

The Order of the Veil

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2 Corinthians 3:13 (KJV) And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

Exodus 34:34-35 (NIV) But whenever he entered the LORD's presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the LORD.

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- Tell story of Moses: second time for ten commandments, forty days in God's presence, veil over face, glory of old covenant fading away
- The Israelites ASSUMED that Moses continued to glow with the glory of the Lord, but that was only temporary – perhaps he allowed their assumption to continue because it helped maintain his authority.
- WHEN MOSES DIED, THE VEIL DID NOT DIE WITH HIM! It is the insignia of the most popular religious order of all time – THE ORDER OF THE VEIL. Its beautiful material has hidden “fading glory” throughout the centuries (for denominations and for individuals), and continues to do so today.
- Nearly every Christian enters **The Order Of The Veil** at one time or another. Belonging to this dubious company simply means that at one time we have been close to Jesus, but for one reason or another we have become complacent and the glory has begun to fade. Rather than admit it, we have put on the veil of outward activity to convince ourselves and others that the glory of God is still present in our lives.
- What does the veil look like? How do you know when you've joined **The Order Of The Veil**? Although there are no dues, vows, or initiations, there are three distinguishing characteristics of those who wear the veil:

1. Reputation Without Righteousness

The first characteristic is a reputation for outward holiness without a corresponding inner reality. The Pharisees were an extreme example of this; their name even meant “separated ones.”

Matthew 23:23 (KJV) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Matthew 23:23 (MSG) You're hopeless, you religion scholars and Pharisees! Frauds! You keep meticulous account books, tithing on every nickel and dime you get, but on the meat of God's Law, things like fairness and compassion and commitment — the absolute basics! — you carelessly take it or leave it. Careful bookkeeping is commendable, but the basics are required.

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In the same way, we wear the veil when we produce outwardly righteous acts without a genuine motivation of love for the Lord. Tithing, church ministry, and the like are important aspects of our Christian walk. We must not neglect them. But they can become outward manifestations of spiritual blindness when they are performed for our own benefit — or to promote an illusion — rather than to glorify God.

You may be a veil-wearer if you publicly serve God but neglect family responsibilities; if you demand virtue from others when your own thought life could use a good dose of germicide; if you support missionaries overseas but are disgusted by the homeless you pass on the street.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REPUTATION AND CHARACTER by William Hersey Davis

Reputation is what you are supposed to be.
Character is what you are.

Reputation is the photograph.
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Reputation comes from without.
Character grows from within.

Reputation is what you have when you come to a new community;
Character is what you have when you move away.

Reputation is made in a moment.
Character is built in a lifetime.

Your reputation is learned in an hour.
Your character doesn't come to light for a year.

Reputation grows like a mushroom.
Character grows like an oak tree.

A single newspaper report gives you your reputation.
A life of toil gives you your character.

Reputation makes you rich or makes you poor.
Character makes you happy or makes you miserable.

Reputation is what men say about you on your tombstone.
Character is what angels say about you before the throne of God.

2. Information Without Application

Another dangerous thing about wearing the veil is that not only can we fool those around us, we are in grave danger of fooling ourselves. We know what it means to be a Christian, we act like Christians, we talk and socialize like Christians. But how well do we know and imitate Christ? This self-delusion is the second characteristic of wearing the veil.

James 1:21-22 (NIV) Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Sometimes we go through the motions of devotions. We look into the mirror of God's Word without doing anything about what we see there.

James 1:23-24 (NIV) Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

Not only must we read, hear, and know God's commands, we must devote ourselves to them in our hearts and in our deeds.

James 1:25 (NIV) But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it – he will be blessed in what he does.

When we spend time in God's Word, does it stop us short? Do we ask God what He specifically wants us to do about what He has shown us? Do we make the necessary changes, take appropriate action? Or do we close our Bibles and forget what we've seen and heard? Do we think we've "had devotions" when in truth we've only read the Bible?

When we do not follow what we know to be God's will, we jeopardize our close relationship with Him.

James 1:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

3. Religion Without Relationship

The final characteristic of those who wear the veil is a lack of consistent, face-to-face fellowship with the one true God. If the posture of outward righteousness and the habit of self-delusion are the leaves and stem of the weed, a lack of relationship is the root — the reason we need the veil. It's also the element that chokes out any chance of bearing good fruit.

When Moses was on the mountain, he lived in God's presence. God's holiness shone on him so brightly that even when Moses left God's presence his face reflected the glory of the Lord. When we commune with God — when we listen, respond, and live as He asks — our lives reflect His glory.

The glory faded from Moses as time distanced him from his retreat on Mt. Sinai. In much the same way, God's glory fades from our lives when we do not seek His presence. We continue to look like we're in close contact with the Lord because we've carefully cloaked ourselves in the veil.

Despite the good show, the fruit of the Spirit is hard to fake, and **wearing the veil becomes a heavy burden.**

We cannot bear fruit in our own power. God knows we can't and doesn't expect us to. This is a crucial part of the Good News, yet many Christians fail to grasp it. Fruit cannot be produced apart from the Vine

John 15:4-5 (KJV) Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

John 15:4-5 (MSG) Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can't bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can't bear fruit unless you are joined with me. I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can't produce a thing.

Our nervous system is so constructed that under the force of electrical impulses we can perform amazing feats of strength and endurance that would be impossible under ordinary circumstances. (i.e. holding heavy books at arm's length) We do not need to struggle to do what we are too weak to do, but rather yield ourselves to God's power which enables us to accomplish what is otherwise impossible. However, if we neglect our friendship with God by failing to live in His presence, His glory fades out of our lives and we are forced to live in our own power.

How to Shed the Veil

Being a true follower of Jesus means that we must vigilantly guard against joining the Order of the Veil.

We can do this by asking:

- Do I display the outward posture of righteousness while neglecting the less noticeable attitudes of obedience?
- Have I deluded myself by hearing the Word of truth without acting on it?
- Have I neglected His presence, thus missing out on His strength, power, and genuine glory?

If we find that we have taken on the veil, we can shed it by confessing our status to the Lord, knowing that He wants us to be in full fellowship with Him. When we recognize and admit our problem to Him, He doesn't condemn us. He lifts us back up into His presence.

David's example can encourage us. We are told he was incredibly close to God—"a man after God's heart." Yet he committed adultery and murder. Apparently, most of his kingdom didn't suspect anything was amiss. His "veil" hid the evidence of his fractured relationship with God. But God gave the prophet Nathan a peek under David's veil. Once Nathan had confronted David and David had repented, he was able to fellowship with God again, maybe even more deeply than before, since he understood more fully the depth of God's mercy and love.

Confessing our lack of fellowship is the first part of shedding the veil. Diligently seeking God is the second part.

Someday, we will see God face to face:

2 Corinthians 3:18 (KJV) But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT) And all of us have had that veil removed so that we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more.

Matthew 5:16 (CEV) Make your light shine, so that others will see the good that you do and will praise your Father in heaven.

As His character—the fruit of the Spirit—grows within us day by day, we will never again have need of the veil.

Acts 17:24-28 (KJV) ²⁷That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: ²⁸For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

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