SCRIPTURE: 2 CORINTHIANS 3:17-18, 4:4, 1 PETER 1:8-9

Main Takeaway: We become like what we behold.

Quote: "'Behold' has such an antique ring to it that it is a great problem to modern translations – some even solve the problem by leaving it out! Others try representing it by words of emphasis like 'indeed'. But nothing has quite the same force as 'Behold'. 'Look at this!' was intended to claim attention for something important to the writer." (Alec Motyer, Isaiah By The Day, 9)

Discussion: Take a moment and discuss that phrase. What does it mean? How does what we fix our eyes on the most shape us for good or bad? What are some examples? What do you tend to behold?

Read: Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 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 3:17-18, ESV)

Summary: Paul is contrasting the gospel message with the Old Testament Law. In Moses's day up until the coming of Christ, Paul says a veil (covering) remained over Israel's eyes. In other words, they were unable to fully see all of God's redemptive purposes. But now the Spirit has opened our eyes to see the beauty and glory of Christ. Those who turn to the Lord are transformed as they gaze upon the image of God's glory—specifically, the image of Jesus Christ revealed through the gospel preached. This isn't a one-time event but an ongoing process of becoming increasingly conformed to Christ's image as believers behold God's glory more fully.

Teaching Point 1: An unveiled face.

Summary: Paul says that we now have an unveiled face, meaning that at our conversion, the Spirit opened our eyes to the beauty and glory of Christ. Now we can see Him!

Discussion: Describe your life before you met Jesus and the Spirit opened your eyes. What was that like? What did you think of God? Of yourself? Of the world? What did you fix your attention and gaze on during that time?

Teaching Point 2: Beholding the glory of God.

Summary: We can now see the glory of God! But what is God's glory specifically? It often refers to God's beauty, His uniqueness, and the weight of His presence and significance. However, Paul shows us even more.

Read: 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.

The glory of God is Christ. We can now, with eyes of faith, see Him.

Discussion: What does it mean that we can see Christ? How is He "there" now to you, when before He was not? Explain what it was like when God opened your eyes and you saw Christ for the first time by faith.

Teaching Point 3: Transformed

Summary: We become like what we behold. It transforms us. This is true regardless of what we are beholding and can have positive or negative results. We can behold all sorts of things that shape us in unhealthy ways.

Discussion: What are some things we behold that shape us negatively? (Ex: people's approval, unhealthy amounts of social media, movies or TV shows that glorify sin, etc.)

How does God transform us as we look at Jesus and behold Him? What does this look like practically and what positive impact does it have on us?

Read: Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls (1 Peter 1:8-9)

We do not see Jesus (physically), but we do see Him with the eyes of faith (we believe in Him) and this produces love and inexpressible joy.

Discussion: How can we behold Jesus? What does this look like practically?