



guidelines for living

a 5 minute message

December 13, 2017

Conformed or Transformed?

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2

The battle for your body takes place in your mind. Everything that defiles the human body--whether it comes through drugs, food in excess, or sexual license-- first originates as a thought. When Paul wrote to the Romans who were struggling to determine what God expected of them, he urged them to "stop being conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds"—a negative followed by a positive.

Question: Does a Christian think differently from a non-Christian? Does he look through a different lens? What's different? In answering that question, notice that the recipients of this letter were having trouble breaking out of the mold. One translation paraphrases Paul's words, saying, "Don't let the world force you into its mold..." Another says, "Don't copy the behavior and customs of the world..." Getting the idea?

The attitude of a pagan Roman in Paul's day was not much if any different from the attitude of most people today. Most Romans believed that if you could get away with it, it was OK to go ahead and do it. The world says, "If you're not near the one you love, love the one you're with! The world says, "Sensuality is a human drive that needs satisfaction." It believes that your conduct is solely a matter of personal choice. No one has the right to enforce personal morals on another.

Today we often cloak aberrant behavior with the garments of science. So, do we acquiesce to our culture? "No," said Paul, adding that instead of conforming to our culture, we should be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Conformation or transformation—that's the choice, and when you come to the fork in the road, you have to decide which way you go. It's your choice—not your biological compulsion. In the two minutes that remain may I remind you of what you perhaps already know: Transformation in your mind and heart is the work of God's Holy Spirit, who came to take residence in your life when you became a believer. It is an ongoing, daily work as He convicts us, points us a different direction, encourages us to do the right thing, and leads us into truth.



guidelines for living

a 5 minute message

Renewal is God's great work in our hearts and lives, transforming us from what we were to what we become when we do what Paul said: we present our bodies as living sacrifices. Your mind controls your body, and that's why when you come to the fork in the road you have to think of the consequences of what you are about to do.

How do you explain the behavior of a man who has a wife and children who goes to a conference in another city, and after a few drinks makes overtures to a co-worker, a woman who signals the fact she likes the attention she is getting? Then, without thinking of the consequences, the man makes the biggest mistake of his life, simply because he could do it. As former president, Bill Clinton, explained his own moral failure: "I think I did something for the worst possible reason just because I could" (CBS 60 Minutes, June 20, 2005 telecast). When you get to the fork in the road, think of the consequences that last a lifetime, that come with 30 minutes of pleasure.

This transformation that we so desperately need today is a daily one. It comes by being in God's Word, by saturating your life with it so that you begin to think the thoughts of Jesus Christ, and begin to live a transformed life. But when you get to the fork in the road, you must decide which way to go. Will you conform or allow yourself to be transformed?

Scripture reading: Romans 8:1-11