



2 Corinthians 3:1-6

God writes the gospel on human hearts for others to see

TRANSFORMED LIVES ARE THE EVIDENCE OF GENUINE GOSPEL GRACE (3:1-3)

Verse 1

- "*commending*" - introducing oneself for the first time
- Paul's opponents had stirred up dissension, causing many to have doubts about his reliability.
 - Human endorsement does not make Apostles; the empowerment of God makes Apostles.
 - Human endorsement does not make gospel witnesses; the power of God makes gospel witnesses!



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Verse 2

- To start from the beginning with them would be the same as admitting that their gospel ministry among them had been flawed.
- The Corinthians should be affirming these missionaries as faithful servants of God and the church.
 - The gospel formed an indelible connection between the Corinthians and these missionaries (*"written on our hearts"*).
 - The transformation the gospel made among them was evident to others who witnessed the fruit of the gospel among them (*"known and read by all"*).
 - Paul and his associate have a letter – a gospel founded local church in Corinth.
 - 1 Corinthians 9:1–2



TRANSFORMED LIVES ARE THE EVIDENCE OF GENUINE GOSPEL GRACE (3:1-3)

³ And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us,

- Jesus Christ has made His power and presence known in the lives of the people in the church in Corinth.
- Paul and his fellow gospel servants made liberating gospel truth known to them.

written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

- The impression of the truth communicated to the Corinthians by Paul and his fellow ministers is supernaturally and spiritually significant.
- Nothing has changed – they are still ministering the same gospel with the same anticipation of God's activity.



CONFIDENCE RESULTS FROM OUR GOSPEL SUFFICIENCY THAT COMES TO US FROM GOD (3:4-6)

⁴ Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God.

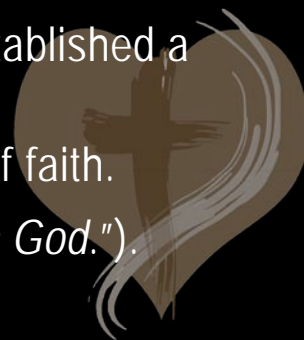
- It is the Holy Spirits activity that grants confidence in gospel ministry.
 - Self-confidence in personal abilities, personality, competency, or popularity is not the substance of effective ministry.
 - In the face of our holy and righteous God, confidence must come from Jesus Christ.



CONFIDENCE RESULTS FROM OUR GOSPEL SUFFICIENCY THAT COMES TO US FROM GOD (3:4-6)

⁵ Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God,

- Once an arrogant Jewish Pharisee full of self-confidence, God has humbled Paul and caused him to be dependent on God's enabling grace.
 - Philippians 3:4–6
- Paul learned not to boast in the flesh.
 - Paul went to Corinth, shared the gospel, suffered, endured and established a church.
 - But Paul doesn't even take partial credit for his walk and ministry of faith.
 - The power is God and the glory is God's ("*...our sufficiency is from God.*").
 - 1 Corinthians 15:10



CONFIDENCE RESULTS FROM OUR GOSPEL SUFFICIENCY THAT COMES TO US FROM GOD (3:4-6)

⁶ who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant,

- Paul now answers the question he asked in chapter 2.
 - 2 Corinthians 2:16
- New covenant life is a consistent demonstration of the Spirit's power and the presence of God.
 - Jeremiah 31:33



CONFIDENCE RESULTS FROM OUR GOSPEL SUFFICIENCY THAT COMES TO US FROM GOD (3:4-6)

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

- The “*letter*” represents God’s truth as an external demand.
- The “*Spirit*” represents God’s power that illuminates the truth, drives us to Jesus for forgiveness, empowering us to understand and live the gospel.
- The letter only reveals God’s truth; it does not inspire and empower obedience.
 - Galatians 3:21
- As he shares gospel truth with others, he is looking for the activity of the Holy Spirit to bring life, conviction, dependence and humble trust in the work of Jesus.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Is your assessment of yourself human or biblical?
- Is your assessment of others human or biblical?
- When you consider engaging in life and ministry, are you looking to yourself or the strength God has promised to supply?





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