

Be Not Conformed To This World

By Ron Boatwright

Paul tells us "that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God...And do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:1-2). Giving ourselves as "a living sacrifice" requires that we "do not be conformed to this world". If we conform to this world, the living sacrifice of ourselves becomes polluted and unacceptable to God. As Christians we are not to be conformed to the world in our speech (Ephesians 4:29), thoughts (Matthew 15:19), dress (1 Timothy 2:9-10), or actions. We are to be transformed or changed. We are to "Put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man" (Colossians 3:9-10).

Worldliness has no place in a Christian's conduct. Worldliness is a malignancy eating away at the very souls of people. Worldliness weakens and destroys our love and respect for God and sets us in opposition to His will. One becomes worldly when he loves the things the world does. Worldliness begins with wanting to fit in and to get along with the world. "Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4). John tells us "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15-17).

As members of the Lord's body, His church, we are not to have "spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). We must "keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27) so we can go to Heaven.

We tend to become like those with whom we associate. "Do not be deceived, evil company corrupts good morals" (1 Corinthians 15:33). We are not to participate in the sinful deeds of the world but, "Therefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord" (2 Corinthians 6:17). We must carefully choose those with whom we associate. "I am a companion of all who fear You, and of those who keep Your precepts" (Psalms 119:63). We cannot become a hermit even though we live in a world with sin all around us. But we must live in a way so, "That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked generation,

among whom you shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15). We are to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them" (Ephesians 5:11). It is not sufficient just to abstain from the evil practices but we must also speak up against them.

But "If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth" (1 John 1:6). Put on righteousness is nothing but hypocrisy. The Lord had much to say against hypocrites in Matthew chapter 23. Many people's morality is the current and popular practice of others.

Even though we must provide for our families, many people in this materialistic world, equate individual success with the size of their cars, wardrobes, houses, and bank accounts. "One's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Luke 12:15). We are to "Set your mind on things above, and not on things of the earth" (Colossians 3:2). True success is pleasing God so we can go to Heaven. We are to be "a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). In not being conformed to this world, you will "make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10) and be assured of a home in Heaven.