

BE YE TRANSFORMED

(INDICATORS OF A RENEWED MIND)

ROMANS 12:2

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In past weeks, we've been blessed by various brethren with lessons which include *can worldliness impact the spiritual growth of a Christian? What does it take to love the world and the danger therein and Unity in our marriages, who's responsible?* In a bid to curb out worldliness in the life of Christians. Hence this admonition will be focused on the indicators of a renewed mind.

To Christians is an appeal by Apostle Paul to dedicate themselves to God and be transformed from the world by the renewing of their mind. Romans 12:1-2

I appeal to you therefore, brethren and beg of you in view of {all} the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as living scarifies, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship. ² do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adaptive to his external superficial custom], but be transformed (change) by the entire renewal of your mind (by its new ideas And its new attitude), so that you may prove (for yourself) what is good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good, acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].

To be transformed is to Change into another form. The VINES put it as the obligation being to undergo a complete change which under the power of God will find expression in character and conduct. That is inward change and outward change (see transfiguration). Christians cannot just claim to be transformed. Your words need to be backed by actions (*Paul Pollard, "Christian Relationships."* In truth for today 2017) Christians are people called out of the world and at such ought to be transformed from the world. This new form in which to live is not something Christians give themselves. It is given by the Holy Spirit. Being a Christian involves changing habits and it is a must to change our ways I Peter 4:1-3- *forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; ² that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God ³ for the time past of our life may suffices to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walk in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, reveling, banquetings, and abominable idolatries*

The change is not instantaneous. There is no room for giving excuse, but acknowledging that habits are hard to give up. It is a process of growth proverbs 4:18. *But the path of the [uncompromisingly] just and righteous is like the light of dawn, that shine more and more (brighter and clearer) until it reaches its full strength and glory in) the perfect day [to be prepared.] Amp* As Believers, we are a building being put together for God Ephesians 2:19-22- *now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God; ²⁰ and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; ²¹ in whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord: ²² in whom ye also are built together*

The Christian life style is not to be designed by this world but by the future one. Since this one is passing away. It will be foolish to tie our hope to it.

The renewing of the mind as used in our text signifies rebirth. This renewal takes place when Christians have their natural mind penetrated and transformed by the Holy Spirit which each one received at baptism. The aim is to have the mind of Christ. I Corinthians 2:16-***“but who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ*** NKJ

This renewal comes through knowledge Colossians 3:9-10- ***Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him*** NKJ

Growing in knowledge is a must for Christians. I Peter 2:1-3; ***therefore laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, ² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*** NKJ

Also in grace II Peter 3:18; ***but grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and forever Amen.***

Once the Christian mind is renewed, he is not to walk like the world because those in the world are past feelings- see Ephesians 4:17-24. Believers cannot hang on to the ways of the world, it results to enmity with God -James 4:4. ***You [are like] unfaithful wives [having illicit affairs with the world and breaking your marriage vows to God]! Do you not know that being the world friend is being God's enemy? So whoever chooses to be a friend of the world takes its stand as an enemy of God.*** Amp

We must change our ways I Peter 4:1-3 ***therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ² that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. ³ for we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the gentiles- when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries*** NKJV.

Transformed believers can prove or make proper judgment about God's will. Apostle Paul discussed further the following as indicators or evidence of a transformed or renewed mind.

Right thinking about others: thinking correctly towards each other as a way of promoting unity is one of the indicators of transformation (renewed mind). Paul in verse three is reminding Christians of the nature of the church as one body and that each of the members had his own gift. The path to unity is that every member of the church must refrain from thinking too highly of the gift that he had been given. Above all, brethren are to serve one another. Apostle Paul is simply saying that every Christian in the Church and society at Large should have proper attitude toward others and not be arrogant concerning spiritual gifts which individual brethren possess. The problem of ***self-importance*** should not be found in the life of Christian. Believers are not to display destructive pride in their lives; they are not to think highly of themselves than they should. See 2 Corinthians 10:13, Eph 4:7, 13. Mtt 7:2 Mark 4:24, Luke 6:37-38.

Love for fellow Believers. To get along with others and / or those with differing opinions, love was the basis given to Christians by Paul in Romans 12:9-21- ***let your love be without hypocrisy, abhor what is evil, cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; ¹¹ not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the lord, ¹²***

rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, ¹³ *contributing to the needs of the saint, practicing hospitality.* Loving the brethren and others is an indicator or evidence of a renewed mind. Love without hypocrisy pertains to being without pretense which could be translated as “genuine” or “sincere” love. This is not characterized by lip or high service that is, it is without play-acting. Believers are instructed to “**hate what is evil**” “that is, to have a vehement dislike for anything contrary to God will for human relationships. Transformed Christians are those who have close and loving relationship with each other’s. In essence this feeling of love and goodwill is to be displayed with respect and honor for each person giving preference to one another. Believers are to take the lead in showing respect or esteeming others highly than oneself. Believers have a commitment to one another in the Lord, and it be must carry out in a willing manner. We are not to be hesitant, reluctant, or lagging behind. Meaning “Never let your zeal for each other flag.” To be fervent in spirit is figuratively used in reference to emotions which are to be stirred up. As transformation takes its course, Christians are to be excited, enthusiastic in our service to God and to one another! Rejoice in hope. Hope is necessary for life. It is the basis of the Christian existence. Believers can gain strength from hope because it is grounded in what God have done in Christ, is experienced in the power of the spirit and moves toward the glory that is to be revealed.

No Retaliation. This applies to Christians and their interaction with each other, as well as to outsiders. Romans 12:14-21

The principle of blessing those who wrong or treat us wrongly goes way back to Christ teaching on the beatitudes- mth 5:44. Transformed Christians are admonished to against repaying “evil for evil” this is because Jesus have settled that on the cross. Paul’s admonition for believers is to respect what is right in the sight of all men and be proper examples. Christians are to give careful consideration to the treatment of others and to demonstrate daily the high value they place on respecting everyone. We must have regards for fellow believers and others living in peace to the extent that it depend on us (cf Hebrews 12:14, mark 9:50). Paul is saying, Christians do not take the law into your hands and seek revenge on those who have wronged you see lev 19:18; matthew 5:39. Believers are urged to let divine justice replace the urge to right wrongs through vengeance. See also proverbs 20:22.

Respect the Gift (talents) of others Romans 12:6-8;

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us. Let us use them: if prophecy let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. NKJV

The VINES dictionary define Gifts (talent) as “**God endowments upon believers by the operation of the Holy Spirit in the Churches**” – **I Cor 1:7**. It is the duty of every believer to respect the gift (talents) of fellow believers be it in the functioning of the body of Christ. Our gifts vary from one individual to another and no one should be looked as superior to the other. This gift is given to each individual according to measure of his faith and must use it accordingly.

Respect for Government Romans 13:1-7

Paul in Romans 13 opined several reasons for Christians to be submissive to the government, demonstrating that even in the political sphere Christians must exhibit the renewed and

transformed mind. Paul's teaching is for every believer to be in subjection to the governing authorities see Titus 3:1. Despite the oppressive nature of governments, Paul wants believers to understand that civil authorities are agents of God, set in place by Him and to be obeyed and at such, he is calling all Christians to be submissive to them not only because they had power of life and death. He opined that Christians should not resist the legitimate demands of the state. **To resist in any way by not paying taxes, by disregarding the laws and edicts (for instance monthly sanitation exercise), by means of showing noncompliance- is the same as disregarding the ordinance of God.** Take note, this does not mean that every governmental decree is God ordinance and comes from Him but only that the governments are ordained by Him.

Respect for Opinions over Food and Special Days Roman 14:1-4, 13-21, I Corinthians 8:11-13

As evidence of transformation, believers are not to be found judging each other but rather be should be accommodating when it comes to issue of opinions that are debatable such as what a brother did or did not eat or what day is special or not.

Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions² one person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only.³ the one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him. ⁴Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the lord is able to make him stand.

The weak ones should be readily accepted by the strong in faith. To welcome the weak in faith is to treat them as equal participant in the Grace of God

Other indicator of transformation by the renewing of the mind is

Loving our neighbors Romans 13:8-14, cf exodus 20:13-15; Deut 5:17-19, 21, lev 19:18

Conclusion

Dearly beloved since we have dedicated ourselves to God through baptism, we are not to be formed or conformed to this world. Paul has challenged us not to conform to the evil of this age. Everything non-Christian in it and reject whatever this world has to offer as pattern for life.

Thank you for listening and God bless you all.