

In SPIRIT and TRUTH

"BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD"

The Transforming Power of the Word of God

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Romans 12:2

Our early years of ministry in Washington, DC, allowed me the opportunity to see the pressure that many college students experience when trying to fit into the new world of campus life. For some, it was their very first time living away from home, and the adjustments were not always easy. Therefore, I felt a special responsibility (especially for those professing

Christ) to let them know that they were not alone.

In subsequent years, when our children became adolescents, going into their teenage years, my husband and I anticipated the need to prepare them for the challenges they would face in college. Our goal was to allow them enough liberty while still at home under our supervision, to observe the choices that they would



make on their own. For instance, who would they choose to associate with as friends? You can learn a lot about your children by the company they keep. Where would they ask permission to go? Would they be trustworthy, or would they give-in to the temptation to compromise with the world?

As Christians living in an ever-changing world, we are still expected to maintain "*holiness unto the Lord*", without compromise with the world.



IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

As a matter of fact, it is because of compromise that the Lord rebuked the Leodicean church in the Book of Revelation, because they were found to be neither cold, nor hot. They were lukewarm compromisers, and He said that He would reject them, spewing (or spitting) them out of His mouth (Revelation 3:16).

CONFORMITY vs. TRANSFORMATION

One common mistake many Christian parents make is trying to have their children conform to the Word of God, before there is a transformation taking place in their hearts. They confront their children regarding their choices of music, attire, movies, TV shows and other forms of entertainment. However, without proper guidance from the Lord, these actions may inevitably meet resistance, resulting in rebellion, defiance, deceit, and even hypocrisy, if the child does not have a heart that desires change. Transformation begins in the heart of each *born again believer* (John 3:3-7); it involves putting on “the mind of Christ” (1 Peter 1:23), which is the Word of God, and requires *sanctification* which is separation from the world...

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” 1 John 2:15-16

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the ENEMY of God.” James 4:4

One of the greatest areas of temptation for Christians to compromise with the world concerning their faith occurs on college campuses. When Greek letter societies begin recruiting for their *fraternities and sororities*, it may seem very appealing for the lonely child of God (ignorant of Scriptures and secret societies) to consider establishing a bond of “brotherhood” with such groups. However, what they may not realize is that such secret societies are merely present-day, socially-accepted, more sophisticated forms of *idolatry*. And the decision to make “a pledge” to any Greek god would put those believers in violation of God’s very first commandment: *“Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3)*. For those who find themselves already indoctrinated, there is the call to **REPENT**. You must call it sin, ask to be forgiven, and renounce your affiliation, in obedience to the Word of God...

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.” 2 Corinthians 6:16-17

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” 2 Corinthians 6:14

IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

RENEWING THE MIND

Reading the Word of God is essential for putting off the old man... being renewed in the spirit of the mind... and putting on the new man (Ephesians 4:22-24). It is by reading and the study of the Word that we acquire a *r e n e w e d* mind, which is “the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16).



When we read the Bible, we obtain knowledge from the wisdom of God’s Word; however, it is only by the *study* of His Word (with revelation from the Holy Spirit) that we can gain *understanding*. King Solomon explained it in this manner...

“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.” Prov. 4:7

MEDITATING ON THE WORD

In other words, knowledge plus wisdom from above, gives us the understanding of how to apply the Word of God in our lives. However, for the Word to renew and transform the mind, there is the need for diligence on our part. It is not enough for us to just read the Bible; the real changes for renewal of the mind takes place by constantly meditating upon it, “day and night”.

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. **But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.**” Psalm 1:1-2

In the natural world, it has been found that there are many benefits to learning by repetition. Studies have shown that, “Repetition, is a key learning aid because it helps transition (information) from the conscious to the subconscious.” Likewise, meditating on the Word allows it to penetrate deep down into *the soul* of man. And because Jesus is the Word (according to John 1:1) when we meditate on the Scriptures, we learn of His ways, as He sanctifies and cleanses us “with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesian 5:26).

BECOMING THE IMAGE OF CHRIST

Once transformation begins in the heart, we should start to look, think, and walk (behave) differently from those in the world. Why? Because we begin to take on *the image of Christ*.

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be **CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON (JESUS)**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Romans 8:29

Again, as we study the Word of God, and receive knowledge with understanding, the Word begins to transform us, and we take on the image of Christ. This is how the born again disciple is able to “put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27) to become “the new man” spoken of in Colossians 3:10. And the hope of every child of God should be that one day, when Christ shall return, we shall see Him as He is and be like Him (1 John 3:2), *because of the transformation*.