

*2 Corinthians 3:1-18, 4:1-18*

Read the Scripture passage above and then work through the introduction below to help guide your personal study.

The sermon this weekend is from Exodus 32-34, which is one of the most revealing stories about God’s character in the Old Testament. In the Exodus story, the Israelites had some of humankind’s first encounters with God’s glory (after the Fall). Moses received the closest interaction with God in Ex. 32-34 when God’s glory passed by him. God then proclaimed something profound about himself: God is merciful to the point of radical forgiveness, while also being holy and hating sin (Ex. 34:67). So much of God’s personality shines through this proclamation.

2 Corinthians 4:4 states that Jesus Christ is “the image of God.” When Jesus came to earth, he was God in the flesh, putting God’s character on display in humanity. Jesus embodied what we read about in the Old Testament. The two aspects of God’s personality, mercy and holiness, came together on the cross of Christ, where he took the punishment for sins that we deserved while making a way for a holy God to forgive our sins and show us mercy. The Old Covenant that 2 Corinthians talks about is what had just been given to the Israelites (Exodus 19-30) prior to the revelation in Exodus 34. Paul talks about the Old Covenant producing condemnation because none of us ever lived up to those standards of our holy God (the Israelites broke it immediately with the golden calf). The cross gave us the New Covenant, where we can now be in relationship with God because Jesus provided complete forgiveness for our sins.

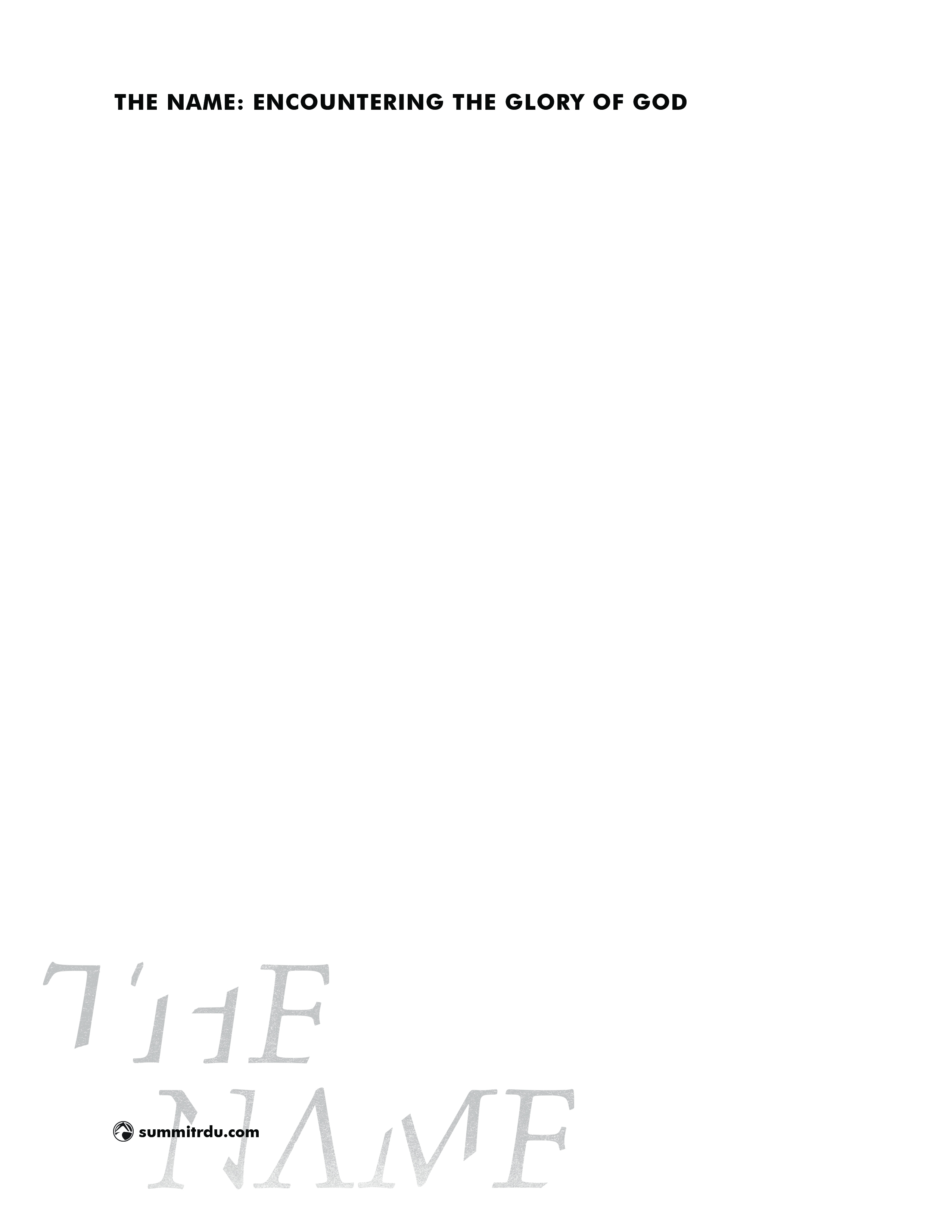
In 2 Corinthians 3 and 4, Paul describes this New Covenant and how it changes our life. A problem that Paul was addressing had to do with living up to other peoples’ standards (2 Cor. 3:1-4). This problem fades away when we remember that, in the New Covenant, we are approved by God! We are not “sufficient” on our own, but God has put his glory in us (jars of clay, 2 Cor. 4:7), so that we can be his servants and ministers. In fact, when we focus on God’s glory, we ourselves are becoming transformed into God’s image. It is important to understand who God is, partly so that we can become who we were meant to be.

Work through these questions before you come to small group and be ready to interact with the Scriptures and questions below.

***Study Questions***

1. This weekend was the beginning of a new series on God’s character called “The Name.” What excites you about this new series? Is there anyone that you think would benefit from this series that you could invite to church in the next few weeks?

2. What did you learn about God from the sermon this week?



3. Read 2 Corinthians 3 and 4. Make a list of all the verses that mention “glory.” What are some things that this passage teaches about glory?

4. Take note of the verses that refer to Moses, the Old Covenant, and the events of Exodus. How does Paul describe the Old Covenant and everything that came with it?

5. According to these chapters, how does the New Covenant differ from the Old Covenant?

6. In Exodus, the people could barely be near the glory of God. But 2 Corinthians says that we can now be partakers in that glory. According to this passage, how does God’s glory affect us?

7. What does it mean to be a “minister” of the New Covenant?

8. What are some ways that you could describe God’s glory to your friends and neighbors who do not know God?

***Prayer Guide***

Pray through some of the ideas in the passage we studied:

* Thank God for giving us “confidence,” “sufficiency,” and “life” through his Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:4-6).
* Ask God that as we “behold the glory of Lord” throughout this series that we would become more like him in every way (2 Corinthians 3:18).
* Pray that Gods grace would “extend to more and more people” in our neighbors and that God would be glorified in our city. Be specific with names of friends and neighbors or groups of people that you know (2 Cor. 4:15).