



The Essentials of Commitment

Romans 12:1-12:2

Pastor Eddie Idefonso

Continued from last edition.....

I. The Appeal

II. The Act

III. The Assignments of Commitment (v. 2)

A. The Christian is not to Be Conformed to This World. (2a)

In verse two we are also told, “**And do not be conformed to this world...**”

The word translated “**conformed**” (**suschematizo**) refers to the outward appearance or likeness, being shaped after the fashion of something. In other words, separated from the world and separated unto God.

Martin Marty said in an interview in the L.A. Herald-Examiner, “*Today you can’t say turning to Jesus means you are turning your back on the world.*” The church is to be in the world as a ship is in the ocean. We are to be in the world but not of it. But the church is taking on water. The world is seeping into the church so rapidly that the vessel is in danger of being submerged. The church, which is to influence the world, finds herself powerfully influenced by the world.

Remember the boy who put a sparrow in the same cage as a canary, hoping that the bird would learn to sing? But later he remarked disappointedly. “The sparrow doesn’t sound like a canary, but the canary sounds like a sparrow!”

We have the notion that we can be inundated by worldly values and yet meet

our responsibility of keeping society from decay. If our assignment is to reclaim the moral ground of this nation for righteousness, how can we do it if we ourselves are guilty of the same sins? To change the analogy slightly: It’s hard to build a dam when you’re flowing down the river!

The late George Gallup said at a national seminar of Southern Baptist leaders, “Polls have uncovered an upswing in religion along with crime and immorality.” Gallop called it a giant paradox that religion is showing clear signs of revival even as the country is ridden with a rising crime rate and other problems that are regarded as antithetical to religious piety. That there is very little difference in the ethical behavior between churchgoers and those who are not active religiously—the levels of lying, cheating, and stealing are remarkably the same in both groups. What an indictment of American Christianity to have religion up while morality is down!

B. The Christian is to Be Transformed by the Word (2b)

“... but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

The word translated “**transformed**” is (**metamorphoustai**), from which we get the word metamorphosis. Most of us

remember enough from science class in school to remember what the process of metamorphosis is. It is the process by which a caterpillar is turned into a butterfly. It is a change from the inside out and it is not just a physical change but a change of nature.

The significance of this word can be seen in the three other places it is used in the New Testament:

In **Matthew 17:2** and **Mark 9:2** it is used to describe the transfiguration of Christ – when the Lord’s true glorious nature was allowed to shine through so that his face radiated like the sun and his clothing was white with light.

The third and final place it is used is **2 Corinthians 3:18** where we read,

2 Corinthians 3:18 (KJV)

¹⁸ But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are “changed” (be transformed) into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Three important things about the verb translated “**be transformed.**”

1. It is a present tense verb – this means that it is something that is to be continuously happening. This is not a once for all time action, unlike the act of dedicating ourselves to the Lord. We understand from the present tense of this verb that what Paul is describing is a process, a gradual transformation.

2. It is a passive verb. Paul is not saying that we should transform ourselves but rather we should yield ourselves so that the Holy Spirit may transform us. Christians are to allow themselves to be changed continually little by little so that their life

conforms more and more to the image of Christ.

3. It is an imperative. This means that this is not just a suggestion but a command.

**“By the renewing of the mind”
It’s hard to serve God with our bodies when our mind is in the gutter.**

Neil Postman of New York University (US News and World Report, Jan. 19, 1981).

“What television does is to bring the whole culture out of the closet, because programs need a constant supply of novel information. In its quest for new and sensational ventures to hold its audience, TV must tap every existing taboo in the culture: Homosexuality, incest, divorce, promiscuity, corruption, adultery, and terrible displays of violence and sadism.”—Prairie Overcomer, June 1988

Philippians 4:8-9 (KJV)

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

⁹ Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

I. The Appeal of Commitment

II. The Act of Commitment

III. The Assignments of Commitment

IV. The Accomplishment of Commitment

Romans 12:2 (KJV)

² And be not conformed to this

world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

A. We will be Enlightened in knowing the Will of God

As the golfer approached the first tee, a hazardous hole with a green surrounded by water, he debated if he should use his new golf ball. Deciding that the hole was too treacherous, he pulled out an old ball and placed it on the tee. Just then he heard a voice from above say loudly: “**USE THE NEW BALL!**” Frightened, he replaced the old ball with the new one and approached the tee. Now the voice from above shouted: “**TAKE A PRACTICE SWING!**” With this, the golfer stepped backward and took a swing. Feeling more confident, he approached the tee when the voice again rang out: “**USE THE OLD BALL!**”

Walter Knight told of an old Scottish woman who went from home to home across the countryside selling thread, buttons, and shoestrings. When she came to an unmarked crossroad, she would toss a stick into the air and go in the direction the stick pointed when it landed. One day, however, she was seen tossing the stick up several times. “Why do you toss the stick more than once?” someone asked. “Because,” replied the woman, “it keeps pointing to the left, and I want to take the road on the right.” She then dutifully kept throwing the stick into the air until it pointed the way she wanted to go!

—Today in the Word, May, 1989

In order to know the will of God the Christian must be utterly surrendered to that will, no matter

what it might be. Those who are not surrendered to God are not in a position to know His will. There can be no reservations at all on our part. Our very bodies must be presented as living sacrifices to the Lord; everything must be offered-nothing withheld.

Illustration: “Will you promise to do something for me?” The object is to extract the promise from the other person before he knew what we wanted done and then to hold him to the promise. Often the immediate response is: “What is it?” In other words, that person was not prepared to promise to do the thing until he first knew what it was. So it is with many Christians. God is saying to them, “**Will you do My will?**” They reply, “**What is it, Lord?**” In short we are only ready to promise God that we will obey His will when it has first been revealed. That is opposite of the Divine order which requires first unconditional surrender.

Trust? Do you really believe His will is good? If your son says, “dad whatever you tell me to do, I’ll do it.” How would you respond?

Proverbs 3:5-6 (KJV)

⁵ **Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.**

⁶ **In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.**

B. We will be Engaged in Doing the Will of God

To know the will of God is the greatest knowledge! To do the will of God is the greatest achievement!- George W. Truett, quoted in “Toolkit,” Cell Church, Winter, 1996, p. 10.

C. We will Find Enjoyment in Fulfilling the Will of God

Illustration: The next year, Wolf and Holmgren went after Reggie White, a free agent who was one of the greatest defensive players in the history of pro football. Every team in the NFL would have liked to have signed White. An ordained minister, he said he would go where God wanted him to go.

Holmgren called White and left a message on his answering machine. “Reggie, this is God,” the message said. “I want you to go to Green Bay.”

Reggie White was not offended—not by Holmgren’s humor or by Wolf’s offer: \$17 million for four years.

Favre joined in the pursuit too. “I told him this was a great football town,” Favre said. “I told him he could make the difference. I also told him I didn’t want him hitting me anymore.”—Parade Magazine, August 24, 1997, p. 5

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