

ARE WE TO BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD? PART 2

As we are transformed into His image the world will not know us because we are no longer “of the world”, we are children of God; *See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.* 1John 3:1. We will always struggle with self and will do things which are not pleasing to God but this is part of the day to day renewal. When we are tempted to do what is against God’s precept we will know it and then our free will comes into place and we have to make a choice to “put away” or not do whatever it is that we are being tempted to do, have self-control. We can do it because God has provided a way for us to escape such temptation. *No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will **provide the way of escape** also, so that you will be able to endure it.* 1Corinthian 10:13. As we allow the Holy Spirit to transform us and as we heed His direction to override our iniquities and self-satisfying ego, such temptations will eventually ebb and His image will become more evident, self-control becomes easier to exercise the closer our relationship with God is because our image is being transformed more and more into His image. Does it mean that we will never sin again? Not so, we will sin but being His we will genuinely be remorseful and repent.

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God wants us to surrender self to Him so He can help us “put on” His godly qualities, otherwise self will get in the way. *13 May the God of your hope so fill you with all joy and peace in believing [through the experience of your faith] that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound and be overflowing (bubbling over) with hope.* Romans 15:13. How are we to do that? “By the power of the Holy Spirit”. When we are surrendered to Him, as Christians, the Holy Spirit dwells in us and He will “transform” us into the righteous person God meant for us to be. If you don’t see much change in your life examine your relationship with Christ, is it what it ought to be, are you allowing the Holy Spirit to transform you? Or are you letting the world or self get in the way?

When we are born again we begin life anew and as our relationship with Him grows so does our desire to be “about our father’s business” as Christ was. We no longer are of ourselves and the only affairs which have priority are those that are pleasing to God. Our transformation by the Holy Spirit brings about a new nature, new character new affections and new goals and does away with the world. Such transformation means that something is done in us that we can’t do for ourselves and it can only be accomplished by having a close relationship with God, reading His Word and praying. One of the obvious personality changes in true Christians is the ability to love others beyond one’s own natural love, one will be able to love unconditionally and love more deeply. One’s behavior will clearly show whether one is of the world or a true Christian, not being conformed to the world. What about Paul when he says, *“I have become all things to all men”* 1Corinthians 9:16. This is another study altogether but Paul didn’t conform to the world he became a servant and a vessel of God so that some might be saved, we ought to imitate him.

God wants us to be His vessels in this world but not to be part of the world, Jesus Himself prayed, *“I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one”* John 17:15, in other words to be God’s instruments for Him to accomplish His purpose and to protect us them against the enemy Satan who doesn’t want God’s purpose to be accomplished. We are not to be conformed to this world “that we may prove what the will of God is, that which is good, and acceptable and perfect” Romans 12:2b, the will of God, what is it? What is good and perfect, is that what the world offers? Not so, today more than any other time we need to be transformed by the Holy Spirit and be God’s instruments for the furthering of His Great Commission. Self exaltation, relativism, perversion and consumerism are priority in today’s society, God’s precepts are being replaced with men’s law, Truth is being redefined and history is being re-written to suit men’s quest for “self aggrandizement”. Being transformed by the renewing of our mind is putting the right “will” first, God’s will. The world is a formidable foe against Christianity because the alternatives seem to be wonderfully rewarding and self-satisfying; the pressure put on by the media, culture, academia, etc. for everyone to conform to the world is most powerful. Be in the world but not part of it means that we must be aware of the world’s influences, get to know what the world is all about and why it is antagonistic to Christianity. Paul’s exhortation for us not to be “conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” is the basis of Christian ethics; he clearly contrasts the benefits of the world versus God’s benefits. As God’s children we do receive God’s mercy through the atoning death of Jesus Christ towards freedom from the power of sin and death, those who are of the world receive the opposite, sin which controls them and death which is separation from God. In John 1:11 we read *“He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.”* The world and its manmade religion rejected the Messiah, why? Because He was different, He was love; He represented God’s character which is totally the opposite of what the world is. We are to become all things in Christ, not be conformed to the world. What about you? To whom would you like to belong, the world or God? When we surrender to God we are righteous in Christ as He alone is The Savior and Lord and as such has made us fit to dwell eternally in heavens with Him.

Being transformed by the renewing of our minds by the Holy Spirit means that we start to become in practice what we are in Christ, God’s vessels of His Great Commission which is to make disciples of all the nations, *19 Go then and **make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 Teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all the days (perpetually, uniformly, and on every occasion), to the [very] close and consummation of the age. Amen (so let it be),* His missionaries that some might be saved. Being transformed means to allow The Holy Spirit to prepare us for our homecoming because as Christians we are foreigners in this world, *For our **citizenship is in heaven**, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;* Philippians 3:9. Christ is the only way.