

Be a Non-Conformist (to the World)

(5/18/25)

Please turn to *Romans 12:2*.

To this day everyone knows who the Jews are and it's not because of the color of their skin or what nation they live in. Everyone knows who they are because *the way they live is different than the rest of the world*. There's a bunch of stuff they don't eat that we do. They observe different holidays, have unfamiliar traditions, and even the non-religious ones are still deeply rooted in the Torah.

The modern nation of Israel is secular and not religious... **yet they name many things after Scriptural stories and characters**. The main Hotel in Jerusalem is called the King David Hotel. In the event of a massive invasion they can't win their government has what they call "The Sampson Option" of destroying everything and bringing the house down. Right now they are conducting "Operation Gideon's Chariot."

They do this because it's the way the Lord commanded them to live:

[Lev 20:26 ESV] 26 You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have **separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine**.

[Deu 14:2 ESV] 2 For you are a people holy to the LORD your God, and **the LORD has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession**, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

[Lev 20:7-8 ESV] **7 Consecrate yourselves**, therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. **8 Keep my statutes and do them; I am the LORD who sanctifies you**.

From that moment on the Hebrew people still lived in and interacted with this world: *but the way they lived was completely foreign to the rest of the world*.

What motivated them was being in covenant with God which was more than just an agreement, it was a relationship.

Here's a simplified definition of a Believer vs an Unbeliever when it comes to God's commands:

- The unbeliever's desire is to follow their passions but the law threatens punishment.
- The Law restrains the unbeliever from sinning because they're afraid of the consequences of violating it. If we steal, assault, or worse then some authority will fine, arrest, or jail us.
- In other words, it's like an outside force pressing in resulting in a feeling of involuntary constraint.
- A believer *desires* to obey the Law out of love for God.
- Said desire comes from *within* them, placed there by the Lord as part of a covenant.
- What inspires a believer to live a holy lifestyle is our love for Jesus. We don't feel constrained by God's commands, but rather (as David said in the Psalms) we LOVE them.

[Psa 119:97-98 ESV] 97 [Mem] Oh how **I love your law!** It is my meditation all the day. 98 Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me.

Feelings of guilt and self-condemnation enter in when we, as believers, fall back on following our desires (flesh) and feel like God's rules are *keeping us from something we'd enjoy/fulfill us*.

When we start to feel this way, we're pushing His commands OUT of ourselves and making them external.

When we make His commands external, we feel imprisoned, restrained, and denied.

“Scott, I thought we were no longer under the Old Covenant? The Law?”

TRUE THAT! We no longer have to make animal sacrifices for sin, praise God! Jesus fulfilled the OC and offered Himself as the last, best, and eternal sacrifice once and for all time!

Part of the beauty of the NC is that God took His moral commandments and wrote them INSIDE of us:

[Rom 2:15 ESV] 15 They show that the work of the law is **written on their hearts**, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.

[Heb 8:10 ESV] 10 For this is the [new] covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

When His commands (which are NOT the OC) are **written on the inside they act as a guide and 2nd witness to God the Holy Spirit.**

The commands written on the inside is what we call our conscience. It's not here to imprison or constrain us, it's here to inspire and remind us of the righteousness that Jesus gave us at the Cross.

So here in NC times, *we're supposed to live like no one else does.* I'm not talking about going Amish. I'm talking about *the love of and for Jesus inside of us inspiring us to live like Him.*

[Rom 12:2 ESV] 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

The Lord said be transformed, not conformed.

Transformed from what? Into what?

Our default mode is the world and following our personal passions and desires.

- To not want to be constrained by any rules or commands.
- To be out of covenant with God.

Sometimes I hear single people—young, middle-aged, and old—**tell me that being single is “freedom.”** I've been married 27 years and here's the deal: *successful and happy marriages require dying to the old self.* It means we can't just do what we want, when we want, and how we want. Our personal goals, dreams, desires, and passions can't be our shepherds. Not if we want a good marriage.

Another human being enters into the sheepfold and we become one with them, as the Lord says in Genesis 2. They have their wants, needs, insecurities, goals, desires, passions, hangups, issues, and quirks. Since we're in covenant with them—the same covenant the church is in with Jesus—we must live as one and not 2. We cannot merely follow our own personal whims.

When Jesus sweeps us up into His arms after forgiving us, He shows us a beautiful future where He dresses us up for a wedding, marries us, then moves us into His amazing city in the sky called the New Jerusalem.

Until that wonderful day arrives, ***we're going through a transformation process from the old self to the new.*** From looking and living like the rest of the world, to looking and living like Christ.

[Rom 6:6 ESV] 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

[Eph 4:20-24 ESV] 20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!-- 21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Let's focus on Ephesians 4 verse 22: ***the old self is the "born to the world out of covenant with God" self.*** The only thing it has is...itself. Its own desires apart from the Lord and only seeing His commands as a prison and denying us something good or fulfilling.

The old self is born corrupt and when Jesus rescued us, we ESCAPED said corruption:

[2Pe 1:4 ESV] 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Notice how corruption is linked with sinful desire—the purview of the old self. That being the case, the old self lives a lifestyle of the same. It's born conformed to this world because it's OF this world.

- Consider this: our bodies are conformed to dirt—earth.
- Our spirits and our new resurrected bodies will be made from and conformed to heaven. To Jesus.

Until then we are on this tough but amazing journey ***of being set apart from the world.*** Of being transformed from one level of glory to the next, becoming more like Christ. Desiring to live for Him based on our love for Him and His for us.

What does this look like to rest of the world? Weird...from several standpoints.

MORAL: only one of these is morality. As Christians we not only submit to God's version of right vs. wrong, *but we stick to it regardless of changing times*. I'm only 56 years old, but morality has changed here in the USA drastically from when I was a kid running around the streets of Addison!

- What used to be taboo is now accepted.
- What used to be sin is now righteousness.
- What used to be normal is now abnormal.

A Christian stands out in an ever-changing and “progressive” society because we stay standing on the solid rock of what God said was moral and call everything else sin.

A Christian is considered backwards, old fashioned, outdated, or even evil for such things. When we stick with God's standards it causes offense in others, perhaps even to the point of breaking relationships.

LOYALTY. Another way we're set apart isn't just our belief in God, but our love and loyalty to Him. Remember the last time someone you knew **got into a new romance or marriage?** Their loyalties changed and that affected what they prioritized and did. They quit hanging out with family, quit coming around, quit doing this...because *they're spending all their time with their new romance*.

So it is for a Christian in love with Jesus. We used to do this, spend time doing that, etc. Now that we're basking in the love of the Lord we spend time praying to Him, going to church, reading the Bible, attending Bible study, serving, etc.

Those who know us should be viewing us just like someone who found new romance.

- We used to be loyal to _____ and now we're loyal to Christ.
- We used to do different things on Sundays, now we go to church.
- We used to cuss and swear, now we don't.
- We used to read all sorts of books, and now we've added the Bible and actually consider it God's word.

We're being transformed. Our spirit is new and is eternal like Jesus. Our hearts and minds, however, need REnewal every day.

- We are no longer just born to this earth, we are born again in Christ to Heaven.
- We're not our old selves. We have been made in the image of Jesus.
- We've already been set apart from the rest of the world by Christ.
- The Church IS its own nation:

[1Pe 2:9-10 NKJV] 9 But you [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, **a holy nation,** His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him **who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;** 10 who once [were] not a people but [are] now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

PRAY