

Small Group Guide: Beholding the Glory of God

Based on 2 Corinthians 3-5

Opening Prayer & Ice Breaker

Ice Breaker: Share about a time when something you believed or understood changed dramatically when you gained more context or information. How did that shift in understanding affect you?

Key Sermon Points

1. Understanding Glory as Weight

- Glory means "weight" - what we make weightiest in our lives becomes the center around which everything else orbits
- God invites us to make Him weightiest not for His ego, but because He is the source of life itself
- When God becomes weightiest, we become free from the tyranny of self-focus

2. The New Covenant vs. The Old Covenant

- The Old Covenant (the Law) revealed our sin but couldn't save us
- The New Covenant through Jesus fulfills what the Law could not
- Jesus kept the Law perfectly and died the death we deserved
- We now have "treasure in jars of clay" - the gospel in our weak bodies

3. Transformation Through Beholding

- We are transformed "from one degree of glory to another" - slowly, not overnight
- Transformation comes from **beholding** God's glory, not white-knuckling behavior change
- We cannot behold God without putting ourselves in His presence through His Word, worship, and community

4. The Compulsion to Share

- As we behold God's glory and are transformed, we are naturally compelled to share Christ
 - The love of Christ controls us when we truly grasp what He's done
 - We must fix our eyes on the unseen eternal realities, not temporary suffering
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Discussion Questions

Section 1: Personal Reflection (15 minutes)

1. **On a scale of 1-10, how "weighty" is God in your life right now?** What evidence would you point to? What else tends to become "weightiest" and pull you into its orbit?
2. **The pastor mentioned that transformation is "one degree at a time" - much slower than we'd like.** Where are you currently frustrated with your spiritual growth? How does understanding this slow process help or challenge you?
3. **Paul says we "do not lose heart" twice in chapter 4.** What circumstances in your life right now tempt you to lose heart? What would it look like practically to fix your eyes on "things unseen"?

Section 2: Understanding Scripture (20 minutes)

4. **Read 2 Corinthians 3:18 together.** What does it mean to behold the glory of the Lord "with unveiled faces"? What are some "veils" that might prevent us from seeing God clearly today?
5. **In 2 Corinthians 4:7, Paul describes us as "jars of clay" containing treasure.** Why is this imagery important? How does it protect us from both pride and despair?
6. **The sermon emphasized that the church in Ephesus (Revelation 2) had good doctrine and served well but had "forgotten their first love."** How is it possible to do all the right "Christian things" without actually loving Jesus? What are warning signs this might be happening?

Section 3: Practical Application (20 minutes)

7. **The pastor listed several ways to behold God's glory:**
 - Getting into God's Word
 - Worshiping with theologically rich music
 - Gathering with other believers
 - Being in community/small groups

Which of these are you currently doing well? Which one do you most need to prioritize this week?

8. **Paul writes that "the love of Christ controls us" (2 Cor 5:14).** When was the last time you shared your faith or served someone specifically because you were compelled by Christ's love? What held you back from doing so more recently?
9. **The sermon mentioned that we often focus on external sins when we first come to Christ, but God eventually reveals deeper heart issues.** What "heart issue" is God currently revealing to you that might not be visible to others?

Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Glory = Weight.** Whatever is weightiest in your life will pull everything else into its orbit.
- ✓ **Transformation comes from beholding, not behavior modification.** We can't white-knuckle our way into Christlikeness.
- ✓ **The process is slow.** We're transformed "one degree at a time," which requires patience and perseverance.
- ✓ **Beholding leads to sharing.** As we gaze on God's glory, we're naturally compelled to share Christ with others.
- ✓ **Fix your eyes on the unseen.** Our temporary suffering cannot compare to the eternal weight of glory awaiting us.

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Morning Beholding Set aside 15 minutes each morning to read Scripture (start with Psalm 145 or Ephesians 1) and worship music. Journal about one attribute of God that stands out to you each day.

Option 2: Identify Your Weight Do an honest assessment of what's currently "weightiest" in your life. Track where your time, thoughts, and energy go for three days. Pray specifically about reorienting your life around God's glory.

Option 3: Share From Overflow Ask God to give you one opportunity this week to share what He's doing in your life with someone who doesn't know Jesus. Don't force it - let it flow from beholding His glory.

Option 4: Community Commitment If you're not currently in regular Christian community (beyond Sunday), take one concrete step this week - sign up for a small group, invite someone to coffee, or reach out to reconnect with a believer you've lost touch with.

Closing Prayer Focus

- Pray for each person's specific area where they're tempted to "lose heart"
 - Ask God to help the group make Him weightiest above all else
 - Pray for opportunities to share Christ from a place of genuine love and transformation
 - Thank God for the treasure of the gospel in our "jars of clay"
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For Further Study

- **2 Corinthians 3-5** (read the full context)
 - **Exodus 34:29-35** (Moses' veiled face)
 - **Revelation 2:1-7** (Letter to Ephesus - the church that lost its first love)
 - **Romans 7-8** (Paul's teaching on law vs. spirit)
 - **Hebrews 8-10** (More on the old and new covenants)
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Leader Notes

- Be prepared for honest discussion about slow spiritual growth - many believers struggle with this
- Create space for people to admit where God isn't "weightiest" without shame
- Emphasize that beholding God isn't about adding more religious activity but about genuine relationship
- If someone shares about losing heart due to suffering, pray for them specifically
- Consider sharing your own story of slow transformation to normalize the process