

# Romans 12:1-2

Sunday 11/29/2009

Last week, we had our second sermon on a great practical section. We haven't got very far in Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2, but we'll finish up verse 2 today. We've been talking about the aspect of the facts of the Christian life, the things in your life and my life that are non-negotiable. There are certain things that we as Christians just have to realize that this is the way they are. The success of your Christian life is going to depend on how you look at them, how you view them, and basically what you do with them.

Last week, we looked at "be not conformed to this world." We talked about the slow process of conformity to the world, how it's so subtle, almost unnoticeable, just like we talked about the disease of cancer. You can go through life, and for maybe six months, you've got the disease, and you don't know it. Most people, especially men, don't get regular health checkups the way they should. Because of that, many of them die of diseases that could have been caught very early. While they're living their life, having a good time, going to ball games, enjoying dinner, doing this, doing that, enjoying their family, inside them the process of their death is already unfolding. When they find it, it's too late.

We looked at it in the Bible in the book of Leviticus, chapter 13 and 14. We looked at the great disease of leprosy. If you remember, I showed you how leprosy was in three forms in the Old Testament. Leprosy in the Bible is a picture of the sin in our lives when we conform to this world and part of the conformance that we go through. It started with a leprosy in the flesh, then it moved to a leprosy in the garment, and then it moved to leprosy within the house.

We talked about how the conforming to the world of a child of God is a very slow process. It's a process that one step at a time, one part of us at a time, is taken over. Then we wake up one morning, and just like we go to the doctor and he says, "You got cancer, and it's in the fourth stage," we wind up one morning, wake up, and we find out that we're a long way from God.

I find an interesting story in the Gospels. I know enough about the Bible to know that there's nothing in there by accident. When you're coming through the Gospels, it's talking about while Jesus was a young boy and his family. The Bible talks about Jesus having other literal brothers and sisters. They're all going from one place to another, and they're walking along the road. They're not in a car, they're not in a station wagon, they're not on a train or on a bus; they're all walking together. They're walking, and suddenly, after a couple of days, the parents of Jesus realize that He's not with them.

How in the world do you go two days without knowing where your child is? I don't know. Suddenly, after a couple of days, they look around and they say, "Hey, where's Jesus? He's not with us." They found Him obviously someplace where He's teaching and beginning to exercise His gift that God has given Him to be the Son of God. But this is still when He's a child.

I looked at that story and I thought to myself, "You know what? If Jesus' own parents could misplace Him on the road as their family is walking together and not know that He's missing, boy, we, you and me as Christians, many times we can walk through life thinking He's with us

when He's not with us because of the fact of sin in our lives or conforming to the world." We're going to be talking about the Bible and broken fellowship.

## I. The Simplicity of God's Way

We talked about the great word study of a little word "way," how the facts of the Bible really simplify everything in our lives. We like to make life a lot more complicated than it is. I think that's one of the things that I love about the Bible. The Bible looks like a complicated book, but it's really not. God intended it to be laid out, and if you study the Bible the way it's intended by God to be studied, you're going to find not only is the Bible a pretty simple book, but the Bible takes this thing called life, which appears wherever you go as a very complicated aspect, and it so simplifies it that it leaves nothing really to the imagination of how easy this life really is. The Bible takes away the illusion; it only leaves the reality.

When you study the little word "way," you find that life is so simple because there are only two ways to go. You as a child of God are either going to walk with God or you're going to walk with the world. We live in a dream world, and we have a lot of myths about our Christian life. I find Christians all the time, and I've even talked to them over the years, they'll say, "Well, Bob, I'm really not out of fellowship with God, but I'm really not in fellowship with God either." They like to believe that there's kind of a limbo, someplace where you're not really out of fellowship with God, but you're not really in fellowship with God either.

Let me just say this to you: that doesn't exist in the reality of the Bible. Sitting here this morning, you're either one of two ways as a child of God: you're either in fellowship with Him, or you're not. The Bible, we're going to talk about it today, the Bible gives you a process so that you can stay in fellowship even though we struggle with things in our life. Honestly, there's no reason why you should be here this morning as a child of God and not be in fellowship with God, because there's a process in the Bible that lays that out for you, that you and I as God's child should never spend more than 30 seconds out of fellowship with God.

You can have the worst day of your life where you struggle with everything, every hour, every minute of the day, and you can still end the day in fellowship with God if you understand the process. Sitting here this morning, it's either one of two things: one, you don't understand the process, and I can't imagine that if you've been around here any length of time or you've been through our discipleship. You either don't understand the process, or you simply have ignored the process. But in your life as a Christian, there are only two ways to go: you're either going to walk with God or you're going to walk with the world. There are only two choices.

## II. God's Guarantee for a Victorious Life

Today, I want to look at your guarantee as a child of God. I want to say this to you: God did not tell you in the Bible, God would not tell you and me in the Bible or lead us to believe something in the Bible that was not true. God would not ever suggest that you and I could have a victorious Christian life and live above the circumstances of life, and always have the victory in our relationship with God if it wasn't true.

I deal with a lot of people. I have a lot of people come in, I watch this, and I've analyzed this over the years. We have a lot of people come into church, and they have issues they struggle with, and they want to get it right with God. I've seen the victory in many, many people's lives. There's hardly a week goes by that I don't come to the point where I don't sit down with somebody on a Monday or Tuesday or a Wednesday or a Thursday, and they don't lay out their problem. I give them a workable, understandable solution to their problem. When they leave, it amazes me, when they leave, it's like, in most cases, it's like the weight of the world is off their shoulders.

And yet, I have not solved their problem. Honestly, you go have something you struggle with for two or three years, or a year, or five or six years, or maybe your whole life. You don't turn that around. I can't turn that around in one counseling session. But here's the reason why people go out many times with a victory, even though they haven't solved their problem. You know why? Because they leave with a plan. They came in with no plan. They come in with all of the problems of not knowing what to do about it. They come in with many, many issues in their life that they don't know how to deal with. All that I did for them was systematically peel back the layers like a head of lettuce, put every problem they've got in a compartment, and then simply say to them, "Now, here's the plan by which you can solve these problems." The plan itself, walking out, now having a plan where before you did not have a plan, will make all the difference in your world when it's God's plan for your life to overcome your circumstances.

We all like guarantees, don't we? If I'm going to go buy a car, and I look at one car, when you're young, you buy things because of what they look like. When you're older, you buy things for how long they'll last. I remember when I was a kid, I bought a Z28 Camaro, 1972, black with silver stripes. Boy, that sucker would run. My dad tried to tell me that it wasn't going to get very good gas mileage. Well, gas was 36 cents a gallon back then, but 36 cents was about \$2 today, or there was back then. It didn't get very good gas mileage. It was a screaming machine, no question about it. The insurance on it, because I was like 20 years old, the insurance on it was out of sight, because, I mean, 20 years old, getting a high-performance car, it's out of sight. The fact that it only had a one-year warranty on it, and the reason for that is because they knew every guy that bought one of those cars exactly what he was going to do with it. You're going to rip the gears, and you're going to burn the rubber, and you're going to drag race from light to light, and they said, "We ain't going to pay for all of this."

Now, if I'm going in to buy a car, and I look at a car, and the guy says, "Well, this one's got a warranty for 30,000 miles." And I walk over here, and I look at this car, and this guy says, "We got a warranty on this one, 100,000-mile warranty, bumper to bumper." Now, I may like this car better than this car, but at my age, cars don't do anything for me. As long as they have a seat in them and they'll get me where I want to go, I'm past racing stripe spoiler stuff. Most pastors at my age, who have been in the ministry as long as I have, the church provides them a car. You don't provide me a car. They want a Lexus, nothing wrong with a Lexus. They want a Cadillac, nothing wrong with a Cadillac. I drive a Ford Ranger pickup truck. Giving me a Cadillac or a Lexus would be like eating whipped cream on an onion; it doesn't match.

But I want to tell you something, there aren't very many guarantees in life. We always should look for the best guarantee we could get. The older you get, the more you look at how long this is going to last, what am I going to get for my money? That's just the way life goes. But I want to tell you something, I'll tell you one guarantee that is absolute, and that is the guarantee that if you do what the Bible says, you are guaranteed to have the victorious Christian life. God gave you a guarantee, not only a bumper-to-bumper, it includes the bumpers and everything about you. It's the only guarantee I've found in life after 30-some-plus years in the ministry, almost 40, that it works.

When people come out of my office, and they have a plan, when they see this guarantee, and it's almost at their grasp, and now somebody has laid it out for them, and many times that's what you'll do with people when you work with them. You'll show them the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. They'll see that even though they're struggling, there's a way out, and they get a plan. I want to look at the guarantee that God has given you and me as a child of God. I'm going to say it again: God, listen to me, God would never tell you you could have the life of victory in this world if it was not true.

Now I want to read Romans chapter 12, and I know we've been through verse 1 and into verse 2, but I want to go ahead and read the whole thing so we have it in the context.

*Romans 12:1-2*

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

*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.*

Now, Father, we thank you for all that you do for us, and we thank you for those that are here today. Lord, I know we've got a lot of people that are under the weather, and Lord, I pray for them, and we need to remember them. I know, Lord, that this flu going around, with all the things, it isn't in the kids, it's in the parents, and Lord, we just pray. It's just the way it is. There's nothing we can do about it. We just need to realize that you have here today those that need to hear this message. I know some that made great sacrifices to be here today. I pray, Father, that you'll give us the things that we need to have today, help them to go out of here with a plan, help them to see this guarantee that's better than any guarantee on planet Earth with anything that we would ever hope for. We'll thank you and praise you in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask of it. Amen.

### III. God's Plan vs. The Devil's Plan

Last week, I got to admit that was kind of a bitter pill because we focused on conforming to the world or not to. So it was the bitter part. But how to have and maintain your relationship and your walk with God, this is going to be the sweet part. I want to talk to you about how to have a walk with God and a relationship with God that you never come to the point where you are never not in victory in your life as a child of God. Just as there are only two ways to go in life, there are

only two plans that God has for you in your life. One of them is the plan that God has, and the other one is the plan that the devil has.

Let me explain some things here. God will always hold the line of truth. Many, many times people wonder why I push so heavily on biblical principles for you to learn Bible principles. The reason why I do that is real simple: you need to know Bible principles because the Bible's filled with them, but this is how you know that God is doing something or God is in something. The reason I can look at a situation and see whether God is in it or God is not, and many of you can't, is because I understand what I try to get you to learn every day of your life, and that is Bible principles. Because the key is this: God never violates His own principles. God won't tell you to do something in the Bible in a different way. God won't set up the church as the structure that you need to have in your life, and then you get the idea, "Well, I don't have to go to church to be a good Christian." The structure, the principle, says that's not true. There are things in the Bible that are absolute, the principles; that's how God works. Know the principles, and you'll never get confused whether God's in it or not.

Now, the devil on the other hand, his plan is to get you to step outside those principles. The devil will be Christian, the devil will be very spiritual, but what the devil will never be is biblical or scriptural. He'll never be that. Where God wants to keep you within the principles of the Word of God, that's why you need to know Him, the devil wants to take you outside the Word of God and the principles.

Have you ever noticed this? Have you ever looked in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John on Jesus' earthly ministry? Could you ever find me one time where He violated the principles that He set down in the Word of God so that somebody would do what was right? There's never a time in the Bible that God violated His own principle so somebody would get saved. And yet you find today that preachers violate principles all the time because they believe that the number one thing is getting people saved. When you study Jesus' earthly ministry, you find out that is not the number one thing. The number one thing wasn't people getting saved; the number one thing was the truth by which you have to get saved. He never violated the truth. The truth are the principles. When Jesus lays something down in the Bible, that's it.

The devil's plan is simple: to get you and I as a child of God to conform to this world, therefore becoming absolutely worthless to God's plan and God's will for your life.

## IV. Transformation Defined: Inside Out

Now we talked about "be not conformed to this world." And then we talked about that we are to be transformed. Now let's get a Bible definition of the two words. I think this is vital. You want to get this down someplace so you don't forget it.

When you conform to something, it's to be like something on the outside first. Then it changes you later on the inside. When you get transformed, it's to become like something on the inside first, and then it takes over the outside. To conform is to be like something, but to be transformed is to become something. That is the greatest two definitions defined in the Bible. When you get conformed to the world, you just become like the world in your actions. When you get

transformed by the Word of God, you become like Christ through a transformation process that starts on the inside first and then transforms you from the inside out.

The world will misinform you. I think the number one thing that you need to understand today is that everything in this world, and I don't know of one thing that the world offers that goes against what I'm about to tell you. Our government is great at one thing, and that is the art of disinformation. The art of disinformation is a tremendous, powerful tool. If you want to really mess somebody's mind up, give them disinformation. Tell them that this is what's happening when it's not. Leak it out through the right people. In every situation, whether it's at work, and this is true of churches, maybe not so much here, but it's true of churches, you always have your people that if you want to get the message out, you just tell, "telephone, telegraph, tell a woman." There's always an outlet by which you can get what you want out if you know the right people.

Now, I don't think that's true of this church, but I've seen, I know I've been in enough churches around, and I said that's true. I had a lady one time at a revival service, a guy was preaching, and she came down, and the preacher said she was the biggest gossiper in the church. She came down, and she knew it. She got convicted, and I was preaching, giving the invitation, the pastor was standing down front, and I could hear the conversation. She came down, and she was whining and crying, and she says, "Pastor, I'm the worst gossip in the world." He says, "Amen." She says, "I got to fix it." He says, "Amen." She says, "I want to lay my tongue on the altar." He looked around and said, "Ma'am, it ain't big enough." It's a terrible thing.

My point is this: everything in this world, I don't know anything that goes against it. Everything the world does to conform you is disinformation. If you can walk out of here just knowing that whatever the world portrays to you is not true, you're going to be ahead of the game. I know they don't have these ads anymore, but remember when they used to put cigarette ads on TV and in the books? I grew up in the era of the Marlboro Man. Because when you saw it on TV, everybody wants to be a man. So when a real man is portrayed as a Marlboro Man, what brand of cigarettes are you going to ask for when you go in? Are you going to ask for the Newports? The Newports were women's cigarettes. They had a little filter on them. Real men didn't smoke cigarettes with filters. Real men smoked Camels, Marlboros. The whole idea was to be a Marlboro Man.

I remember seeing ads in the paper with a real rugged-looking guy out west somewhere with chaps on and a horse and cattle behind him, smoking up there, and it said, "Be a Marlboro Man." I remember seeing pictures on TV where the guy's herding thousands of cattle with a Marlboro sticking out of his mouth and a caption, "Come to where the flavor is." Have you ever smelled 10,000 cattle? That's disinformation. They portray it. If they put a picture of my father before he died, who smoked four packs of Marlboros a day, probably all of his life, at the time he was 12, who was a strapping guy about six foot five, my height before I got sick, about 220 pounds. If they'd have showed a picture of him before he died, sitting in his hospital bed, down to about 70 pounds, that you could have picked him up in one hand, and showed him with his shirt off with a scar that came from here all the way around the back when they cut him in half and took one lung out and half of another out because of the cancer he got from smoking cigarettes, that's reality. But they can't sell cigarettes doing that. Disinformation.

We all like the Super Bowl. You know why we like the Super Bowl? Even if you don't like football, the commercials. Especially the beer commercials. Every time you still see it, every time you see the beer commercials on TV, it's always put into a thing where it's young people being social with other people, having a fun time and saying, "Budweiser, this Bud's for you." In all the frills, every Christmas they show that Corona one where it's a Christmas tree and it's on a tropical island someplace, and it's all about beer and it's all about fun. It's all about friends. You see, they would never sell beer if they showed a panning Sunday night down at the City Union Mission. Most of those people down there, those men down there, had great families at one time. I've met them that had PhDs. I've had them come up to me at the end of our sermons and ask me to pray because their family has rejected them because of the alcoholism or the drugs or whatever they've gotten into that has absolutely wrecked their life. That's the reality.

I started going down the mission about 35 years ago. 35 years ago, the average age of the mission man down there that was in the City Union Mission was about 60 years old. You know what the average age is now? About 28. You know why it changed? Disinformation. Everything in this world, everything in this world, it has one purpose: it's to misinform you through disinformation. The world and the devil will misinform you and then it'll take that misinformation and then try to conform you. Where on the other hand, the Bible, God will take the Bible and inform you and then transform you.

## V. The Thorough Furnishing of the Man of God

*2 Timothy 3:16-17*

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

*That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.*

Great passage. Now we've talked about it many, many times, but then it says this, "that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." I don't know what you know about the Bible or what you care about the Bible, but you've heard me say it many, many times: every word in the Bible is important. God put every word in there for a reason. The more you get in the Bible, you'll find out that the words of the Bible will actually line up and be in sync with the great doctrines of the Bible.

Now we know that when we get saved, the Holy Spirit of God comes and lives inside us. That indwelling Holy Spirit of God can never leave. It's never a question whether you're, after you're saved in the Bible way, it's never a question, "Am I saved today or am I not saved today?" The question will simply be, "Am I a child of God in fellowship or out of fellowship with God?" That'll be the issue.

When you notice this verse down there that says that the Bible was given by inspiration of God and it's profitable. It's profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instructions in righteousness. And then it says this in verse 17, "that the man of God may be perfect, throughly, T-H-R-O-U-G-H-L-Y, throughly furnished." You know why it says "throughly"? Because

transformation of your life starts on the inside. The Word of God works through you. It starts with the Holy Spirit of God in your life. And then it doesn't say "finished," it says "furnished." You know why? Because once you get saved, there are certain things that you want to furnish your soul with.

One of the greatest studies of this is the Old Testament tabernacle. Even though the Old Testament tabernacle was a literal thing that the nation of Israel used, the Old Testament tabernacle is a picture of your body and my body. Inside that tabernacle, you had a number of things that were furnishings. Before you went into that inner place there, there was a brazen altar. That brazen altar is where the sacrifice was killed and it was burnt, a picture of Christ dying for you on the cross. When you went into that tabernacle, before you went in, right over here was what they called a laver of water. That was for you, the priest, to wash his feet before he went in, and then he washed his feet when he came out. The reason for that is because the tabernacle with all of its furnishings and all of its coverings had no floor. There was no floor in it. There's no carpet down. That priest had to walk in the dirt of this world.

In that tabernacle, in that second part, this is where he did his ministry. So you're going to find in there a table of showbread. That table of showbread had 12 loaves of bread on it, baked fresh every day. Picture the Word of God. It's called the showbread because "show," like showtime, because that's the bread the priest showed everybody that was holy. It was on a table. That table represents in the Bible our fellowship with the Word of God. Have you ever noticed how that bread is laid out on that table? It's laid out 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and then in front of that, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Twelve because of the fact that it represents the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. But it's laid out on that table, 6 and 6. You know why? Because it's a type of the Word of God, and there are 66 books in your Bible.

Over on the other side of that tabernacle was a seven-prong candlestick. That seven-prong candlestick represents the Holy Spirit of God. When a priest went in there to do the work, there was no light from the outside. The only light that was in there in that tabernacle that represents your life and my life and my walk with God and my ministry was the light from the seven-prong candlestick or the light from the Holy Spirit of God. It's a picture of your life and my life on the inside. There needs to be some furnishing.

You know what else you had in there? You had an incense, and that incense burned continually. You know where they got the fire for the incense? You talk about a great study on prayer. The fire that lit the incense had to come off the brazen altar out front. That incense in there is a picture of prayer. Inside that second part of that tabernacle, after you got through the sacrifice and went into the second department, it's a picture of your life and my life in Christ in that tabernacle, which is a type of Christ. There were some furnishings.

You know what your job ought to be as a child of God once you get saved? You need to furnish inside what God's looking for. You need to realize that you need to be thoroughly furnished. Every time that priest went out, every time he came back in, he washed his feet. Every time you're confessing your sin, getting right with God, every time, all day long, every time you walk through this world, and just as the priest got his feet dirty walking back and forth, you and I are

going to get our feet dirty in this world. The only way to get it clean is to wash it with the water of the Word. It's a great picture, but the furnishings.

When you get saved, what I try to do with you, if somebody's working with you in this church, if somebody's trying to help you get through things, we're doing one thing: we're trying to take you as the man of God or the woman of God, and we're trying to thoroughly furnish you unto all good works.

Now I need to say this. The devil's so subtle. You have an NIV or an ASV or whatever it is, they don't put the word "thoroughly" in there. They put an "o" before the "r" and they make it "thoroughly." They don't use the word "equip," they don't use the word "furnished." They use the word "equipped." Thereby destroying the whole doctrine of what the Bible says, that transforming starts on the inside and then works out. It starts by the Holy Spirit of God coming inside you. It starts by you building the furnishings that God wants you to have. It starts thoroughly from the inside out onto all good works. Your transformation starts on the inside and works its way out to the point where you become that living sacrifice, Romans chapter 12 verse 1.

## VI. The Transformer Analogy

Now let me define for you in an easy format what it means to be transformed because these are words that you may say, "Well, I believe that and I understand that, but help me understand it, break it down for me even better." This is what I have to do.

In your backyard, if you go home today, or maybe in your front yard, depending on how they ran it, either buried in the ground, you'll see a big green box out there somewhere in your neighborhood. That big green box is called a transformer. Now if you don't get your power buried and it's on a pole and it comes in aerial, then if you look on your telephone pole, it will be a round thing about that big and gray, and it looks like a canister about that big, and it's up there in that telephone pole. You know what that is? That's an aerial transformer.

Now what does a transformer do? Raw power comes off the pole. Raw power, if you ever saw it, comes from the power company. Sometimes they come off the, every power company will have what they call a central station, and that's where all the power starts from. Sometimes you see them along the road where they have them fenced in, and you can even hear the buzz on them. There's so much power coming through it. Raw power comes off that pole, and it's in its raw form. If you ram that raw power right into your house, it'd blow your house apart. I don't even think you'd get a chance to turn a light switch on. As soon as you hooked that 50 million volts coming off that power pole and you put it into your box, your fuse box, and it hit those circuits, it'd be over. I'm not sure it wouldn't blow your house up. I know one thing, you don't want to turn a light on with your feet wet.

So the power company puts what we call a transformer between your house and the pole, to take the raw power that comes off that pole and transform it into power to run your house and all the utilities without blowing it up. Now look at it this way. Electricity is power on a pole. In fact, I don't have time to get into this today. Something's always bothered me about telephone poles in

the shape of a cross with power on them. Electricity is one of the, and we take a lot of things for granted that the Bible, that are in the Bible, that are much more laid out in the Bible than we maybe understand. Ben Franklin discovered electricity, yet electricity's been around us all the time. I don't have to tell you that lightning, which is what electricity in its original form came from, is what it is in its rawest form. Lightning is laid out in the Bible as a type of the devil.

I don't need to tell you that if you ever turned on a shortwave radio, when you don't have a station, you hear some of the most unbelievable sounds. They call them diathermies, they call them all kinds of stuff. But at the end result, at the end of the day, going back to the Bible, you got some incredible power out there that man has just basically tapped into. If you got hit with lightning, man, it's over. Gary was telling me he was hunting here, deer hunting during deer season last Sunday, wasn't it? And lightning hit a pole. About how far from you, Gary? About 250 yards. He said he felt the concussion from it. He had a metallic taste in his mouth. You don't come to church on Sunday morning and get hit with lightning. God's right. I'll tell you that. No, I'm just kidding. Man, I'll use that. And he was 250 yards away. I'll forget that about the power on a pole stuff because it gets too Twilight Zone-y, and that's not my point today. I'll get off and show you some diathermies that will scare the fire out of you.

Power on a pole. Raw power that comes from God. Very frankly, when you got saved this morning, or when you're saved this morning, today you got saved, you may not know this.

*Psalms 33:6*

*By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. You really like what he's talking about? He's talking about Genesis 1:1 or before, and he's talking about the power of Almighty God speaking, being spoken, and actually the worlds coming into frame by what God says. He says, "Let there be light." The whole universe had light. That's power. He said, "Let there be Jupiter, let there be Earth, let there be this, let there be that." And it was there. That's power. There's no greater power in the universe than the power of God.

But I'm telling you, the day you got saved, whatever power God has, you got inside you. But God put it in through a transformer. Because if God just gave you the raw power, and He is, your whole body would just go, "pfft," it'd be gone. That power came down today, you got saved. God gave you all His raw power. This temporal body, that's why in eternity you got to have a glorified body. Because my physical body can't handle it.

You know what Jesus Christ was in technical terms? He was a transformer. God is light. We've talked about it in a couple of Bible studies, four or five months ago. I told you about this cosmic radiation thing and this empower power, this light that God is, and what a magnitude it is. Unbelievable that the sun is just a small picture of it. I showed you how that somewhere out there in the third heaven, God is some magnificent white light that just keeps radiating. The power is unbelievable. When God wanted to relate to you and me, He just didn't come down in some blinding light and scare the fire out of everybody. It's one of the Bibles says no man can see

God and live. But what God did is He took that raw power of who He was and He put it in a transformer: Jesus Christ.

When God showed up on this Earth, the power was under control. Had all the same power, but now it's under control. It's in the person of a man, the God-man, Jesus Christ. When you and I got saved, that's why God gave you His power through Jesus Christ. Because we needed a transformer. Now once you have Jesus Christ in your heart and into your life, you have all the power that God is, but it's in a transformer so you and I can use it. Do you know how that thing works? It's just not simple. That's how God gives you His power.

You know what spiritual maturity is? The ability for you and me as I grow to let the Holy Spirit of God through Jesus Christ, my transformer, let the Spirit of God flow through me in a workable fashion just like the transformer in your backyard lets you light your lights when your refrigerator lights all your electrical things. Without it, it would blow up. Without Jesus Christ, the power of God would just wipe me out. So God put a transformer in.

You know what your job is and my job? Every day, every day, every day, work for us coming to the end of the year. One of the things you want to look at about your life at the end of 2009, going into 2010, and ask yourself is simply this: Am I more like Jesus Christ today, this year, than I was last year? The transforming aspect of becoming like Christ, that's spiritual maturity. The more you become like Him, the more you turn into Him, the more you become Him, the more the power flows through you.

Now let me explain this. This process is not instantaneous in your life. You need to understand this. I know the moment you get saved, you have all that God is. But this change doesn't always take place the day you get saved. I mean, you're saved, and you have all the power that God has, but you don't have the ability to use the power right. There's a process. That process is simply one of transforming yourself into Christ, and there lies the guarantee. I can get you to have a plan in your life that you focus on every day becoming more like Christ. Every day that transforming process takes place. There'll be nothing in this world that will keep you from having the power of God in your life.

We like to blame our problems on other people. I do. It's convenient for me to say, "Well, I'm doing this because of so and so," or "I'm this way because of you." The truth of the matter is, we have nobody to blame for our spiritual condition today other than ourselves. You know why that is? Because there's always a choice we can make. I don't know of a time in my life, no matter what situation I find myself in, no matter how despicable it may be, no matter how bad it may be, how complicated it may be, I don't know of a time in my life when I don't have a decision to turn around my life and do the right thing. Now I may not do it. I may be so overwhelmed with all that I struggle with that I can't do it, but there's never a time. I may not have enough courage to do it. But there's never a time in our life, never, when we don't have the ability to make the right choice and turn that thing in the right direction. That's the key. That's the guarantee. That's the guarantee.

So this change doesn't always take place. It's not always immediate. It's a process. This is why Paul, when he was dealing with young Timothy, this is why he told young Timothy, he said,

"When you want to get into the ministry," and he's giving Timothy the instructions of being a pastor or being in a ministry, he says to Timothy, "Not a novice, not some newbie Christian." Don't take new Christians that just got saved or new Christians that had been saved for six months or maybe even a year and don't put them in the ministry because of the fact they've got the power of God, but they don't know how to use the power of God. It takes a process.

You've heard me say many, many times that when Jesus Christ went back to Heaven, and it's a key point, when Jesus Christ went back to Heaven, He replaced Himself with three things.

1. The first thing He replaced Himself with was in Acts chapter 1 and Acts chapter 2. That would be the Holy Spirit of God because the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit of God had never come before. Now the Holy Spirit of God comes to live and dwell inside our bodies, never to leave.
2. The second thing He replaced Himself with was the Bible. Up to this point, the Bible was in part. By the time you get to 100 AD, 90 AD, the Bible is now complete. You have a complete Old Testament, complete New Testament. So the second thing He replaced Himself with was the Bible itself.
3. The third thing He replaced Himself with was also defined in the book of Acts, and that's the concept of the local church.

You see, the Holy Spirit of God is your guide. God's got a plan for you, and there's a process by which you develop, you transform yourself into Him. The structure that God gave is a three-point structure. First of all, the Holy Spirit of God. You got to have Him in you. You got to be saved because He's your guide. The second aspect is the Word of God. God's got a plan for you. He's got something He wants you to do. So the Word of God becomes your roadmap to show you how to get there. But you've got to have a vehicle. You can't get from... You can have the best plan in the world. "I want to go to St. Louis. I really need to go to St. Louis. Boy, I want to go to St. Louis. I'm going to St. Louis." But if you don't have a vehicle to get to St. Louis, you ain't going. You've got to have the Holy Spirit of God. You've got to have the Word of God. The Holy Spirit of God is the guide. The Word of God is your plan. But you've got to have a vehicle. And the vehicle is the local church.

My job as pastor, you older Christians that are working with me and help with people, we have the same goal. We have one thing that we do. We may do it a little differently. We may be working with people on different levels or whatever the case may be, but at the end of the day, it's the same thing. It's to help that person through the process of getting to the point where they don't just become like Jesus Christ, conform, but they actually become Him through a transformation process. That the power of God gets transformed through them.

The verse says that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished, unto all good works. That "perfect" there is not sinless perfection. You're never going to be perfect in everything that you do. Neither am I. That's why the priest back in the tabernacle had to wash their feet every time they went in and went out. Just like every day of your life, you have to wash yourself in the water of the Word of God to stay clean in your fellowship with God. That's part of that process I told you a little bit ago, that there's no reason for you to be out of fellowship with God today

other than you choose to be. Letting God transform you to be perfect for the work of God. We call it spiritual maturity. It's a process of transformation.

Remember now, and you've got to keep this in mind, Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2, is not about your decision for salvation. There isn't any salvation in Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2, anywhere it's found, anywhere in chapter 12. This is about everyday Christian living and the facts involved. The decision you and I make after we're saved to give your body a living sacrifice, and that takes some maturing in our lives, and it goes through a process.

There's a great pattern of this in the Bible, at least I think there is. It's one that I follow. I look at the 12 apostles. Did you ever study them? I know we can study them individually, but just look at them as a group. We already know that they represent Christianity. We've seen how it breaks down many, many times. But you realize that there's a model in that story. You realize that they're with the Lord Jesus Christ for three and a half years. At the end of three and a half years of walking with Him and Him teaching them, at the end of three and a half years, He felt comfortable enough to go back to Heaven and leave the job that needed to be done in their hands. Now that's a model.

You know what I think? And I don't say this because I equate myself to be like Christ in any way, shape or form, but it's the model. You know what I think? I think this: you're a young lady and you're a young guy, and you get saved, and you give me your undivided attention for three and a half years, I'll have you ready to do just about anything in the ministry that needs to be done. That's the model. Do you know what He did for them? Did you ever notice how He talks about what their occupations were before when He found them? Did you ever see what most of them wound up being at the end? You know what He did from point A when He found them to point B when He left them? He transformed them into something. He transformed Peter from who he was, a fisherman, to the point where he was now the guy in Jerusalem that held it all together. He took Paul, though he's not one of the twelve, he took Paul who used to persecute Christians and transformed him to the greatest Christian that ever lived.

I would basically say this: you give me any young man or any young lady that wants to do it, and you give me their undivided attention, and you let me put in their lives, and they get the world out of their mind and out of their life, and they start to focus on what needs to be done, and they get that thing where it needs to be, and I guarantee you in three and a half years, I'd put you up against just about any pastor in this city. The problem is getting your undivided attention. Too many shiny things out there.

You know, I go up to this place called Lee's Summit Fitness Center. Bally's closed, and I was at Bally's for about 120 years, and it closed. But I go up there, and when I joined, about a week later, I got a phone call, and there was a gal up there that she heads up the personal trainer part of it, and she was all excited because I joined, and she's more excited because she thought maybe I would want a personal trainer at \$200 an hour. I go to the gym, I mean, I just go to keep my heart going. I don't really go for any other reason. I told her, I explained to her, I have my own program. I think they're good, but I watch the trainers up there. I think they're good trainers. In

fact, I liken what they do as what I do as a pastor. They train people. I train people. They're their workout coach.

I watch them start them with the basics. I watch them do little leg squats as they go around the deal. I watch them hit the machines for a couple of times, and then I watch them raise the deal there. One of them is a big old boy. He and I are kind of buddies, and he had this old lady on the machine the other day, and she was doing really well, and I was standing there with the machine next to him, and she got done with that, and she says, "Boy," she says, "I just, I just, I just, I just love you." She says, "You're just so good for me. I just love you." And he's laughing, looked at me, and I said, "Uh-uh-uh, you're not doing your job. They ain't supposed to love you. That old lady had to be puking on her hands and knees coming around here." You don't want them to love you, but he's laughing. I said, "You need to give her a little hoorah. She's, you know, I don't care, she is 75, make her run some laps with 80 pounds on her back or something." You don't want them liking you.

But you know what they do? Because I'm going to tell you this, it's true. I'm a very self-disciplined person. I've been that way ever since I was in the military. You don't have to motivate me to get up and run in the morning. You don't have to motivate me to work out. You don't have to motivate me to eat. I can motivate myself. I have selective motivation. I get motivated about the things I want to do, and then I flip the switch on the things I don't want to do. But it's good because I know deep down in my heart I could do the others if I chose to, but I chose not to. I would classify myself as a very disciplined person.

But you know what? I still cheat on the weights. Sometimes I watch guys up there, they'll get 200 pounds, and they're jerking it up, and they think they're really doing something. You want to really do something, here, there, here, that's the way it works. Now I know that, and I try not to do that, but I catch myself in the middle because my flesh is just as cheating as theirs is. I do something as heavy, next day I catch myself, I'm cheating on it, I'm pulling it, I'm bouncing it, I'm not doing the thing on it. I got to stop myself. As disciplined as I want to be, as disciplined as I want to be, I know how to do that, I know I should do it, I know the way to do it, but my flesh wants the easy cut, just like everybody else's.

You know what the coach does? I watch them, they'll put that there, they'll put their hand right there, and a guy's got a ball behind his head, and he's doing his leg ups, and he'll put his hand right there, and it says, "Come up and touch my hand." He makes him, makes him come up where he can't cheat. You can't come halfway and think he went all the way to the top. You got to come up and touch the hand. I've seen him put their hand on the back of their head when they move forward, they got to come back and touch that because it's easy just to do the half ones. You got to go all the way back and come all the way up, that's when you get the workout. That's what a coach does. That's what a pastor should do to his people: make sure you don't cheat, make sure you do the spiritual workouts you're supposed to do, and you start with the basics, but you make sure that when you do your Bible, you're consistent with it. You make sure you don't cheat on the workout because we all have a tendency to do it, and it's something that you don't even know you're doing, but you just do it.

I had a guy up there, and he was doing over his head and coming up this way, and he was bouncing them suckers. He could have dribbled it and took a shot with it, he was bouncing them, and he's thinking he's doing something, and maybe he's burning calories, but he ain't doing anything. You take that same thing and just take it down and bring it up, take it down and bring it up, you won't get 10 of them done. But we deceive ourselves, and that's exactly what we do as Christians.

## VII. Renewing the Mind: Attitude vs. Action

Now that verse says, "You are transformed by the renewing of your mind." So after salvation, there are still certain parts of us that we need to change, and we do it by building a discipline. We do it by being our own coach. We do it by understanding what God requires for us and then disciplining ourselves to do it.

Now let me talk to you about, and we're going to, we're defining a lot of things today that you need to have the definitions of. Let me define for you what it means when the Bible says that we're transformed by the renewing of our mind. Let me talk about that concept of renewing your mind. It's real simple. In counseling, and some of you will learn this, some of you already know it, in counseling, when you're dealing with people, you're basically dealing with people with problems. You're basically dealing with two things, and all counseling rests on these two things. We'll really get into it when we get into counseling, but it's the foundation from which you work with people. It's the understanding, bottom-line principle that you've got to have in your head when you're working with somebody who's got problems or trying to just get through the Bible and do it. It's very simply attitude versus action.

Now the Bible says, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." We are basically what we think about. Matthew chapter 5 verse 28 says that a man looketh upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery in his heart. Why is that? Because the attitude will always produce the action. It's just that simple. We in our life form attitudes about things, and those attitudes we form, if they're the wrong attitude, it'll produce the wrong action.

You find this when you work with marital situations, with people with marital problems. This is basically the whole problem with marriages today, and marriages are just a shambles today. I'm talking about Christian marriages; the unsaved ones don't have a chance. But I want to tell you something, you know what's the problem with this? It's people grow up with a wrong attitude about marriage, and they grow up in the wrong attitude about marriage. They don't understand what it is in the Bible. A husband doesn't understand his role. If you give the average husband, saved husband, and give him a New Testament and say to me, "Line out for me what your job is from a Bible standpoint," he'd look at you like a frog in a hailstorm. He doesn't understand his role. So all his life he's seen his mom and dad, he's seen his grandma and grandpa, he's seen people that he's friends with, people that are married, and he forms his attitude about marriage based on not what the Bible says, but what he sees. And then when he gets married, he takes his attitude into the marriage, and it becomes a mess.

Marriage is not something that man designed. Marriage is something that God designed. You can't take something that God designed and run it by another system that God never intended it to run by. But you know why people try to do that? Because they got the wrong attitude about marriage. Husbands, Bible says, "Love your wives even as Christ loved the church." Let me say to you as a husband today, if you can't open up the Bible and lay that out and detail out what that means, you're in a marriage, but you're, I'm telling you, you're in a marriage with a wrong attitude about it, and in time it's going to produce the wrong action. And the same way with the women, same way with the women.

I tell people that there, and this is basically true of husbands, and me included, how many times I've heard women say, "I don't want to do it anymore. I'm done. I'm finished with this marriage." I need to tell you, there comes a time, after a while, that there's a, in your house, you may not know where it is, but your wife knows exactly where it is, there's a big switch, and not one she beats you with, but a switch that you flip. At some point, after a while, she walks over and she's had it. Leah, you're leaving? Doesn't mean you've had it with Gary. No, I'm not. She's had it like Leah, she's mad, she's gone, she's out of here. You're done. The woman walks over to that place in the house and she flips that switch. At that point, you can do everything in the world. You can become Moses, you can become Elijah, you become John the Baptist, you can become everybody in the world, and you know what? It doesn't matter, she's done.

How many times I've heard a woman say this, "I don't want to do it anymore because here's what'll happen, Bob. We'll come in, we'll sit down, you'll kick his rear, and he'll say, 'I need to change this,' and he'll change it for two or three weeks, and then it goes right back to what it was before. And Bob, I don't want to come in and talk anymore because we've been there what, 10 times now, 12 times now, and the bottom line is this: he's not going to change. He says he wants to change, and he comes to the point where he changes for two or three days, two or three weeks, in some cases it's been two or three hours, but inevitably we always end up where we started, and nothing changes, and I'm done."

Now let me take that scenario and tell you why that is. The reason why we do that, guys, is because when we're faced with an issue, and I use marriage, it can be anything. You know what that man does when he comes into me with his wife? You know what he does when he leaves? He changes the action, but he will not change the attitude. So when you change the action without changing the attitude, it's going to slip right back into it. You want to fix whatever problem you have in your life, no matter what it may be, your marriage with your wife or wife with her husband, bottom line is, forget the action, change your attitude. That's the only place where it's lasting. That's the only place where it's lasting.

The renewing of your mind is simple: it is developing the right thinking patterns because our actions will always be the driving force of our attitude. Developing a life of wrong attitude will produce a life of wrong action. So when you come into me and you got a drinking problem, when you came into me and you can't stay, when you came into me and you can't stay in a church for three weeks or a month without bailing out, when you can't be consistent in what you're doing, I don't want to work on your action because that won't change it. You got to get where the source of the problem is, and the source of the problem is your attitude.

You all got little children, most of you, and right now we know that a lot of our little children get sick. I remember one time my kids were sick, this has been years ago, and they were really, one was really sick, I forget which one it was now, and she was really sick, and I remember walking in her bedroom when she was sleeping, and I thought to myself, "Boy, she's sick." I put my hand down on her little head, and her little head was just as hot as a furnace. I remember standing there praying over that little bed and asking God to take care of her, take care of that fever, and Lord, let that fever go away, and Lord, help her get better. And the Lord spoke to me through that thing, and He said, "You know what, Bob," He says, "I'm going to honor that prayer, and she's going to get better, but let me use this as a teaching tool. You want me to take away her fever, but you realize that the fever is not the real problem. The fever is just a symptom of a bigger problem called an infection that's going on inside her."

I never forgot that, and in dealing with people years and years and years later, and to this day, I find out that that's the way most people want to fix their problems. They want to treat the symptoms, that's your action, but they really don't want to solve the problem. This church is a clearinghouse. You have people come in, and everybody got issues, I got issues, everybody's got problems. I think that nobody's perfect, we all have things to be struggled with, we all have things we work on. But this church is a place where a person comes, and if they come any length of time at all, they got to be faced with the things they got to change. You can't stay around here and just adjust your action all the time, it gets too uncomfortable. So you find someplace else to go. Why? Because deep down inside they don't want to deal with the real problem. They want to treat the symptom, but they don't want to solve the problem. You see, the only way to solve your problem, or the only way to treat your symptom and fix your symptom, is to solve the problem, and that's your attitude. That requires a renewing of your mind, a renewing of your mind.

This is why we see it so many times, from marital counseling to people's problems or whatever they may be, people that they do not want to develop the right thinking pattern, the right thinking process, which is based on biblical principles. It's getting God's people to think the right way.

*2 Corinthians 4:16*

*For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*

See that thing? That's a great verse. "For which cause we faint not." You and I as Christians shouldn't faint, we shouldn't quit, we shouldn't give up. You know why we give up? Because we get the wrong attitude about something, and it produces the wrong action, and we faint. The only way, your guarantee of a victorious Christian life, no matter what stage you're in in your Christian walk, your success as a child of God is simply based on your ability to renew your mind day by day. The inward man.

This is why 1 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 16 talks about, "We have the mind of Christ." In Philippians chapter 2 verse 5, Paul said, "Let this mind of Christ be in you." What you have of God, and this is what you got to do, this is how you, this is what you have to do to renew your mind: it has to be done on a daily basis.

## VIII. Christianity as a Culture: Brainwashing for Good

Now we as Bible believers, we take a lot of heat. Two things that a Bible-believing church will get criticized for, it just comes with the territory, and this happened all my life, and you're going to find that the first thing that any Bible-believing church that really aggressively teaches the Bible and tries to transform people and does it to the extent that the Bible says, the first thing people are going to do when they see it, they're going to call it a cult. Second thing they're going to do is say, "Well, Bob just brainwashed you."

Now we laugh at that, and I do think it's kind of funny. I mean, I understand that 100 years ago, and this is where, in if you ever get a chance to get these books, there's a set of books out by a guy by the name of Will Durant. You ought to be able to get them on eBay pretty cheap. They're nothing to do with Christianity. Will Durant was a secular historian, a lost man. Will Durant wrote about a 12-volume series on the history of civilization. To me, the favorite book they did was called Caesar versus Christ, where he compared Caesar and Christ. But he represents what we call the Age of Reason. Will Durant was a historian around the latter part of the 19th century, and he wrote 12 or 14 volumes on the history of civilization and every aspect of it. That's bogus stuff, but it's the value of it is it shows where the Age of Reason had come from in Europe. The Age of Reason, we don't have a lot of time on it, but the Age of Reason was in counter to the great Philadelphia church age. The Age of Reason is the humanistic start of it all. Guys like Thomas Paine, Nietzsche, it's the great secular minds that began to reason about life instead of looking at the Bible for life, hence the Age of Reason. The Age of Reason led to the Age of Ignorance today, and it's just the way it is.

Most people, have you ever want to have fun with somebody next time somebody says, "Oh, you guys, your church is just a cult." Ask them, "Give me a definition of a cult." Now we laugh at us being a cult, but I got to be honest with you, they're probably three-quarters right, in a good way, but they're three-quarters right. They're too stupid to see the difference. You know where the word "cult" comes from? It comes from the word "culture." We have a word in our vocabulary called "agriculture." It's got the word "culture" in it. Agriculture is things that you grow up, and you grow them up in a certain way which forms a culture. A culture is the way we live our lives.

In if you ever got Walter Martin's book back here called Kingdom of the Cults, we have it in a bookstore. He is called Kingdom of the Cults, and he lists all the cults for you. In that great book back there is the fact that a cult is a culture unto itself. Now here's where it's close: Christianity is a culture unto itself because we're separate from the world. But Christianity, Bible Christianity, is not a closed culture. You take a Jehovah's Witness, he raises little JWs up in his culture, agriculture. He teaches them the way to think, he requires them to think, and they become a closed culture. So we have a church that in every sense of the word, bad sense, is a cult. One, they're a culture unto themselves.

Have you ever noticed that Jehovah's Witnesses churches don't have any windows in them? And it isn't because they didn't have enough money in their budgets. There's a reason why they don't have windows in them: they're a closed culture. They don't want anybody seeing what goes on inside. They're a closed culture. We just celebrated Thanksgiving. They don't, they think it's

pagan. We're coming up on Christmas, the birthday of Jesus. They don't, they don't say the Pledge of Allegiance. They don't have an American flag. They don't recognize the American flag. They don't recognize Easter. Now I don't recognize him either, but you don't see me telling you not to have a Christmas tree, no. Do I think Christmas is Christ's birthday? Absolutely not. I know he was born when he was born in the Bible, and I know when he was born in history. I don't need somebody to put it out December 25th. I know where the whole thing got started. But you see, do you realize how goofy people would look at us if we suddenly said, "No Christmas," and I told you, "You have a tree in your house, you got a Baal pole, you let your kid believe in Santa Claus, you're going to send him to hell." You see, that's a closed culture. You try to witness to the next person about Christ and tell them in your emphasis on why they shouldn't celebrate Christmas or Easter or all the holidays. You see, a closed culture shuts everything out, and they become a culture unto themselves. The difference between our culture and their culture is in those closed cultures, they tell you what you're supposed to think. All I try to do is to get you to think. That's harder because human nature likes to be told what to think, but they're trying to get you to think for yourself. That's tough.

Now 100 years ago, and this is where the Age of Ignorance comes in, 100 years ago, what we believe as a church was the mainstream. You see, somebody says, "You're a cult." "Oh, really? Why is that? Because of what you believe?" Who's Sir Robert Anderson? You don't have a clue. He lived in the 1800s. Sir Robert Anderson was the standard on the Antichrist. When he wrote the book *The Coming Prince*, his book has never been refuted. It was the standard textbook on the Antichrist in the Tribulation period for what, 100 years? You know what Sir Robert Anderson believes? Same thing I believe. How about Robert Dick Wilson, back in the end of the 1800s, great Bible teacher? He taught the standard. How about C.I. Scofield? How about David Gregory, math professor at Oxford in 1710, wrote a 600-word thesis on the gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, the whole plan of God and the whole end of eternity in 1710, had the date of the Second Coming of Christ around the 2000-year mark figured out from the Bible in 1710, and in all that time, not one word of a 600-plus word thesis has ever been refuted. You know what he believed? Believed the same thing I believe. You see, when you are an idiot and don't know history, and something new comes on the line and you don't like it, there's got to be something wrong with it, especially when the Holy Spirit of God works on you. But I got to say, you're close, you're close.

Now everybody's afraid of being brainwashed, and I never understood why. I guess they read the book *The Manchurian Candidate*. I had a woman one time years and years ago, she came into me, and she and her boy was in all kinds of problems, all kinds of problems. She came in and said, "Could you do something with my boy?" I wanted to say, "Could I start with you?" but I didn't. I said, "Sure." Kid was about 15 years old. I took that kid, got some guys around him, spent some time with him. In about six weeks' time, eight weeks' time, that kid fell into the, he just wanted somebody to love him. That kid was studying the Bible, that kid was coming to Bible study. I was meeting with him, couple other guys were meeting. He was missing church. I got a knock on my office door one day, and the mother came in, and she was mad as a hornet. I said, "What's the matter?" I thought something happened, that he had a relapse, went out and killed seven people or something like that. You know what her gripe was? Her gripe was the fact that I had

brainwashed her son. Now all I wanted to do was read his Bible. See, she wasn't happy, she wasn't happy when he was doing all the stuff the world has, but she wasn't happy now that he got rid of all that was doing everything that God was. You know what the real issue was? She wasn't doing in the Bible what he was, so he's getting her under conviction, so she wants to stop it. Can you imagine a parent doing that? I see it all the time.

She said, "You're turning him into a zombie. He's going to be a drone programmed to drink the punch." This all started back with, remember that guy Jim Jones down in Guyana? You always hear the jokes about, "Well, he'd be passed the punch out of your church." Yeah, we'll punch you out, come on in. Oh, not that kind of punch. Jim Jones was down in Guyana, and he had a following of what, 1200 people. The government went down, and they were going to shut him down, and everybody thought he was doing because he was doing all kind of weird stuff. You know what he did? He had enough sway over the people that he got them to auto-drink cyanide Kool-Aid. You've seen the pictures of your, in any kind of look at it all, just the aerial view of just hundreds of bodies laying everywhere. I mean, 800 people walked up, "Yes, sir, drink the punch," and they drank it. That's a cult.

But because you and I follow a strict, rigid principle in the Word of God, and people out there don't understand it, don't want to understand it, you got to be a cult. And they're half right, except our cult, which comes from a culture, Christianity is an open one. Nothing to hide here. Nobody tells you what to think, nobody tells you what to do.

Now here's the problem, the need for renewing our mind, the need for being brainwashed, the need to change our thinking pattern. Now here's where it gets complicated for people on the outside looking in. For you and me, or at least for me anyhow, it becomes pretty easy.

*Isaiah 55:8-9*

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.*

*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

It's that simple. So after I'm saved, to change my attitude, to affect my action, I got to change the way I think. Now how are you going to do that? By washing every generation, by renewing your mind day by day. In other words, you're going to wash out the old things that are in there, and you're going to put in the things of Christ.

When you grew up, maybe you're too young for this, when I grew up, the standard line mothers was, when we all started to cuss, we all started sooner or later, some sooner than later, but the standard line was our mothers used to say, "If I hear you say that one more time, we're going to wash your mouth out with soap." How many ever heard your mother say that to you? Okay, got a good godly mother around here. "I'm going to wash your mouth out with soap." Why did your mother really think that that was going to stop your filthy talk? It might stop all your talking for a while, depending on the soap she used, but what was her point? Her point was, "You are speaking in a foul language that is not acceptable, and I'm going to wash your mouth out to change the way you talk." Okay, if that was your mother a cult leader? Did you have signs in

your house, "Don't eat the chocolate cookies, at least with cyanide"? Does your mother control everything that you did? I mean, obviously to a point she did, but did she? But after when you got older, when you're not on your own, what was the reference point of washing your mouth out with soap? It's the same one I'm telling you, that you got a mind that has got a lot of crap in it, and you want to be like Christ, you can't just stop the action, you got to deal with the attitude, and that means you have to wash out your mind. Brainwashing. I don't know what else to call it.

So after I'm saved, I wash out my mind, all the bad, selfish, worldly, sinful things, and I put in the godly things. Hence, your brain is going to be washed out of your mind. You want to know what the greatest cult is in the world? And it isn't us. It isn't the Jehovah's Witnesses. It isn't the Mormons. It isn't even the Seventh-Day guys. It is the United States Marine Corps. Now they're a cult. Now you wouldn't think they're a cult, would you? Probably some of you who are veterans and patriotic would get a little upset that I even put them in the same category as a cult, but they're a cult.

You know another cult? Police officers. Present company excepted, but you know this is true, Joe, we've talked about it before. We're civilians. They look at different between me, you ever try to go up to a police officer and be friendly to him? Unless he's an older guy, he's one of the young guys that got his head shaved and he's got the macho stuff on, he's not going to give you the time of day. You know why? Because he is another world, and I understand it. I'm not saying it's wrong. Police officers take care of each other, I understand that, and they look at you and me as civilians, I understand that, and where I end up work, they probably got to do that, but they're not going to be, they're not going to be nice to you. I just say, you may get a guy that's been on the force for 20, 30 years, and he's mellow, ready to retire, and he'll be nice to you. But you take these young guys out there that just come on the deal, they get an attitude, man, and that attitude is, "I'm the law." And I know they're trained to do it, I'm not saying anything wrong with it, but that's a mindset. That's an attitude.

In the Army, the Airborne guys, they're not going to look at civilians. They look at other soldiers that don't have the parachute on their wings. They look at them with disdain. They call them "legs" because they have to walk wherever they go. Airborne guys jump out of airplanes. They hate Marines. They hate anybody that doesn't have that little silver wings upon their chest because they look at them as superior. Now I understand it, you go through jump school, go through all of that stuff, jump out of airplanes, and you think you're special. Okay, maybe you are, but that's a closed culture. I've seen American Airborne guys get in fist fights with infantry guys, and they both bleed the same, they both fight the same enemy, but because one thinks he's in a culture that is better than anybody else, he'll fight his own comrade in arms. Stupid the way it is.

But you want a cult of cults? Oh, it's the Marine Corps. Because like all cults, they do exactly what a cult does. They take you, shave off your hair, put you all in the same kind of clothing, treat you all miserably with disrespect. They don't care if you're black, they don't care if you're Hispanic, they don't care if you're white, they don't care if they're yellow. You are all equally worthless. And they tear you down. They make you feel like, they tell you that you're like, you're whale puke. And then they tear you completely down, take every sense from you. They take your

mail from you, they take your clothes from you. You all look alike, you all dress alike. They tell you when to eat, they even tell you when to go to the bathroom. They tear you completely down.

Basically, this is what, and just to say this, this is what Todd Haley's doing with the Chiefs now. I don't care whether he's successful or not, but just so you have a mindset, he's coming from this angle, I guarantee you. I'm not saying he's right, I'm just saying this is what he's doing. Don't laugh at me, Harry, I'm just telling him. He's tired of these prima donnas who are making \$30,000 a day, \$300,000 a week. If you paid anybody, I don't care how talented you are, you give you \$330,000 a week, and you're going to, if you're going to think you're something special, and you're going to think you're more valuable than anybody else because you get a paycheck of \$330,000, he just takes that away. You may still get the paycheck, but you're going to earn your spot. He's completely torn them down, and he wants to build them back up. That's just the way it is.

You get those Marines out there, why they're always saying, "Ooh rah"? What does "Ooh rah" mean? Back in my day, it was "Ooh rah, Ooh rah diddy diddy," but that's different now. They get you running down the road, Shane encountered, when you get out of basic training, you think you can whip the world, and you can't, but you think you can. You know why? Because they took you from a civilian, transformed you, conformed you to the Marine Code, and made you into a U.S. Marine Corps guy. Now you went from Johnny Civilian to a guy that can storm up a beachhead. The last message you'll ever hear from your DI or from your commanding officer is he'll tell you this: "From this day forward, every Marine is your brother." They make you sleep with your rifle, give it a girl's name because they know that in your civilian life you like to hang out with girls and have sex with girls and sleep with girls. Well, the only girls you're going to sleep with now is your weapon, so give it a girl's name. And then they tell you, "This is your wife, and you will be faithful to her, so sleep with her." You ever try to sleep with an M16? What's really tough is if you're an M60 machine gunner, now you got two wives then. I mean, they get you to mindset, they work you over. "You're running down the road, napalm, napalm sticks like glue, get it on the children and the mothers too. If I die in a combat zone, box me up and send me home, put my medals upon my chest, tell my mom I did my best. Two old ladies laying in bed, one rolled over to the other end, said, 'I want to be an Airborne Ranger, hoorah!'" Crazy. That, my friend, is a cult.

Could you imagine what we get tagged with if at the end of church I got you all out and put you in the columns and ran around the park lot, you all were screaming, "I ain't working for Uncle Sam, I do my work for the Great I Am, hoorah!" We'd be in jail.

Now where do they get that? You say they get that from the Marine Corps training manual? No, they don't. You want to know where they get the basis for that? Jeremiah chapter 1. Look at it, turn back to Jeremiah chapter 1. Now this is, this is where it starts. Look at Jeremiah chapter 1 and pick it up in verse 7. Now this is one of the greatest passages in the Bible that explains how God gets you through the process of transformation by the renewing of your mind, and yes, it's awful close to being a cult because it has its own culture, but it's not a closed culture.

*Jeremiah 1:7-10*

*But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.*

*Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.*

*Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.*

*See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.*

See that? You get saved, there's some things you and I got to get rid of before you can get built up. Now that's what the Marine Corps does, he gets rid of those things and then turns you into Marines. My job as pastor of this church is to get rid of those things in your life and then turn you into transformed Christians.

Oh, I wish I had time to deal with this today, but I don't, but I'll give it to you quick. Look at these four things.

4. The first thing he says you got to change is "root out." You want Hebrews chapter 12 by that because that will be root out bitterness. You got it. First thing you got to get out of your life is bitterness. You got to come to the point where bitterness will keep you from ever doing anything for God long term. You may fool around with it for a while, but sooner or later it'll destroy you, and Hebrews chapter 12 tells you how.
5. Now look at the second one, "pull down." That'll be 2 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 4-5. That is pull down strongholds. There should be nothing in your life that has more power over you and more control over you than the Word of God and God. If it is, it's a stronghold, and before you can ever give God everything, you got to pull it down.
6. Look at the next one, "destroy." We talked about this last week. That'll be Joshua chapter 7 verse 12. That'll be Achan and the accursed thing that he stole, hidden in the tent floor. You got to destroy some things.
7. Look at the fourth one, "throw down." That'll be 2 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 5. That'll be casting down imaginations and every thought into the captivity of the obedience of Jesus Christ.

There's some things you got to get rid of, and the only way you do that is through a process, and that process is not one of conforming but one of transforming. It's not becoming more like yourself, it's becoming more like Christ. Where the Marines take you from the civilian and put you into the Marine Corps and make you a Marine, what Airborne takes you from here and puts you into here, Christianity takes you from a worldly, godless sinner, saves you, and then through a transforming process of the power of God, makes you what God wants you to be. Can't we see that?

## IX. Proving God's Good, Acceptable, and Perfect Will

Now why is that? Look at Romans chapter 12 verse 2, end of the verse: "that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." You see, this transformation from the inside out is to prove something to somebody.

In closing, this is real simple. As a child of God, you have something to prove. You don't have to prove it to me, you don't have to prove it to your mom or your dad. The Bible says that we're to study to show ourselves to prove unto God. But you have something to prove to a lost world, and what you have to prove to this world is the will of God in your life. You will remember that the word "will of God" is not something you do, but rather the will of God is something that you are. And you do this by becoming a living sacrifice.

Once you get saved, people know it. Romans chapter 14 verse 7 says, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." They watch you. They watch how you deal with things. When you tell them how to deal with something, when you deal with them, but you can't deal with it when you teach them and tell them through your discipleship lessons how to get rid of bitterness or forgive or to deal with this particular problem when you struggle with it yourself, they see that. They see that. They watch your commitment to the Bible. They watch your commitment to church. They watch your commitment to people. They watch what's really important in your life. Let me tell you something, at this point of your life, a double standard will kill you.

You prove to them by your life that this thing called Bible Christianity is really real. They see it by you showing up on Sunday morning. They see it by you showing up on Thursday night. They see you by passing up things that somebody else would do, and you say, "Nope, I'm going to be at church today." And they look at that and they say, "Wow, that's weird," but inside they're saying, "Wow, I wish I could be like that." Consistency is the name of the game.

I told you before, you want a good reality check, and I use this for myself all the time. I tell people this all the time. We all, we all pretend we're more than we are. We all do, that's just human nature. We all cheat on the machines. But I want to tell you something, you ever want to check yourself, you want a good reality check, just think this scenario through: you're the pastor of a church, and you have a church full of people who are just like you and your commitment today. They're just like you and your commitment to God. They're like you and your commitment of showing up Sunday morning or Thursday night. What if everybody in your church that you have gave like you do financially? Could you pay the bills? What if everybody in your church witnessed as good as you do? Would anybody ever get saved? What if everybody in your church had a walk with God just like you? Now you see, that's the reality check because what you do is you put yourself in a position as a pastor and then you look at who you really are in light of, "Could I really be successful in building a church if I had a church full of people just like me?" There's the reality.

Now he says, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." He says, "You may prove it is that good." You know what? Some of God's people will do the minimum. They will, in every church you have them, you've got some of God's people who will do the minimum, and the Bible says that

they're good, but it's not acceptable. Then you have people in every church, and they're everywhere, you have people in every church that they will, what they do is acceptable. It's acceptable, but it's not perfect. And then you have very few people, very few in every church, you have some of God's people who get a plan. They realize that their life is no longer theirs, and this perfection that they want to work at is not sinless perfection, but their perfection is to be perfect for the work of God. They want to be everything to God that they can be.

I look at people and I think to myself sometimes, "You know what, I just, I don't get it sometimes." I watch some of you guys play sports, and I love watching you, and I watch, I watch you guys play in our sports league, and I watch you play volleyball, and I get out there to watch you play, and nobody likes to lose, nobody does. And I've watched you guys get angry at yourself. I get angry myself when I play softball and I make a dumb thing, I could shoot myself. I get mad at myself. I never get mad if somebody else makes a mistake, but I get mad if I make a mistake because I don't want to let anybody down. I look at that and I watch people get upset when they lose or maybe a bad call or maybe they made a bad mistake or maybe somebody else did something that was bad, and they get upset at that. I look at myself and I thought to myself, "Boy, you know what," and this is not a criticism, but I think that my, because it's human nature, but I look at myself and I say to myself, "You know what, why can't we get mad as mad at ourselves when we lose with God as we do when we lose at sports? Why can't we get just irate with myself when I let God down? I wish, I wish, I wish, I wish I hated to lose for God as much as I hate to lose the ball game. I wish that when I did something that messed up God's plan or messed up this or that, that it would just drive me nuts till I got that thing to the place where it was back in."

You see, some of God's people, they'll be good, but they won't be acceptable. Some will be acceptable, but they won't be perfect. And some of God's people get a plan, they get a process to every day of their life be more like Christ. They transform themselves into Christ, washing out their minds, accepting the culture of Christianity, realizing that we got to take it back out to the world, and then become everything that God wants us to be as we reach out to a lost and dying world. That's what we have to prove: that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. God doesn't want a good will of God. He doesn't even want an acceptable will of God. What He does want is a perfect will of God in your life, perfected unto the work of the ministry, not by what you do, by what you are.

Now that's the guarantee. There's your guarantee. If you will simply take the Bible principles, if you will wash out of your mind, if you will change the attitude instead of the action, if you will get honest with yourself in your family, in your marriage, in your own personal life, that you will say, "You know what, why is it that I keep going back to the same old thing?" The answer is simply, you're changing the action, you're not dealing with the attitude, and that comes by a process of washing and renewing day by day. Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus.