Transformation by Staring at the face of Jesus

In 2 Cor 3:18 Paul states that “we” believers in Christ, “with uncovered face, looking at the mirrored glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, just like (Moses’ transformation) from the Lord, the Spirit.” Then he refers to “the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For it is not ourselves whom we are heralding but Jesus Christ as Lord…For God has shone in our hearts the illumination of the knowledge (the illumination that comes from the knowledge) of the glory of God (shining) in the face of Christ” (4:4-6).

The context for Paul’s remarks is his exegesis of Exod 34:29-35, the temporary glory of God that shone on Moses’ face whenever he stood in the presence of God, a glory that brought fear to the Israelites. Paul contrasts this manifestation of God’s glory with the permanent and

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Our culture is awash with many challenges—from same-sex ‘marriage’ to confronting ISIS—but one major trial is the idea of ‘gay Christianity.’ Non-practicing, “gay Christian” is becoming a darling in portions of the evangelical world.

The individuals calling themselves gay Christians may not be acting upon their feelings, yet keep the sinful desire close—so close as to place the label before their primary identity—Christian. And along with identity comes a friendship idolatry that approximates a gay romantic relationship without the sex.

Into this mix of cultural tides, Restored Hope remains a place of hope for those seeking God’s kind promises. Not only do we know that Jesus loves those who struggle with same-sex attractions, we know that He transforms the inner person into His image. Thus single and married individuals are not doomed to endless inner conflict.

“Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.” 1 Peter 2:11
inviting glory that shines on Jesus' face, who (unlike Moses) is the very "image of God," a spotless mirror of God's magnificent being and essence.

We can't actually see Jesus' face. The usual image that we have of him with beard and long hair may not be correct. Some of the earliest depictions of Jesus show him beardless with short hair. Some early Church Fathers, mindful of the prohibition of images of God, disapproved of pictures of Jesus' face. Indeed, the New Testament gives us no description of the face of the earthly Jesus on which to dwell.

When Paul talks about the light of God's glory shining from Christ's face, he directs our attention to the gospel about Jesus, whom we proclaim as Lord (4:5)—whose love for us was epitomized by becoming sin on our behalf, reconciling us to God, rising from the dead, imparting to us the Holy Spirit, causing us to experience the life of Jesus as we die to self, and assuring us of glorified resurrection bodies in the future (4:7-5:21). Looking on Christ's face was a metaphor that Paul used for reflecting on Jesus' actions on our behalf that have brought so much true life. It is the steady reflection on these that brings about our transformation.

Let us gaze on such beauty & live.