



**Valentine's Day - 2016**  
**"From One Degree of Glory to Another"**  
2 Cor. 3:18, 4:3-6, 16

Sunday | February 14th, 2016 | Pastor Patrick Bowler

**CONSULT THE  
SCRIPTURES**

**2 Corinthians 3:18** "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

**2 Corinthians 4:3-6** "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

**2 Corinthians 4:16** "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day."

(Eph. 5:22-33, Phil. 1:6)

**CONSULT THE  
SCHOLARS**

[Timothy Keller] "Have you ever traveled to a mountainous part of the world when it was cloudy and rainy? You look out your windows and you can see almost nothing but the ground. Then the rain stops and the clouds part and you catch your breath because there, towering right over you, is this magnificent peak. But a couple of hours later the clouds roll in and it has vanished, and you don't see it again for a good while. That is what it is like to get to know a Christian. You have an old self and a new self (Ephesians 4:24). The old self is crippled with anxieties, the need to prove yourself, bad habits you can't break, and many besetting sins and entrenched character flaws. The new self is still you, but you liberated from all

your sins and flaws. This new self is always a work in progress, and sometimes the clouds of the old self make it almost completely invisible. But sometimes the clouds really part, and you see the wisdom, courage, and love of which you are capable. It is a glimpse of where you are going.

Within this Christian vision for marriage, here's what it means to fall in love. It is to look at another person and get a glimpse of the person God is creating, and to say, "I see who God is making you, and it excites me! I want to be a part of that. I want to partner with you and God in the journey you are taking to his throne. And when we get there, I will look at your magnificence and say, 'I always knew you could be like this. I got a glimpse of it on earth, but now look at you!'" Each spouse should see the great thing that Jesus is doing in the life of their mate through the Word, the gospel. Each spouse then should give him- or herself to be a vehicle for that work and envision the day that you will stand together before God, seeing each other presented in spotless beauty and glory."<sup>1</sup>

**DISCUSS**

1. How important is friendship to the human experience? Why?
2. Tim Keller identifies two "prime qualities" of a friend: (1) Constancy, and (2) transparency. Discuss these two qualities in light of our sanctification (transformation "from one degree of glory to another"). How do these qualities serve not only our own growth, but also the growth of others?
3. Looking back, where have you experienced significant growth in the past few years? If married, where have you noticed significant growth in your spouse?
4. Whether in marriage or in other relationships, discuss how each of us can be used by God in the sanctification of others. Why do you think God chooses to transform us ("from one degree of glory to another") in this way?
5. What immediate applications can be made in light of this text?

<sup>1</sup>Timothy Keller with Kathy Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage* (New York, NY: Dutton, 2011), p. 121.