

Do not Conform

Online Sermon:

http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

“The chameleon is a master of disguise. No matter what environment it’s placed in, it will change its color to disguise itself.”¹

Apostle Paul told the church of Corinth, “if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old is gone, the new is here” (2 Corinthians 5:17). To be “born of the water and the Spirit” (John 3:5) is the singular most important event that can



happen in a person’s life because Jesus tells us that **“anyone who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life”** (John 5:24). The word of God that used to be foolishness to us when we were perishing in sin (1 Corinthians 1:18) is now meditated upon (Psalms 1:2), understood and joyfully obeyed (John 14:15-21)!

So radical is this transformation of the heart that those born again are Christ’s ambassadors and royal priests (2 Corinthians 5:20; 1 Peter 2:9) called to **“let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven”** (Matthew 5:16). The world, however, often avoids friendship with the believer due to their righteousness exposing

their evil deeds (John 3:20). Hence Jesus states, **“if you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to this world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you”** (John 15:19). Is it easy to be like Jesus? Even though this world is not our home



(Hebrews 13:14) and believers are called to let their light shine how easy is it to identify a person who is born again living amongst the lost of this world? Truthfully many Christians take their council from the ungodly and walk in the ways of sinners (Psalms 1:1-2) so that they might “fit in” with the very crowd they are trying to reconcile with Christ who offers

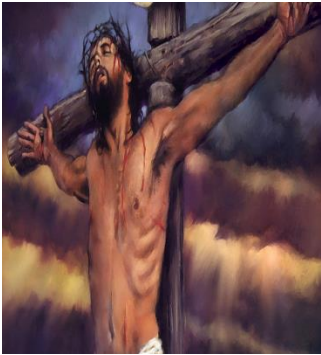
them righteousness and eternal life! As chameleons their witness is weak for how can one persuade another of the infinite value of the Treasure one has found when one is not allowing God to radically transform one’s words and deeds? The following sermon is going to review the words of Apostle Paul as found in Romans 12:1-2 to help explain and encourage us to no longer conform to the patterns of this world as chameleons but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds in the ways of the Lord!

By the Grace of God, I am Who I am

To encourage us believers to no longer be chameleons of the ways of this world but instead let our light shine Paul begins by reminding us that our salvation was obtained through the

¹ Taken from Sermon Central a sermon entitled “Chameleon”

mercies of a loving, gracious God (12:1a).² We were headed to hell when the Good Shepherd called us by name.³ We were enemies of God (Romans 5:10) and though He had every right to give us over to our depraved minds (Romans 1:28), Christ not only died to atone for our sins (1 John 2:2) but also showed us the way, truth, and life that we could have never found on our own (John 14:6)!⁴ Therefore, Apostle Paul cries out, “but by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect” (1 Corinthians 15:10).⁵ The truth that Paul is pointing too is that “justification by faith produces neither moral passivity nor permissiveness.”⁶



Knowing that we were not purchased with “perishable things like silver or gold that we were redeemed but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18-19),⁷ ought to compel us to joyfully give the life we cannot keep in service to He who bought us at the price of His very life (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)!⁸

² Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 433.

³ Alan Carr, “[The Secret of Holy Living \(Romans 12:1-2\)](#),” in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 2247.

⁴ Douglas J. Moo, *Romans*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 394.

⁵ Alan Carr, “[The Secret of Holy Living \(Romans 12:1-2\)](#),” in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 2247.

⁶ James R. Edwards, *Romans*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 281.

⁷ James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: The New Humanity*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 1492–1493.

“We experience God’s mercy as a power that exerts a total and all-encompassing claim upon us: grace now “reigns” over us (5:21). It is therefore entirely fitting that our response to God’s grace is all-encompassing: the presentation of our entire persons as a sacrifice to God!”⁹ For this to occur we must see our “identity in terms of our eternal destination rather than how we are viewed by the world.”¹⁰ Paul urges us in view of God’s mercy to not seek friendship with this world but to let our light shine by continually seeking to be “conformed to the likeness of God’s Son” (Romans 8:29)!¹¹

The Living Sacrifice – Dying to Live

Considering God’s mercy Paul says you are “to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice” (12b)! When we hear the word “sacrifice” it brings to our minds the Old Testament sacrificial system when the one who sinned brought forth an animal and the priest laid hands upon it signifying their atonement was made through the death of the animal in their stead.¹² Unlike the Old Testament times believers are made “holy through the sacrifice of the body of Christ once and for all” (Hebrews 10:10). As a result of our “union with Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit we have died to sin” (Romans 6)¹³ and as a result, thankfully, cannot go back to being lost and heading for hell as we were

⁸ James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: The New Humanity*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 1492.

⁹ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 750.

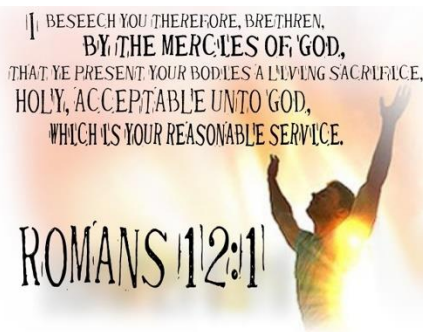
¹⁰ Craig S. Keener, *Romans*, New Covenant Commentary Series (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 144.

¹¹ James R. Edwards, *Romans*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 282.

¹² Alan Carr, “[The Secret of Holy Living \(Romans 12:1-2\)](#),” in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 2247.

¹³ James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: The New Humanity*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 1494.

before. However, since the sinful nature still exerts influence on us to return as chameleons of the fallen ways of this world,¹⁴ to



live rightly before the Lord who was “slain from the foundation of this world” (Revelation 13:8) one simply must sacrifice “self” upon the altar, take up one’s cross and follow Jesus (Matthew 16:24).¹⁵ In the Old Testament when the animal was placed on the

altar it became consecrated to God. In a similar manner offering ourselves as a living sacrifice means consecrating our every thought, word, and deed unto our Redeemer!

While on our own we are incapable of no longer sinning, those who have the mind of Christ have died to sin and unlike the animal sacrifice are not dead but very much alive, empowered, and capable of being slaves to righteousness (Romans 7).

Through the power of the Holy Spirit and considering God’s mercy in sending His Son Jesus to atone for our sins Apostle Paul

urges us to resist “the pressure to be squeezed into the mold of this world”¹⁶ but with a pure heart¹⁷ seek to please the Lord by letting our light shine, not as chameleons, but as children of God before this very dark world! Since Christ gave His very life to atone for our sins, is it not fitting of a response in return for us to offer our full lives as living sacrifices in service to Him?¹⁸

Set Apart as Holy

We are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices in the manner that is holy and pleasing unto God (12c). Conformity to the ways of this world is “totally inconsistent with the love of God or man”¹⁹ for “salvation does not mean that Jesus died to save us in our sins but to save us from them.”²⁰ While we cannot stop living in this world we certainly can and must be obedient to the will of God so that those of this evil age (Galatians 1:4) might, though they be blinded by the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4), see the Light of the One directing our paths.²¹

When we use our bodies as heirs to the eternal age to come believers cease to be “irrelevant, insignificant, odd, or peculiar”²² but signposts to God’s infinite grace and mercy that none might be lost (2 Peter 3:9).

¹⁴ Douglas J. Moo, [Romans](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 395.

¹⁵ Leon Morris, [The Epistle to the Romans](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 434.

¹⁶ Douglas J. Moo, [The Epistle to the Romans](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 755.

¹⁷ Douglas J. Moo, [Romans](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 396.

¹⁸ James R. Edwards, [Romans](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 282–283.

¹⁹ Robert Murray McCheyne et al., [A Treasury of Great Preaching: 5 Vol. Set](#) (WORDsearch, 2020).

²⁰ James Montgomery Boice, [Romans: The New Humanity](#), vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 1504.

²¹ F. F. Bruce, [Romans: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 6, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 223–224.

²² R. C. Sproul, [The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Romans](#) (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1994), 196.

May we offer our bodies as “implements of righteousness” (Romans 6:13)²³ rather than with indifference or worst yet as chameleons, imitating the freedom of the fallen which has left



them enslaved and naively looking to satisfy the eternity God has placed in their hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11) with temporary and meaningless trinkets and toys of this world. We honor God with our bodies when we eat our food and thank Him for what He has given us,²⁴ when we guard our tongues so that no unwholesome talk might (Ephesians 4:29; James 3:5-6)²⁵ distracts others from His holiness we

are trying to emulate (Romans 8:29),²⁶ when we exercise both physically and spiritually that which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, when we refuse the lust of the flesh and eyes (1 John 2:15-17),²⁷ when we spend hours studying, praying, and going to church instead of worldly activities,²⁸ when we work with our hands to provide for ourselves and share with the poor (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12),²⁹ and we honor God with our bodies when we use our feet to take the Gospel to those perishing in their sin (Romans 10:14-15)!³⁰

²³ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 433.

²⁴ Douglas J. Moo, *Romans*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 397.

²⁵ James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: The New Humanity*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 1503.

²⁶ James R. Edwards, *Romans*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 284.

²⁷ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 754.

²⁸ James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: The New Humanity*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 1503.

Though this age is incredibly evil and filled with God-haters, insolent, the arrogant, and those who have no understanding, no love or mercy (Romans 1:29-30); this is even more reason to imitate His holiness for in utter darkness Light truly shines the brightest!

Transformed Minds

To keep the ways of this world from infiltrating our thoughts and desires Paul says we are to be continuously



transformed by the renewing of our minds (2a). Those who have passed from death to life are to “relearn things from a new perspective.”³¹ We are no longer free to wander on the broad path that gives itself over to self-gratification and fleshly desires (Romans 8:5). Having

been born of the Spirit the Lord expects His own who “have been introduced to the world to come”³² to “recognize and affirm” the newness initiated in Christ (Romans 6:4, 7:6) in their lives.³³

²⁹ James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: The New Humanity*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 1503.

³⁰ James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: The New Humanity*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 1503.

³¹ R. C. Sproul, *The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Romans* (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1994), 197.

³² Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 435.

³³ Craig S. Keener, *Romans*, New Covenant Commentary Series (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 144.

Being a living sacrifice unto the Lord is only possible when the mind is controlled by God's commands and His will for one's life. Since we live in a fallen world that entices believers to go back to being ruled by their sinful natures, the only way to be holy and let one's light shine is by asking God to renew one's mind daily.³⁴

“The renewal of the mind is the gift of grace to see ourselves, others, and the world from the perspective of the cross of Jesus Christ, which alone produces a hatred for our sins instead of delight in them, and a love for sinners instead of rejection of them.”³⁵

For one's mind to be renewed we cannot and must not let life merely happen! True discipleship consists of both “learning and unlearning as well.”³⁶ Those who “belong to the age Christ inaugurated” are to be constantly inviting the Holy Spirit³⁷ to transform their “innermost thoughts and attitudes”³⁸ so that they might reflect the righteousness of our Lord. For this to happen believers must “unlearn” and reject the ways of this world that only glory the god of this age. If we fill our minds with secular culture,³⁹ we will remain chameleons and our light will not shine, nor will we grow beyond mere infants in the Lord (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). If we meditate on God's word day and night and allow both it and prayer to be the standards that govern our

³⁴ Douglas J. Moo, [Romans](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 397.

³⁵ James R. Edwards, [Romans](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 285.

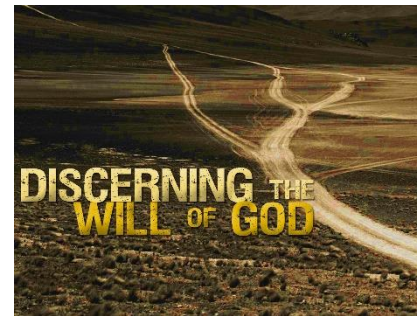
³⁶ James R. Edwards, [Romans](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 285.

³⁷ Douglas J. Moo, [The Epistle to the Romans](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 756.

words, thoughts, and deeds⁴⁰ then these biblical truths will be constantly renewing our minds in whatever is noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable in the sight of the Lord (Philippians 4:8)! May we be filled with the Holy Spirit and may the Lord rule over us who have been purchased at the price of His very life!

The Will of God

In view of God's mercy if one offers one's body as a living sacrifice and refuses to conform to the patterns of this world but instead invite the Holy Spirit to renew one's mind daily then Paul says one will be able to “test and approve what



God's will is, His good, pleasing, and perfect will (12:2b)! Living in proximity to so many “competing voices” telling one how to live one's life makes it extremely hard to know what is right and wrong. Though we be “unworthy servants” (Luke 17:10),⁴¹ we remain

created in God's image (Genesis 1:27) and as masterpieces of His grace capable of being holy as He is holy (1 Peter 1:16). While God is wholly other, and we can only in a small measure

³⁸ Douglas J. Moo, [Romans](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 396.

³⁹ James Montgomery Boice, [Romans: The New Humanity](#), vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 1502.

⁴⁰ Douglas J. Moo, [The Epistle to the Romans](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 757–758.

⁴¹ James Montgomery Boice, [Romans: The New Humanity](#), vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 1506.

know of His might, knowledge, love, and power; believers must not forget that with the Holy Spirit and having the mind of Christ we are able to discern God's voice when He calls us by name! When we lack wisdom on a matter then we are "to ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you" (James 1:5).⁴² It is by meditating on God's word and prayer that His will is revealed to us.⁴³ Even though God often asks of us tasks that are "humanly" impossible, in faith we are to obey with the assurance that He who asks enables and always does good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28)!⁴⁴

So let us throw off the shackles of sin that so easily entangle us and refuse to be chameleons of this world but instead lights testifying to the amazing grace, love, and power of He who gave us an eternal life as heirs in His kingdom! Let's march forward without question or reservation⁴⁵ so that the world might see that the recipients of God's love will never stop letting their light shine so that they might please their Lord, Saviour, and King!

⁴² Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 758.

⁴³ R. C. Sproul, *The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Romans* (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1994), 197.

⁴⁴ Alan Carr, "[The Secret of Holy Living \(Romans 12:1-2\).](#)" in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 2250.

⁴⁵ Alan Carr, "[The Secret of Holy Living \(Romans 12:1-2\).](#)" in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 2250.