - Yet God Declares Them To Be “One Flesh!” And This Can Happen To The Point That Even Your Children Start To Wonder - Why Do We Need *Both* Parents?
      - So - When We Are Told That “The Lord Is The Spirit” It Means That:
        - Their Divine Relationship Is So Close That What The Lord Is Like, The Spirit Is Like! What The Lord Does, The Spirit Does! And Even Where The Lord Is, The Spirit Is!
        - And So - Not Only Is Their Nature The Same, But Also:
- Their Mission Is The Same!
  - All That Was Promised In The Old Testament:
    - About The Holy Spirit:
      - Is Provided In The New Testament:
        - Through The Lord Jesus!
    - In John 16:7, 13-14 - Jesus Tells Us - “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. / [And] when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. / He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you!”
  - And So - When You Turn To The Lord For Eternal Life:
    - You Receive The Gift Of The Spirit!
      - And The Gift Of His Life!
        - Because - 3:6 - “The Spirit Giveth Life!”
    - If You Are A Christian:
      - You Have The Gift Of Life!
        - From The Lord Jesus, From The Holy Spirit, and Even From God The Father Himself!
          - What Are You Doing With This Gift Of Spiritual Life?
    - Another Gift God Offers Is:

## 2. *The Gift Of God’s Liberty!*

- When You “Turn To The Lord” You Have:
  - The Gift Of God’s Liberty!
    - See This In 3:17b - “And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty!”
      - After Describing The Relationship That Exists Between The Lord & The Spirit - Paul Focuses His Attention On The Ministry Of The Spirit!

- But He Is Still Identified As “The Spirit Of The Lord!”
  - Still Shows Their Intimacy & Unity & Harmony!
- But - “Where The Spirit Of The Lord Is, There Is Liberty!”
  - Now - “Where” Is The Spirit? Where Is The Special Home Of The Holy Spirit?
    - The Holy Spirit Did Not Come To Just Dwell *With* You, If You Are A Christian, But To Dwell *In* You!
    - Jesus Explained This In John 14:16-17 - “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; / Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you!”
      - And So - In 1 Corinthians 3:16 - Paul Could Ask - “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”
  - So - When You “Turn To The Lord” *With* Your Heart:
    - The Holy Spirit Himself Takes Up Residence:
      - *In* Your Heart!
        - And Then - He Gives You True, Spiritual *Liberty!*
- **IE:** Now - This Is Something Hard:
  - For American Christians To Fully Understand!
    - We May Even Feel A Bit Like The Jews Of Jesus’ Day - Who When Jesus Said - “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. / They answered him, We . . were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?” (John 8:32-34)
    - But How Did Jesus Answer Them?
      - “Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin!”
  - Whether We Think So Or Not - Or Whether We Feel Like It Or Not - We Were All Born In Bondage To Satan & As Slaves To Our Own Sin!
    - But When You Turn To The Lord:
      - You Are Given Real Freedom:
        - Not Necessarily An Outward, But An Inward Liberty!
      - Now - Through The Lord Jesus & The Holy Spirit:
        - You Are Free To Stand Before The Lord!
    - Before You Are Saved:
      - You Can Only Stand Before God:
        - As His Foe & As Your Judge!
    - But Back In 3:9 The Gospel Is Called:
      - The “Ministration Of Righteousness!”
        - This Means That Through The Lord & The Spirit - You Are “Justified Freely By [God’s] Grace!”
    - And Now - You Have Access & Freedom:
      - To Stand Before God:
        - As Your Father & As Your Friend!
  - You Are Also Free To See The Lord!
    - Before You Are Saved:
      - There Is A Veil Over Your Heart:
        - And You Cannot Receive “The Things Of The Spirit Of God!”
    - But When You Turn To The Lord:
      - 3:14 - That “Veil Is Done Away In Christ!”
        - And Now - You Can See & Understand & Even Pursue After The Things Of God!
  - You Are Also Free To Speak For The Lord!
    - As Paul Described Back In:
      - 3:12 - “Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech / boldness!”
  - One Of The Greatest Gifts That God Gives:
    - To His People Is This Freedom & Liberty!
      - This Is Why Paul Tells Us In Galatians 5:1 - “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage!”
    - Your Gift Of Freedom:
      - Is Not So That You Can Continue:

- To Sin!
- Because That Is Not Freedom At All! It Is Bondage!
- Instead - Your Gift Of Freedom:
  - Is So That You Can:
    - Serve! The Lord & Others!
    - Galatians 5:13 - "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another!"
- If You Are A Christian:
  - You Have The Gift Of Liberty!
  - How Are You Using This Gift Of Christian Liberty?
  - Another Gift God Offers Is:

### 3. *The Gift Of God's Light!*

- When You "Turn To The Lord" You Have:
  - The Gift Of God's Light!
    - See This In 3:18a - "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord!"
    - This Is Part Of Our Liberty - Given To Us By The Spirit Of The Lord!
    - Now - We Can *See* - The Glory Of The Lord!
- How Can We See It?
  - With A Greater Clarity:
    - Than Ever Before!
      - 3:18a - We Can See The Glory Of The Lord "With Open Face!"
      - This Simply Means That There Is No Longer A Veil Covering Our Face Or Even Our Hearts!
  - Remember Back In 3:13 - When Moses Put A Veil Over His Face?
    - One Reason Was To Show The Children Of Israel:
      - That There Was A Veil Over Their Own Minds & Hearts!
      - 3:14 - "Their Minds Were Blinded!"
  - But Now - Every True Christian:
    - Has Had That Veil Removed!
      - According To 3:14 - Jesus Is The One Who Takes It Away!
      - And Now - You Can See!
  - You Can See - "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!" (4:6)
    - And So - You Can Also See:
- A Greater Character:
  - Than Ever Before!
    - Most Of The Jews Could Only See The Glory Of God:
      - As It Shined In The Face Of His Servant:
        - Moses!
    - But Now Can See The Glory Of God:
      - As It Shines In The Life Of His Only Begotten Son:
        - Jesus Christ!
    - But Even Still - There Is More For You To See!
      - Because 3:18 Describes Us As "Beholding As In A Glass!"
        - That Is A Mirror! **IE:** Light / Mirror
          - We Get A Much Greater Glimpse Of The Full Glory Of God By Looking At & Learning About Jesus!
        - Now - Even Though You Can Be Blinded By A Reflection From A Mirror - Its Still Not The Same - And So One Day - Even That Mirror Will Be Taken Away:
          - And "We Shall See Him As He Is!" (1 John 3:2)
      - Paul Puts It This Way In 1 Corinthians 13:12 - "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known!"
  - What A Gift!
    - If You Are A Christian:
      - You Have The Gift Of God's Light!
        - To See & To Know The Lord "Even As You Are Known!"
          - But - How Are You Using The Gift Of God's Light *Today?*
    - Yet, God Even Offers Another Gift!

#### 4. ***The Gift Of God's Likeness!***

- When You "Turn To The Lord" You Will Experience:
  - The Gift Of God's Likeness!
    - Even The Likeness Of Jesus Christ!
      - 3:18 - "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord!"
  - So - As You Continue To Use:
    - God's Light - And Gaze Upon The Glory Of The Lord:
      - You Will Be Changed!
        - And This Change Is:
- A Special Change!
  - The Word For "Change" Here Is Also Used In:
    - Matthew 17:2 - When Jesus Was "Changed" & "Transfigured" Before His Disciples - Peter & James & John!
      - When "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light!"
  - So - It Will Be As If:
    - You Were In The Place Of Moses!
      - And As You Gaze Upon The Goodness & The Glory Of The Lord:
        - Your Face & Your Life Will Start To Glow & Shine & Take On The Glory Of Jesus Himself!
    - Until - John Gill - "Christ Himself Is Formed On [Your] Soul!"
  - This Is The Light That Jesus Was Talking About:
    - In Matthew 5:16 - "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven!"
      - It Is The Reflection Of His Light In & Through Your Life!
        - But We're Also Given In This Verse:
- A Special Confidence:
  - Because "We All – ***Are*** Being Changed – ***From*** Glory ***To*** Glory!"
    - In Other Words - When You "Turn To The Lord" He Is In The Process Of Transforming You:
      - From What You Are Today Into What You Will Be – Someday!
        - Fully Glorified In Heaven With Him!
  - Now - This Does Not Take Place All At Once!
    - ***IE***: Just Like The Seasons Don't Change All At Once - As Much As We Would Like Them To - From Winter & 20 Degrees To Spring & 70 Degrees - Instead - The Change From Winter To Spring Is Gradual & Incremental - From One Day To Another & From One Degree To Another - But We Are Still Sure & Confident That Spring Will Come!
  - Even So - If You Are A Child Of God:
    - You Are Being Changed By God!
      - It May Seem Slow! It May Even Seem Like An Endless Struggle!
        - But Remember:
    - Philippians 1:6 - "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ!"
      - And - Colossians 3:4 - "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory!"
        - This Is Your Hope!
          - Can You Say - "It Will Be Worth It All, When You See Jesus!" (?)

#### **Conclusion:**

1. When You "Turn To The Lord" - These Are All:
  - God's Gifts To You!
    - And These Gifts Are:
      - From The United Hands Of God!
        - This Is Why - End Of 3:18 - Paul Says That Your Change / Transformation Is "Even As By The Spirit Of The Lord!"
          - This Can Also Be Translated - "Even As By The Lord – Who Is The Spirit!"
  - It Reminds Us Of 3:17:
    - "Now The Lord Is The Spirit!"
      - Every Gift You Enjoy As A Christian:

- And Even "Our Whole Transformation Is The Work Of The Lord In And By And Through The Spirit!" (Lenski)

2. So - What Are You Doing With These Great Gifts:

- From The Lord?

- **IE:** When You Give Someone Special In Your Life A Gift - You Intend For Them To Enjoy It & To Use It! Valentines Day Is Coming Up This Week - Men - How Would You Feel If You Gave Your Wife Flowers - But They Never Found Their Way Into A Vase? Instead - They Stayed In The Box & Dried Out Almost The Same Day You Gave Them To Her!

- God Intended For You:

- To Use His Gifts!

- So - **Use:**

- The Gift Of His Life:

- That He Gave You!

- The Gift Of His Liberty:

- That He Gave You!

- The Gift Of His Light:

- That He Gave You!

- The Gift Of His Likeness:

- That He Is Still Giving To You!

- How Can You Use These Gifts?

- Romans 12:1-2 - "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. / And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God!"

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