

Conformed or Transformed?

by Wayne Goff

Romans 12:2 clearly instructs Christians **not** to be fashioned according to this world. 1 Corinthians 7:31 teaches us not to misuse this world because its form is passing away. But in reality, too many in the church **are fashioned** to this world in a way not taught by God. They talk like the world, using the Lord's name in vain. They dress like the world, regardless of whether the clothing is too tight, too little, or too gaudy. They study carefully the "fashion world" and try their best to fit in with today's styles. While not everything they do is worldly or sinful, they do not contemplate what God would want them to be in spirit, in thought, in word and in life. They go to church, some even habitually, but their heart is not in it.

Perhaps an *objection* is that Christians today want to know when can I be like the world, and when must I be like God? We can do many things the world does — work at a good-paying job, buy a nice house, own a nice car, and dress according to the standards of today, but in accordance with the modesty prescribed by God. Some get confused because they just don't see the line that is to be drawn. If they can do these things like the world, then why must they be different at all?

The **answer** to the objection lies in the simple fact that when we obeyed the Gospel, and had our sin-sick souls purged by the blood of Jesus Christ, that we became God's possession — God's property — even God's servant or slave. *"For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's"* (1 Cor. 6:20) Since this is true, we must seek to please God first and ourselves second. In the words of Romans 12:1, we are to present our bodies as a *living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable to God, and spiritual.

Some may chafe at the thought of being God's **slave**, or **servant**. The terminology sounds too much like one is *confined, limited and suffering in bondage*. **The irony of it all is this: once we become the servant of God we will never be more free!** Being a servant of the Lord is uplifting, enlightening, and empowering! In our original text, Paul uses the inspired term **"transformed"**! We will be the Lord's slave, but a voluntary slave who is being transformed into the image of God!

Dear reader, did you know that the Greek verb translated **"transformed"** only appears four times in the New Testament, and that two of those appearances are used to describe the transfiguration of Jesus Christ before Peter, James and John (Matt. 17:2; Mk. 9:2)! Does that sound like one is being limited, confined and in bondage? Absolutely not! It is becoming something strong, powerful and beautiful. God as our Master is a loving God who wants us to become more like Him. Listen to the apostle Peter as he writes: *"As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust"* (2 Pet. 1:3-4).

It is apparent through Peter's words that **servicing** God is a positive transforming experience. Being transformed into the image of God requires (1) knowledge, (2) conviction, (3) dedication and (4) time. *"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord"* (2 Cor. 3:18). As someone has aptly illustrated the Christian's life with these words: *"a train is never so free as when it remains on the tracks."* Being a slave of God is *becoming* what God made us to be, and *remaining dedicated* to that instruction and discipline God lovingly gave us.

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