

II. Group discussion *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for "the big question."*

1. What did you think of Jim's story about the new Christian who was not able to follow the epistles until she read the gospels? How did that match your experience?

Retell the story for anyone who was not present.

This lady was trying to improve her life without knowing Jesus. What are other attempts to improve our lives that do not satisfy without a relationship with Christ?

Church attendance, exercise, plan a budget, good deeds, education, make resolutions, follow commands, new car, plastic surgery, etc.

2. Read II Corinthians 3:12-18 aloud.

3. What is happening to believers, according to II Cor. 3:18? *We are being transformed into the image of Christ.*

What does it mean to be transformed into the image of Christ? What changes in your life? Does it mean we should speak Aramaic, grow a beard, and wear a robe? *We cannot become an ancient Jew, but we remain in our culture responding to people in ways like Jesus responded. God's priorities shape our priorities, words, actions, and even thoughts.*

How long does it take for us to be formed into the image of Christ? *Conversion takes a moment, and conversion takes a lifetime.*

4. In what sense can Christians hear scripture better than Jews, according to verse 15-16? *A veil has been removed between us and God.*

What is the Old Testament story behind the veil reference? *Exodus 34:29-35.*

Why did Moses wear the veil in Exodus 34? *He was glowing with God's presence and people were afraid.*

How is the veil still present for people who read scripture without knowing Jesus?

5. How does Jesus remove the veil? How is our vision improved because we know Jesus?

What are some things we know through Jesus that ancient Israelites could have never imagined?

God became human, died for us, rose from the grave, and now lives within us to help and guide us.

Why is it that some people know the story of Jesus, but their lives are unchanged? What is missing? *What is the difference between knowing Jesus and knowing about Jesus?*

6. How does focusing on Jesus transform us (verse 18)? *The NIV translates it "reflecting the Lord's glory" but Jim Woodroof and many translators believe it is more accurate and makes better sense to say focusing on Jesus is the key to transformation. See the RSV or NASB.*

If the secret to transformation is focusing on Jesus, what helps you focus on Jesus?

Who have you seen being transformed by Jesus?

† **The big question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

Think back a few years. How has God transformed you into the image of Christ? How are you more like Jesus today than you were in the past?

III. Other resources

The point – Get to know Jesus, and he will transform you. You will become like the thing that you love most.

Prayer ideas

Pray for God to draw us closer to his presence that we might know him and imitate him.

Thank God for changes Jesus has made in our lives.

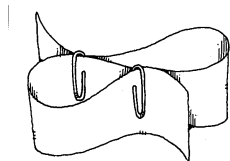
Pray for a friend who needs to be introduced to Jesus.

Ask God to guide our congregation through the process of discerning whom he has prepared to preach at College Hills.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Magic trick – the Paper clip and strip trick (Say that 3 times fast!).

- This trick requires a strip of paper and two paper clips.
- Set up-- Curve one end of the paper strip around until it touches the strip just past the middle. Fasten it with a paper clip. Now curve the other end around the back side of the strip and fasten it with a second paper clip as shown below.
- Hold the two ends of the paper strip firmly. Say the magic words and briskly pull the two ends in opposite directions. The strip will pull flat and the two clips will shoot into the air hitched together.



What happened to the paper clips? Would you say they were transformed by this trick, or are they still paper clips?

What does it mean to be transformed?

How can people be transformed?

Read II Corinthians 3:18 aloud.

How does focusing on Jesus transform us?

What is one way focusing on Jesus could change you this week?

LIFE Group Guide

II Corinthians 3 – Power to live

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: **Knowing Jesus changes us to where we can live abundant lives.**

How can we find the power to live the commands of scripture? Jim's Sunday sermon suggests that we will find the power to enjoy abundant lives if we are in relationship with Jesus. Focus on Jesus, and you will become like him.

This guide looks at II Corinthians 3:18, a powerful verse about God's power that transforms us. It reflects on Exodus 34, a passage where Moses had to wear a veil because his face was glowing from the presence of God. Paul suggests that people who read scripture without knowing Jesus still have a veil between them and God.

Leadership tip: Most of our groups have been meeting six months, so now is a good time to review your covenant. Remind everyone about your plans, and ask if those plans still fit. And ask how the group is doing. If you cannot find your covenant, grab one from the adult spiritual formation table or the church website.

I. Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ What would you think about placing an asterisk beside Barry Bonds' name if he breaks the home run record?
- ❖ If the power went out for a week, what would you miss most?
- ❖ Why do brides wear veils? *Take guesses from the group.*

According to [Weddingdetails.com/lore/...](http://Weddingdetails.com/lore/)

The bridal veil is descendant from two sources. A woman's face that was covered by a veil meant that she was spoken for. A veil was used to disguise the bride so that she would not be recognized by the evil spirits wishing to harm the vulnerable bridal couple.