

## **“Be Transformed”\_ GIVE YOURSELF AWAY 3**

Look again at **Romans 12:1-2**. The text will be on the screen. Read it with me.<sup>1</sup> **Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.**<sup>2</sup> **Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but BE TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--His good, pleasing and perfect will.** Over the past few weeks, we've seen the urge to be living sacrifices and the charge not to conform to the present worldview. We've also seen the primary motivation to do this is the mercy of God. Today we'll consider the Holy Spirit's prompting to **be transformed** by the renewing of our minds.

Though folks may dispute the precise time in a person's life that it takes place, most agree that because of the finished work of Jesus on the cross, salvation is instantaneous. Depending on which passage you hang your hat on however, one might argue one is saved the moment they believe that good news that Jesus gave His life for their sins while others insist it isn't until you confess aloud that *“Jesus is Lord.”* Others say it's only after you obey Jesus' command to be baptized. One thing is for sure, if we all followed the examples of Scripture, it wouldn't be a discussion we'd likely engage in at all. According to Jesus' instruction, the apostles commanded every believer to immediately confess and be baptized. We even read that converts were baptized within an hour of their acknowledgement of God's Son and His sacrifice for them. I encourage people to respond as soon as possible to all of Jesus' commands\_ but it's the Spirit's timing that we need to be sensitive to.

Unlike salvation, sanctification takes time. Though there often appears to be some immediate changes, transformation is a process. That's why there is this need to be *“a living sacrifice”*\_ staying on the altar until the work is complete. The Greek term is the word from which we get **“metamorphosis”**\_ and it is in the present passive imperative tense. This at first seems like a conundrum of sorts. We are being commanded to be passive. In essence, this transformation is a process to which we must continually surrender.

We all know people who have dropped out of school without graduating\_ and many who have ceased diet and exercise programs before reaching their goal. Few of us would leave the beautician's or barber's chair half way through a cut or a style or a treatment. And who in their right mind would get off the operating table in the middle of a surgery? That's as much a reason for sedation as sparing us discomfort and pain. Of course, many give up on prescribed rehab or therapy before it is complete. (*Nina's shoes / limp, gait*)

Sadly, far too many have halted their spiritual transformation by a stubborn refusal to surrender to God's work in and through them. Paul is insisting that in order for the metamorphosis to take place, we must remain in the cocoon of God's grace, allowing Him to continually renew our minds. But, how? The most practical answers are as follows:

**Pray.** You can't talk with God regularly without being changed. Anxiety and worry fade. Anger dissipates. Sinful desires are displaced. The mind is renewed. Hearts are rejuvenated. Spirits are refreshed. No wonder Paul says in **1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:17** that we should pray without ceasing. Join with others or pray all by yourself. Don't know how? Let Jesus teach you. Listen to the prayers of others. Just open your heart and express to God what you're thinking and feeling\_ and ask Him to respond with a clear call to what He wants for you to think and feel. They may be light years apart. I once had a lady approach me after a Sunday service and ask me to pray for her, because her *“blankety-blank”* husband, who was a *“bleeping”* cheat, had run off with a *“woman of ill reputation”* and taken all their *“beep- beep”* money.

To protect the ears of others and to keep the air in the foyer from turning blue, I took her aside to clam her and pray with her. We set up a time to talk later in the week and I encouraged her in the meantime to personally pray for her husband to repent and ask God to heal her own heart. She came back the next week and the week after that\_ and though neither her hubby nor the circumstances changed, she did. Three months later, instead of profanity, it was praise coming from her lips as she rose from the waters of baptism. Prayer can change things\_ but more importantly, it can change us.

**Study.** Spend time in God's word. Instead of seeking information, seek transformation. Personal time reading and meditating upon the Scriptures will season the soul. Listening to God's Word proclaimed will plant spiritual seed within the recesses of the mind. Attending at least one Bible Study group with an open heart and mind will change the way you think. I guarantee it. Our classes and programs re-launch in a couple weeks. Come and keep coming. Too many times I've heard peoples say, "*The topic isn't relevant.*" Or "*The subject doesn't interest me.*" Listen, the topic is your transformation and the subject is you. Jesus said, we can't survive on bread alone. We need a steady stream of the word from God (**Matthew 6:4**). God's word is food for the soul. It's sustenance for the weak and refreshment for the strong. "*Forgotten God*" / "*True U*" / "*Your Best Yes*" – but all through the filter of God's unchanging, but transforming word.

**Worship.** Sing alone or sing along\_ and you'll find your heart lifted and your mind refreshed with God's truth. That is providing it's all about Him. If it's about our likes instead of His praise we might feel good the way we are but will not be challenged to be changed. I've head folks say, "*I just can't get into it.*" Or "*I don't like to sing.*" Well, that's a heart issue. The same scripture that tells us to love our neighbor, says we're to "*Speak to one another in psalms hymns, and spiritual songs.*" (**Ephesians 5:19**). That's not a suggestion. It's a command. Praise God and let people hear it. Don't know the lyrics? Listen to others sing and you'll catch on. Let the message get into you, and you will get into the worship. I, for one can come to church discouraged and down hearted\_ but after a few songs of worship, my disposition has changed.

\* David Dunn Concert this weekend. Chosen Ones in about 8 weeks.