

Transformed

Introduction. In the first century there was basically two views of the human body. One was that it should be worshiped for its beauty and idolized for its strength. The body was something to be proud of and to flaunt.

On the other hand, some believed that body was inherently sinful. The body did not matter, only the spirit mattered. In fact, the body was only a shackle and a prison. It was something to be despised and even of which to be ashamed.

The gospel presented a third view. The body is to be consecrated to the Lord. It is not to be worshiped, nor it is to be abased. We should not glory in it, but neither should we be ashamed of it. It is given to us by God. It is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). The biblical view is stated in Romans 12:1-2.

“Therefore” establishes a connection with the foregoing argumentation (cp. 6:13, 19). “Beseech” means “to exhort, to encourage someone to do something.” The word was used of exhorting troops who were about to go into battle (cp. Matthew 8:5; Acts 16:9). “Conform” means to fashion outwardly or external conformity (cp. 1 Peter 1:14). It indicates the adoption or imitation of a pose or received mode of conduct. But the word “transformed” means to be changed inwardly (cp. Matthew 17:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18). When a person becomes a Christian, he is to undergo a change, a metamorphosis. The man in sin is to be changed into a child of God (2 Corinthians 5:17). The two verses indicate three ways Christians are to be transformed from the world.

I. Our Morals Must Be Transformed

- A. The world seeks to conform us to its fashions, attitudes, and morals. James L. Standfield wrote, “The world is the Devil’s liar for sinners and its lure for saints.” Satan still seeks to ensnare us through our own desires (Romans 13:13-14; Ephesians 2:1-3; James 4:1; cp. Genesis 25:34).
- B. We have to be transformed from the desires, deeds, and deceitfulness of the world (Hebrews 12:14). There is pressure to conform through ungodly friends, salacious literature, and immoral mass media. Television, Internet, and our phones can and often do present pictures that appeal to the lewd and the lascivious. Facebook and Instagram should not be used to post material that is not appropriate for a Christian, either morally or doctrinally.
- C. In Philippians 1:27, the original word “conduct” is related to our English word politics. Warren Wiersbe says it means “to behave the way citizens are supposed to behave.” Christians must do more than “talk the talk” — we must “walk the walk.” The most important weapon against the enemy is not a stirring sermon or a powerful book; it is the consistent life of a Christian. This “life” is to be everywhere: church, home, work, school, and community (Psalm 139:7-12).

II. Our Minds Must Be Transformed

- A. This text calls it “the renewing of your mind.” J. Oswald wrote, “A well-ordered life is the outcome of a well-ordered mind.”
- B. Moral change begins with a mental transformation. Christians think differently than the world. Discipline your mind to think about what is true, honorable, right,

pure, lovely, and admirable (Philippians 4:8). Your actions, in all realms of your life, indicate what is in your heart (Matthew 15:18-20).

- C. There are three elements in the mind:
 - 1. The intellect — when Peter called on the Jews to repent (Acts 2:14-40), he wanted them to change their minds and views about Christ.
 - 2. The emotions — it is possible to have a knowledge of sin without abhorring it as something that dishonors God and ruins humanity. Leaving sin is partly an emotional process (2 Corinthians 7:9-10).
 - 3. The will — this is a determined abandonment of sin and a return to God (Psalm 51:17; Jeremiah 6:20; Hosea 6:6; Acts 2:38).
- D. “Renewing” means that Christians go back in their thoughts to their original commitment and reaffirm its necessity and legitimacy. Since so much in the world appeals to the obscene, off-color, and unclean, we renew our minds, refresh our spirits, and revive our hearts. How do we affect this renewal?
 - 1. Read the Bible.
 - 2. Listen to recordings of hymns and sermons.
 - 3. Read good books by religious authors.
 - 4. Attend worship and enjoy fellowship with like-minded Christians.
- E. By meditating on these good spiritual outlets, we can channel our minds in a positive direction and flush out bad thoughts.

III. Our Motives Must Be Transformed

- A. The construction of the original language teaches that, when a Christian’s mind is transformed, his thinking ability, moral reasoning, and spiritual understanding are able to properly assess (prove, discern) everything and accept only what conforms to the will of God.
- B. Three terms are used to describe the will of God.
 - 1. “Good” is what is pleasant in its character or constitution and beneficial in its effect (Luke 10:42; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
 - 2. “Acceptable” borrows from Old Testament sacrificial language to describe the kind of holy living that God approves, a “living sacrifice” that is morally and spiritually spotless and without blemish (Leviticus 22:20).
 - 3. “Perfect” has the idea of being complete or mature, of something’s being everything it should be (Matthew 5:48; 1 Corinthians 13:10).
- C. Dedication leads to discernment and discernment leads to delight in God’s will. An intimate connection lies between discerning the will of God and making oneself a living sacrifice (Philippians 4:18; Hebrews 13:16).
- D. The reason why the heart is renewed is so we can do the will of God (Matthew 26:39, 42; Luke 11:28). Our motivation is beyond this life — it is spiritual, eternal, and heavenward. We benefit from thinking about Heaven (Philippians 3:20).

Conclusion. The gospel has power (Romans 1:16), and when people see that power in you, they are more convinced to believe the gospel because it becomes real to them. They see that it can transform lives. The gospel has been doing this for 2,000 years, and it will continue to the end of time.