

THE CHALLENGE OF CONFORMITY

Pastor's Bible Hour – March 1, 2009

Tabernacle of Praise – Pastor G. Richardson

Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Rom 12:14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

Rom 12:15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

Rom 12:16 *Be* of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

Rom 12:17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

Rom 12:18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Rom 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, *Vengeance is mine; I will repay*, saith the Lord.

Rom 12:20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

Rom 12:21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

CONFORMITY

Athanasius, early bishop of Alexandria, stoutly opposed the teachings of Arius, who declared that Christ was not the eternal Son of God, but a subordinate being. Hounded through five exiles, he was finally summoned before emperor Theodosius, who demanded he cease his opposition to Arius. The emperor reproved him and asked, "Do you not realize that all the world is against you?" Athanasius quickly answered, "Then I am against all the world."

Crowd control is the method of making sure that a large crowd does not get out of hand. But the term may also refer to the control a crowd can wield over an individual.

The World tries to Conform us, and to Reform us but only Jesus can Transform us.

Rom 12:2

And be not conformed ... - The word rendered “conformed” properly means to put on the form, fashion, or appearance of another. It may refer to anything pertaining to the habit, manner, dress, style of living, etc., of others.

1. We live in an age of conformity for many reasons.
2. (ex) The fashions are mass-produced and merchandised at the same time all across the country. (So many dress much alike.)
3. (Ex) Our foods are advertised on billboards, in newspapers, and magazines, on the radio and other media devices, so what you see in supermarkets is basically the same across the nation.
4. What we wear and what we eat, the cars we drive, and the houses we live in, show how much we like to be the same as the other person.
5. Few people are willing to stick out like a sore thumb from the rest of society.

WHAT DO WE DO WHEN

1. When the society we live in pressures us to conform to ideas that cut across our Christian Convictions?
2. What happens when all of a sudden “**Everybody’s doing it?**”
3. What happens when dad is pressured on the job to gamble, drink, and listen to dirty jokes?
4. What happens when mom is pressured to fit in with the latest styles that are sensual and ungodly?
5. What do we do when our children are pressured by neighbors children to fit in with the styles of the skaters, emo’s and gang members that are all around us?

THE WORD OF GOD MUST BE OUR GUIDE

Psa 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

1. The Word of God gives us insights into how Christians can withstand the pressure to conform.
2. As Christians, we are to be the light or the guide to this world, by standard, dress, attitude, love, holiness etc.

Exo 33:16 For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? *is it* not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that *are* upon the face of the earth.

Php 2:15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

Php 2:16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.

Col 2:20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the **rudiments** (mindset) of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

1Pe 2:8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

1Pe 2:9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

THE WORLD'S PRESSURE TO DANCE TO THERE MUSIC

1. All Christians face a constant battle against conformity to the world's habits and the world's way of thinking. We must take a stand daily against the tide of worldliness,

1Jn 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1Jn 2:16 For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

1Jn 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

2Pe 2:20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

2Pe 2:21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

2Pe 2:22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

YOU MUST PURPOSE IN YOUR HEART TO NOT DEFILE YOURSELF WITH THE SPIRIT OF THIS WORLD

1. A Pastor cannot monitor your life; and try to control your every action; you must choose to be a Christian!

Dan 1:8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

- a. Because they ate unclean beasts, which were forbidden by the Jewish law.
- b. Because they ate, as did the heathens in general, beasts which had been strangled, or not properly blooded.

- c. Because the animals that were eaten were first offered as victims to their gods.
2. The Pressure put on the three Hebrew Children, was a test of the keeping power of God.

Dan 3:3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Dan 3:4 Then a herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,

Dan 3:5 *That* at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

Dan 3:6 And whoso falleth not down and worshipeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

Dan 3:7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down *and* worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

PAUL'S APPEAL

1. By “**the mercies of God**” We need to look back at all God has done for us, and the focus of God’s mercy is the cross of Calvary (the sacrifice of Jesus’ life) The Christian himself is to become a sacrifice. This act shows the Christian understands and appreciates what Jesus has done for us.
2. The act of a Christian to be a “**Living sacrifice**” shows the war against conformity begins with a willingness to have myself – my desires to conform to this world, put to death.
3. The conformity to the world usually involves sensual pleasures of one kind or another. When you present your body to God as a sacrifice, the desire for worldly fleshly fulfillments is eliminated. A sacrifice does not worry about conformity.

4. We must look the world squarely in the eye, and decide to reject the world when it conflicts with Christian values.
5. A Christian with a renewed mind will be alert to possible dangers of compromise. A renewed mind takes place when we allow God to speak to us in our own Bible reading and through the ministry of the Word.

“BE TRANSFORMED”

Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

1. It is brought about by a **renewed mind**. 2 Cor. 5:17 tells us a Christian is a “**New Creature**” “**Old things have passed away**” (the former concepts and values are passed away).
2. All things become new when we are re-created in the image of God.
3. Are look at the world through a renewed mind. We look at the world and its values different since the transformation of the new life. To do the will of God and to please Him become our highest priority in life.

CONFORMED TO HIS IMAGE

Gal 4:19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be **formed** in you,

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* **conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

1Co 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.

(Trans) “**Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.**”

1. The term “understudy” is used in the theater for someone who learns the lines of the primary actor so that he or she can step into the role if necessary.

2. Our lives should fully imitate the one who died for us.

Php 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death.

Php 1:21 For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

2Co 3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.

2Co 3:18 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.