

Transformed: Renewing My Mind; Transforming My Life - Rom. 12:2

Illus. First steps in faith from my 1st Fall in college after my conversion. – The Word, the way my thinking changed.

Introduction: Last week we talked about total commitment. We discussed how surrendering to Jesus losing our life so that we could find it is the first step in discipleship. ***As a new creation in Christ we are urged to be a holy, God pleasing, 24/7/365 Christian. Another way to say this - Totally commit yourself to following Jesus worshipping him by your continual service.***

Romans 12 as context - Romans 12 is a particularly rich and dense passage on being a disciple and has several key one anothers.

1. *Committed Christ Follower – Determined Disciple (12:1)*
2. ***Renewing My Mind – Transforming My Life (12:2)***
3. *Members of One Another – In This Together (12:3-5)*
4. *Gifts, Grace and Community (12:6-8)*
5. *An Authentic, Fervent and Hopeful Community (12:9-13)*
6. *Overcoming Evil With Good in the Community (12:14-21)*

Theme: ***The renewing of my mind by the Word and the Spirit leads to a transformation of my life.***

1. Transformed: Renewing My Mind; Transforming My Life (Rom. 12:2)

- a) Negative Command – “And do not be conformed to this world”** or Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world (NLT) – “the spirit of the age” ‘don’t follow the scheme of the world’

Moses to the Israelites: ³ So do not act like the people in Egypt, where you used to live, or like the people of Canaan, where I am taking you. You must not imitate their way of life. **Leviticus 18:3 (NLT)**

Jesus: ⁸ Don’t be like them... **Matthew 6:8 (NLT); ‘In the world not of the world’ (cf. John 17:14-16)**

Not this but that...

“...stop allowing yourselves to be conformed...continue to let yourselves be transformed...” CEB Cranfield, Romans vol.2, p.607.

- b) Positive Command – “but be transformed in the renewing of your mind”**

¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, ***are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.*** For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. **2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV)**

As we look at Jesus and grow in our understanding and experience of Him we are being transformed. Our minds will continually be renewed as we are continually exposed to and progressively embrace the teachings of Scripture. This means that we must make it a continual practice to read, hear, study, memorize and meditate on the Scriptures.

“Paul’s meaning here in 12:2 would appear to be that believers are to allow their way of thinking to be renewed by the Spirit of God in the light of the gospel.” Colin Kruse, Paul’s Letter to the Romans, Kindle edition, Loc. 10117

So, continue stopping conformity to the world but do continue transformation. Pressure to conform to this world pattern is continuous, and we do so both consciously and unconsciously. By God’s grace we can counter this by God’s Word and Spirit (Rom. 6-8). But this must be intentional as we talked about last week this transforming work flows from our commitment to follow Christ.

c) Purpose – “so that you can discern what God’s will is

- i. ‘The good or beneficial’ – morally good; that which is good for you and others**
- ii. ‘The pleasing’ – that which pleases God; morally good by God’s standards**
- iii. ‘The perfect or complete or absolute’ – the whole enchilada; Cranfield suggests the Great Commandment as the definition of this**

“Here then are the stages of Christian moral transformation: first our mind is renewed by the will of God; and then we are able to discern and desire the will of God; and then we are increasingly transformed by it.” John Stott, Romans, p. 324.

Expanded translation by Chip = “Stop allowing yourselves to be molded by the influences and pressures of this present world system. But allow God to completely change your inward thinking and outward behavior by cooperating wholeheartedly moment by moment with the Spirit’s renewing process.” Chip Ingram, Living on the Edge, p. 56

Romans 12:1-2 is a complete thought, here it is in a sentence. – ***Totally commit yourself to following Jesus worshipping him by your continual service and rather than conforming to the present thinking around you continue being transformed by changing your thinking and cooperating with his Spirit.***

2. Renewing My Mind – Transforming My Life

a. God wants to give you what’s best. John 8:31-32

- i. What’s best is not to be heard as what’s easiest.**
- ii. To be the best requires effort on our part.**
- iii. Knowing God’s Word begins the journey to getting God’s best**

“Most people in America, when they are exposed to the Christian faith, are not being transformed. They take one step into the door, and the journey ends. They are not being allowed, encouraged, or equipped to love or to think like Christ. Yet in many ways a focus on spiritual formation fits what a new generation is really seeking. Transformation is a process, a journey, not a one-time decision.” — David Kinnaman, unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity... and Why It Matters, 2007.

b. Why is the Christian life so difficult?

- i. We are in a spiritual battle Ephesians 6:12**
- ii. The world is a spiritually toxic environment – the spirit of this age is opposed to God’s Word, will and ways.**
- iii. Guerilla warfare - My sin nature Galatians 5:17**

“Stop allowing yourselves to be molded by the influences and pressures of this present world we live in. Stop allowing Satan to dupe you, con you, use you, trick you, promise you life and love and power

through a seductive world system that will only deliver disappointment, defeat, depression, and make you a slave to sin.” Chip Ingram, Living on the Edge, p. 56

- c. *Am I conforming to the world?*
 - i. *Yes, No, Maybe?*
 - ii. *World in 1 John – Do not love the world*
 - iii. *The world influences us far more than we know.*

“Arrogance is perhaps the most socially acceptable form of sin in the church today. In this culture of abundance, one of the only ways Satan can keep Christians neutralized is to wrap us up in pride. Conceit slips in like drafts of cold air in the winter. We don't see it, but outsiders can sense it.” — **David Kinnaman, unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity... and Why It Matters, 2007.**

Comment on ***They Like Jesus But Not the Church.*** – Tipping!

‘I hate working Sundays because that’s when all the Christians come in.’ (a waitress) Most Christians come across as negative people. Issue: Christians are negative people. Dan Kimball, They Like Jesus But Not the Church, p 97.

They Like Jesus But Not the Church. – One take away - we cannot demand that non-Christian hold Christian beliefs and values.

“In virtually every study we conduct, representing thousands of interviews every year, born-again Christians fail to display much attitudinal or behavioral evidence of transformed lives. For instance, based on a study released in 2007, we found that most of the lifestyle activities of born-again Christians were statistically equivalent to those of non-born-again. When asked to identify their activities over the last thirty days, born-again believers were just as likely to bet or gamble, to visit a pornographic website, to take something that did not belong to them, to consult a medium or psychic, to physically fight or abuse someone, to have consumed enough alcohol to be considered legally drunk, to have used an illegal, nonprescription drug, to have said something to someone that was not true, to have gotten back at someone for something he or she did, and to have said mean things behind another person’s back. No difference. . . . but they were slightly more likely to say they had helped a poor or homeless person in their community (53 percent versus 45 percent).” **David Kinnaman, unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity... and Why It Matters, p, 47**

³¹ ***Do to others as you would like them to do to you. Luke 6:31 (NLT)***

- d. *How can I cooperate with the Spirit’s transforming work in my life? Love God, Love others*
 - i. *Be in the Word – alone with God*
 - ii. *Be in prayer – alone with God*
 - iii. *Be in fellowship – with others*
 - iv. *Be accountable – with others*
 - v. *Be authentic – towards others*
 - vi. *Be loving – towards others*

Summary: *Transformed: Renewing My Mind; Transforming My Life*

1. ***Be an intentional, committed Christ follower.***
2. ***Recognize that we are in a spiritual battle.***
3. ***Renew our minds by the Word, fellowship and prayer.***

4. *Cooperate with the Spirit's work in our lives.*
5. *Live as a new creation in Christ.*

Application: *Transformed: Renewing My Mind; Transforming My Life*

- *Am I letting the 'world' influence me more than I should?*
- *Am I intentional about renewing my mind by being in the Scriptures consistently?*
- *Am I cooperating with the Spirit's transforming work in my life by embracing and practicing the teaching of the Scriptures?*

Totally commit yourself to following Jesus worshipping him by your continual service and rather than conforming to the present thinking around you continue being transformed by changing your thinking and cooperating with his Spirit.