

# Stop Being a Camouflage Christian

## Romans 12:2

October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Archery season for deer comes in the first Saturday in September. I love to hunt with my bow, but I haven't been in the woods yet this year. As a matter of fact, I haven't even shot my bow yet. But my friend, Chuck, who I hunt with, has called several times this year to share his experience in the woods. He called a couple of weeks ago and told me that several times he had four or five deer at the same time right under his tree. They were playing within fifteen yards and stayed for thirty to forty-five minutes. Now if you are a hunter, you know the thrill of being in the woods with deer all around while you observe them in their natural environment. It is amazing how Chuck can be in the woods and a deer not know he is there. Now Chuck normally dresses in jeans and a Polo shirt. You hardly ever see him in anything but that. But don't get that picture of him in the woods; that isn't how he looks. So the deer won't know he is there, he actually makes himself look like a tree. He has a wardrobe that he puts on when he goes into the woods because he wants to blend into the environment. He wants to be in the woods, but more importantly, he wants to be of the woods. When he puts his attire on, he goes into the woods and climbs into a tree. Once he places his back against that tree, I promise you, he looks just like a tree. Now before he goes into the woods, he doesn't smell like Chuck. He has this stuff in a bottle that he sprays all over himself. He not only looks like a tree, he actually smells like a tree. Can you imagine Chuck being in the woods, deer all around, and the deer don't have a clue he is there? That is good if you are the deer hunter, but it's bad if you are the deer, especially if it has a rack big enough that Chuck wants to harvest!

As we open to Romans 12:2, we are going to think about something that is really sad. Do you realize how many non-Christians come into the presence of Christians and don't even now they are there? It's one thing for Chuck to be in the woods, and be of the woods. But it is another thing when Christians are called to be in the world and they are also of the world; and then so live a life that those who do not know Christ don't even know who they really are.

## **Scripture**

***"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."***

We are only going to look at the first part of verse 2. In the last lesson, Paul gave the believers at Rome a challenge. Based on what God has done for them in Christ, he challenges them to offer their bodies to God, a sacrifice that is alive, holy, and acceptable. This sacrifice is the most rational, logical, and reasonable act of worship they can do. Now we learned something in Romans 11 that many of us have never tied into the Christian life. It was that the Gentile side of the Church who have been grafted into the olive tree was for the purpose of creating jealousy among Jews so they would return to God. After learning that awesome truth, we can have a better understanding of Romans 12. Chapters 9, 10, and 11 are dealing with the ultimate purpose of our salvation. It is to bring others to the same salvation, therefore, God expects us to offer our bodies as a sacrifice.

## **Worldly Influence**

This leads us to verse 2 where he tells us two things, one is negative and one is positive. He begins with the negative, which is what we will discuss in this lesson. He said, "*Do not be conformed to this world.*" The first thing we need to do to understand this is to stop and look at the grammar of this statement; it is an imperative. An imperative is a command of action, but it

is a negative imperative, which means that Paul wants us to stop doing something. It is a present tense imperative, meaning the action has already begun. So he wants them to stop doing something they were already beginning to do.

We might look at Paul's letter to the church at Rome and believe it was one of the greatest theological letters ever written. But the church at Rome struggled just like we struggle. As a matter of fact, there was a statement in the Roman world that said, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." Paul tells them to stop being conformed to this world. He is saying don't be like the other Romans. It is a passive verb, meaning this is something they are allowing to happen to themselves. He is basically saying stop letting the world influence you. God didn't save us and then ask us to present ourselves as a living sacrifice so that we would be influenced by the world, but for us to influence the world. The Roman church was being influenced by the world around them. So Paul reminds them that as they present themselves to God as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, they have to first stop being of the world.

This word, "*conform*," speaks of an outward expression that doesn't reveal your inner nature. It literally can be translated, '*masquerade*.' When my grandson goes to Trunk or Treat at Halloween, you won't know him because he will not be cute and cuddly and sweet, (as he really is) he will masquerade as an alligator. He will have a tail and a snout, and he will be ferocious. When you see him you will think there is an alligator, but in all reality, it is just my grandson! That is what this word means. It means to have an outer form, or behavior, a look that doesn't express who you really are. Stop allowing the world to cause you to look like who you really aren't.

- **Worldly Culture**

The world is influencing the Roman church. There are two Greek words in the New Testament that are translated, "*world*," in our English Bibles. One is *aion*, and the other is *kosmos*. We get our English word, cosmetics, from *kosmos*, which means 'to arrange, to order, to systematize.' In this verse, it is *aion*. While *kosmos* refers to the arrangement behind what you see, *aion* is what you see. It is the culture, the manifestation, and the spirit

of the world. It is usually translated, 'age.' Richard Trench, who is a Greek authority, has done a wonderful job of writing a book that talks about all of the synonyms of the Bible. He describes the word as: "All that floating mass of thought, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims and aspirations at any time current in the world, which is impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitutes a most real and effective power, being our moral or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably exhale." Basically, Paul is saying that we are living in a place where there is a culture that is anti-Christ and anti-God. It has a value system, principles, thoughts, and behaviors that are totally contrary to God. And at every moment, we who are living in the world are breathing and exhaling this value system. As we inhale and exhale, as we are surrounded by it because God left us in the world, that value system is trying to squeeze us into its way of thinking; 24/7.

Most of us believe this is the greatest place on earth to live. Most of us cannot imagine raising our children anywhere else because we believe it is safe here. Yet Paul would write to the church at Hardin and tell us to quit being influenced by the world; quit letting the world put its thinking into your brain. In Ephesians 2:2, Paul reminded the Ephesian church that at one time they walked according to the course of this world. Paul told the church at Corinth that the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe. Jesus Himself called Satan the ruler of this world. The Bible calls him the prince of the power of the air. Can you imagine allowing God's enemy to put his thoughts into our minds and then actually act on those thoughts and believe they are ok to live out? Do you see this? We are to be in this world, but we are not to be of it. Many Christians want to pull out of it. You can't pull out of it, you have to stay in it. But as you stay in it, you have to quit being like it.

I John 5:19 says, "The whole world lies in the power of the evil one." Do you realize the culture in which we live isn't Christian? It is anti-Christ, and it is anti-God, and we breathe it. But as we breathe it, we cannot be influenced by it. Now without naming everything that is anti-Christ, I want to give you some principles that you can apply so that you can stop being influenced. I believe if you take these principles and analyze what you

listen to, what you read, and what you watch, you will be able to pick out what is of the world. I will tell you how to do this in the next lesson, but right now I want to tell you what to be on guard about.

I believe that R.C. Sproul is correct when he defines the worldview of the world; how the world looks at the world in which they live. I believe the motto of people outside of Christ is: Right now counts right now. If I could analyze the systematic thinking of the world, I would put it: Right now only counts right now. Do you understand that? The mindset of people outside of the Church is that right now counts, but they believe it only counts right now. So if right now only counts right now, you will think and act differently once you buy into that.

The worldview of the Church is: Right now counts forever. Do you see that difference? If right now only counts right now, then life is about you right now. If you want to see what the world thinks about the world, the next time you are watching TV, watch the advertising. We have a beverage company calling themselves the "now generation." Where do you think that comes from? We have another beverage company telling you that "you only go around once." Another tells you "to grab all the gusto you can." Right now only counts right now, and right now is all about you! Therefore, culture manifests in a worldly way with instant gratification. I do what I do for what it brings me right now. In the world, there isn't anything really worth waiting for. If you can't have it now, and you can't do it today, it isn't worth waiting for. So if right now only counts right now and it is all about you and you live in a state of instant gratification, you measure your life by the accumulation of things. We love things and use people, so we measure ourselves by how big our toy box is. Some of us actually brag about having to build another toy box because we have so many toys. We have so many toys that we don't know which toys to use and which toys to sell because we haven't played with them in so long. You have to realize that we are in a world that believes it is all about them. If we, as Christians, aren't careful, we breathe that 24/7 and the next thing you know, we begin to live a life that says to those around us that right now counts right now, and it is really all about me. It is what I can get right

now because life is all about stuff. If we aren't careful, instead of us influencing the world, the world is influencing us.

- **Color Christians**

When my son was little, I enjoyed his toys. I remember when I got too big for a racecar set, so when my son was born, I got to play with racecar sets all over again. One of my favorite sets that we bought him was by Hot Wheels, called Color Racers. This was a unique little Hot Wheel car that was a certain color, but if you put it in cold water it would change colors. It would turn another color when you put it in hot water. It would change colors depending on its circumstances. How many of us are color Christians? When we are in the environment of the Church, we are one color. When we are in the environment of the work week, we are another color. When we are at the golf course, we are another color. When we are in the break room, it is amazing how much we look like those guys around us. Just like that little tree frog, he doesn't change the color of the tree, but the tree changes the color of him. That is what Paul is saying...stop letting this happen to you!

## **Influence the World**

You are a sacrifice who has been offered to God and he put you in the world, but He doesn't want the world in you. He wants you in the world to make a difference. Take that mask off! I believe that we have done something wrong in the Church. We have let the world believe we are a hypocrite because we act one way during the week and then come to church and act another way. I don't believe the hypocrisy is taking place in church, I believe it is taking place out there. If you are a born-again believer, if you have been set apart from a life of sin to a life of salvation, if you have been transformed from a sinner to a saint, you are right with God and have presented yourself to Him, and this is who you are! The hypocrisy is not while you are at church; the hypocrisy is when you get to work, or get around those friends who don't know Christ and you put their face on. Paul says to stop doing that because that is not who you are!

Do you have behaviors, words, or actions that are of the world, and not of God? You have friends that aren't Christians and they have never seen the

real you because you just blend in. You have never revealed the real you. You open your mouth and sound just like them instead of like the Christian you really are. You need to make a decision to stop being like the world. Confess that you have been wrong, repent, turn and be transformed by the renewal of your mind so that you will be conformed to the will of God.