

CONFORM OR TRANSFORM? (Romans `12:1-2)

I. The charge (vs. 1).

- A. Paul begins this section with a charge to be different.
 - 1. Paul could come with a bold command, he had that power as an apostle.
 - 2. However, the charge he gives is in the form of a plea.
- B. Notice that the plea is based on the mercies of God.
 - 1. As an apostle, he had the power to command.
 - 2. However, any following of God must be based on love.
 - 3. One can't be scared into following God or brow beaten into following God.
 - 4. If one will look at the mercy of God and allow that mercy to motivate change and obedience, the results can last life long.
- C. What he charges us to do is give our bodies to God as living sacrifices.
 - 1. The idea in view is the sacrifices of the Old Testament.
 - 2. The people gave animals that had to be killed, but they were dedicated to God.
 - 3. Paul, by inspiration calls us to give our living bodies to God.
- D. It is a sacrifice of every aspect of our bodies.
 - 1. It is a sacrifice of the eyes, in that we don't give into the lust of the eyes, but rather focus or sights on godly things.
 - 2. It is a sacrifice of the lips, in that we don't use worldly language, but offer up the fruit of our lips to God in praise and speak words that make for peace with God and man.
 - 3. It is a sacrifice of our hands, in that we don't take up things with them meant only for our pleasure, but that we use our hands to work to provide for our families and in order to give to God.
 - 4. It is a sacrifice of the ears, in that we don't take in worldly sounds but instead become swift to hear that which is good and edifying.
 - 5. It is a sacrifice of the mind, in that we no longer think of ways to strictly please self but we fill our minds with those things that please God.
 - 6. It is a sacrifice of the feet in that we don't go to places that allow us to sin but they take us to worship and work and into the lives of others to help them come to Christ.
- E. It is to be a holy sacrifice.
 - 1. It is made holy by giving it to Christ.
 - 2. It remains holy by continually doing that which is right.
- F. It is to be acceptable to God.
 - 1. The only way it is acceptable to God is if it is offered on His terms.
 - 2. We are to be exactly as God wants us.
- G. Paul then lets us know that doing this is logical.
 - 1. The word "reasonable" comes from the word from which we get our English word "logic."

2. It is logical to serve God because He wants and provides that which is best for us.
 3. It is illogical to live a life for self that results in being lost for eternity.
 4. It is extremely logical to live a life for God that leads to eternal life.
- H. So, Paul charges us to give ourselves to God as living sacrifices.
- II. The challenge (vs. 2a).**
- A. How can we meet that charge as we are?
 - B. Paul tells us how by challenging us to conform or transform our minds.
 - C. There is the great temptation to conform to that which is around us.
 1. The word literally means “do not fall in with the external and fleeting fashions of this age nor be fashioned to them.”
 2. Liquid conforms to its surroundings.
 3. It becomes the same shape as that which contains it.
 4. Some translations have the word fashioned instead of conformed.
 5. It is the challenge of every Christian to be different than the worldly people around us.
 - a. We are constantly challenged to accept the values, standards and morals of those around us.
 - b. It is easier this way while we are on earth.
 6. Think about that for which the world stands today.
 7. The world is at war with Christianity and will always be at war with it.
 - D. Instead, our minds are to be transformed.
 1. This word is the Greek word from which we get our English word metamorphosis.
 2. It is the same word used for the transfiguration of Jesus.
 3. It carries the idea of a complete change of mind, our thinking and acting being changed as a result.
 4. Think of it like all of those shows on TV where a team comes in and completely changes a house or a room from something drab and drear to something completely amazing.
 - E. Before actions can change, there must be a change of thinking.
 1. The only way we can be different from the world is to have our minds changed.
 2. We don't think about things the same way we once did.
 3. The gospel must be allowed to change our views and thinking about things.
 - F. So, after the charge to be living sacrifices, Paul points out the challenge of doing that by showing us that we can either conform to the world or be transformed by the gospel.
- III. The change (vs. 2b).**
- A. When we obey the charge and meet the challenge, there will be a change in us.
 - B. While living for Jesus, having been changed by the gospel, we will be able to know what the will of God is.
 - C. God's way is the good way.

1. There is nothing harmful in doing God's will.
 2. It is morally, spiritually, emotionally and physically good for us.
- D. God's way allows us to be acceptable to Him.
- E. God's way allows us to become mature and complete spiritually speaking.
1. We get to be what God would have us to be.
 2. We can work towards being the complete Christian that God wants us to be.
- F. This change allows us to view each situation in view of God's will.
1. What would God have us to do in this situation?
 2. What is best for me spiritually?
 3. What will allow me to please God?
 4. All these type questions will be asked by the one who has changed.
- G. We will judge in a way that is in accordance to God's will and not our own.
- H. We won't worry about what is popular, safe or accepted by the world, but what is right and good in God's eyes.