

THE CHALLENGE OF CONFORMITY

Youth Night

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.

Athanasius, early bishop of Alexandria, stoutly opposed the teaching 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 Theodosius quickly repoved him and asked, “Do you not realize that the entire world is against you? Athanasius quickly answered, “Then I am against the entire 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 will try 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.

And be not fashioned according to this world.

Do not imitate the way of this world

Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold

Do not be conformed to this world- this age, fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs.

Transform by the renewing of your mind: The world wants to control your mind, but God wants to transform your mind. The word transform is the same word as transfigure In Matt. 17:2. It comes from the word Metamorphosis which describes a change from within. The world wants to change your mind, so it exerts pressure from without. But the Holy Ghost changes your mind by releasing power from within. If the world controls your thinking, you are a conformer; if God controls your thinking you are a transformer.

We live in an age of conformity for many reasons

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

What Happens 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?” When even some of our own churches want to watch movies, go to professional and High School games. Be involved carnal verbiage, and old slang’s of your old life.

Tit 2:7 In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *showing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,
Tit 2:8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

3. What happens when everybody starts dropping their standards of dress and wants to fit in the latest styles that are sensual and ungodly?
4. What happens even when carnal Christians no longer hold the standards of righteousness and dress in the styles of skaters, emo's gang style, long hair, long sideburns, facial hair, and all the skull ware?

WE MUST LET THE WORD OF GOD 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 and self discipline.

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.

Phi 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;

Phi 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 of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

Rudiments: Worldly Principles, or the Mindset of the world.

But be Transformed by the renewing of your mind: “But let yourselves be transformed by the complete change that has come over your minds.

But be Transformed (changed) by the (entire) renewal of your mind – by its new ideals and its new attitude.

Your Mind controls your body, and your will controls your mind. Many people think they can control their will by “willpower,” But usually they fail.

THE WORLD’S PRESSURE TO DANCE TO THEIR 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.

1Jo 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.

1Jo 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.

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

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

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.

Dan 1:8 -

Daniel ... would not defile himself with ... king's meat — Daniel is specified as being the leader in the “purpose” (the word implies a *decided* resolution) to abstain from defilement,

1. **The Pressure put on the Three Hebrew Children:**

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.

They didn't bend they didn't bow, they didn't burn!

PAUL'S APPEAL

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.

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, where he gave his life. The Christian life himself is to become a sacrifice. This act shows your appreciation for what Jesus has done for us.

2. **“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 straight 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 the 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 taught and preached word of God.

CONFORMED INTO 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.

1. 2 Corinthians 5:17, tells us that we are a “New Creature” “Old things have passed away.” (The former concepts and values are passed away). And all things become new when we are re-created into His image.
2. Our look at the world through a renewed mind. We look at the world and its values different since the transformation of new life. To do the will of God and to please Him becomes our highest priority in life.

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.*