



LC STUDY GUIDE
"UnBroken"

The Passage: 2 Corinthians 3:12-18
April 30 – May 13

How to use the LC Study Guide

Hello Leaders! Thank you for your ongoing commitment to pursue Christian community and the study of Scripture that leads to life transformation in Christ and strives to serve "the other."

These studies have been designed with the following aspects in mind:

1. To facilitate a discussion on the passage of Scripture that was preached that particular Sunday using the Inductive Bible Study Method (not necessarily on the themes of that particular sermon). In summary, this method stresses "Observation" (what the reader can see from the text), "Interpretation" (what we can learn when we study the text with various tools, commentaries, and resources), and "Application" (how we can apply the Scripture to our lives).
2. Groups using this study range from the new leader to the highly experienced. Groups themselves have their own context. This study attempts to hit the middle. The stronger studies require about an hour or two of leader preparation to contextualize this resource to the needs and personalities of your group.
3. In addition to prep time, please spend time in prayer during preparation and before and after the study. It's the power of the Holy Spirit that illuminates the Word of Scripture and we are humbled that He uses our combined efforts as part of this work. (For more tips on using this study, please see the endnotes.)

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership and all that you do for the cause of Christ. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Tim, on behalf of the LC Team

Introduction

We continue in our "Unbroken" series that takes us through Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. Today we want to look back at Moses and the old covenant and appreciate Paul's understanding of the new covenant found in the redemptive work of Jesus and how it changes everything.

2 Corinthians 3:12-18

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 prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing 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 all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

○ – At first read, it could almost be misunderstood that Paul is bragging and undermining the Israelite hero Moses who had to be veiled. What do you see as Paul's real point, starting in verse 12? (The answer unpacks in vs. 16 to the first part of vs. 18.).

(Paul, a trained rabbi and a serious student of the Torah had an enormous respect for Moses and the ancient Israelites. The point he is making is that Jesus is even greater and that because of the gift of the Holy Spirit, Jesus-followers are no longer veiled from God's glory.)

I – Why does Paul contrast Moses and the old covenant with Jesus and the new covenant?

(This really is breaking news in the world of the Israelite theology. It's important to appreciate that a central and consistent theme throughout Paul's ministry is to demonstrate how Jesus changes everything.)

I – What do you think Paul means in verse 15 when he says, "Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts?"

*(To appreciate the meaning here, let's consider this explanation offered by N.T. Wright: Paul takes the biblical picture of Moses and his veil and develops it two stages further. First, he says that since the problem which caused Moses to wear a veil in the first place was the state of heart of the people, we can see that the veil still lies over the law itself, the 'old covenant', when it is read in the synagogue. In other words, the law really would reveal God's glory; it really would point forward, like a great story in search of an ending, to the coming of the **Messiah**. But for those whose hearts are not ready for it, it is 'veiled'.*

Second, therefore, it is as though the veil lies, not just over the law when it's read, but over their actual hearts (verse 15). Paul is not, of course, thinking of 'Jewish people' as though he wasn't one himself. He is describing the person he once was, unable to see or even imagine that the crucified Jesus of Nazareth could be God's Messiah, the one in whom Israel's hope and destiny found its fulfilment, the one in whom God said 'Yes' to all the old promises).¹

¹ Wright, T. (2004). [Paul for Everyone: 2 Corinthians](#) (pp. 36–37). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

A – What part of your life might be similarly *veiled*?

A – Verse 17 can be used in a variety of ways. Here in the actual context, it's seen first seen as the power that allows us to experience God's glory. But it also applies beyond this context. How does Paul's teaching of Spirit giving us freedom and allow us to experience God's glory in our everyday lives?

- a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
- b. Complement these questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? what do others think?)
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don't rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
- e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into "teaching" rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.