Understanding a Biblical Worldview — Delivery Transcript

Romans 12:1–2 (ESV) · Vernon Ferguson (guest preacher) · Sunday, November 8, 2026 · *Standalone sermon*

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If you want to turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 12 — Romans chapter 12. And I've got to say, holler out to all my Broadview Old West people. Y'all get it out now. Okay? Amen. All right, get it out, get it out. Romans chapter 12. I'm coming.

Only 4%

The headline said, "Biblical Worldview among Adults Remains at 4%." Wow. George Barna and the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University said only 4% of American adults currently hold to a biblical worldview. Is that important? Of course it is. It's the same critically low number they saw in 2023.

Why is this percentage so low in the church? What's happening? It's fairly simple, they explain. People are shaped far more by the culture they consume than by the weekly sermon. (I'm glad Wes is not here this morning.) If you're going through life and you're taking in dozens of hours every week of bad messaging — from social media, from the music that you listen to, or the television shows and the movies that you watch — and then you want to offset that by going and sitting in church Sunday morning for a 30-minute message, that's going to be very difficult to do.

The rope

So why is a biblical worldview so important? Now we come to the rope. If you've known me very long, you've probably seen this before, but here we go. This rope represents all eternity.

All eternity. And this red part on the end represents our life here on earth. Compared to eternity — you see what's happening here?

We live 80, 90 years here on earth, and we're told, especially here in the United States, that when you start school, work hard, work hard. Then you start getting close to getting out of high school: work hard, go to college, go to trade school, do all you can, do your best. Then you get out of college, you get out of trade school, you start your career, you work 25 years, you retire, you move to Florida, you play golf, and you fish, right? And then you step into eternity.

But the problem is that most of us put all our energy into this time right here, and not the future — this right here. Y'all get the point? That's why a biblical worldview is important: so that we see our ultimate future.

Not conformed, but transformed

Romans 12, verses 1 and 2:

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

As followers of Christ, we are not to be conformed to the world's pattern. J.B. Phillips translates it this way: "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould." So what exactly does Paul mean by telling Christians, "Do not be conformed to the world"? The Christian and the world are not to be like-shaped. It's just like a boat that's in the water, but not of the water. The Christian is in the world, but not of the world.

Followers of Christ pattern their lives after the Lord, right? Not according to the principles of this world, which the Bible says is controlled by the devil, "the god of this world," in 2 Corinthians 4:4. The reference to the world is not the physical world, but rather the age that we live in. It refers to the culture and the standards of this world.

Transformation begins with faith and deepens as we grow in the knowledge of God, right? And are sanctified in holiness, live out our righteousness, and hope in eternal life. Amen.

Again: "Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." By the renewing of your mind. By the renewing of — you get it?

Two worldviews

What I'm talking about is the Christian worldview versus a non-Christian worldview. Jesus told us in John 15:19, "If you belong to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you." Believers have a heavenly citizenship and allegiance to God's kingdom, rather than to the corrupt and rebellious systems of this world — this earthly world.

Let's look a little closer at this. Did most of y'all get a diagram? Got one of these in your page? Let's pull that out right quick, and let's see and understand the Christian worldview, and then look at the non-Christian worldview.

God-centered. Everything in our life — everything in our life — is God-centered, right? God created. God created all of us. Then there's sin, and sin brings us to death. But God's given us a Savior. His name is — amen. Salvation is unearned. Heaven is our home. I like that, don't y'all? Earth — we're just here camping, guys. The Father answers our questions through his Word and his Spirit. God's life, God's rules. And we're just passing through. You see the little box at the bottom? We're just passing through. But while we're here, we are to be holy and be on mission. Amen. That's the biblical worldview. There's a lot more that you could put in there, but that is the big, big idea.

Non-Christian. No God — big bang. No sin, no Savior, no salvation, no heaven or hell. That's it. Feelings answer all our questions: "I just feel that." Y'all know what I'm talking about? "This is my life, my rules. Earth is my home. So be happy. Gather all you can, as much as you can, as fast as you can in this life." Y'all got it?

One foot in, one foot out

What happens to those Christians who live with one foot in the Christian worldview and one in an unbeliever's worldview? Matthew chapter 6, verse 24,[1] says that no one can serve two masters. Meaning a divided heart and loyalty cannot stand without internal friction. The warning is clear: one foot loving Jesus, one foot in the world. A divided heart cannot follow two masters. The result is both feet in hell. That's a tough reality, isn't it?

God has never called us to a partial commitment. He calls for complete surrender. He's not seeking a place in your life, to be part of your life. He wants all of our lives. He wants to sit on the throne of your heart.

The chicken and the pig

J.John, a British evangelist, tells a story that might help us a little bit. In Britain they have these traditional big red London double-decker buses driving through the city and the

English countryside. They use the sides of them for advertisements — huge signs on both sides. And one day this bus had a massive advertisement with a picture that read, "Egg and Bacon — the Great British Breakfast."

As the bus rumbles past a grassy field, a chicken and a pig stand together watching it go by. Don't get ahead of me. The chicken looks up at the large poster, gets incredibly excited, nudges the pig, and says, "Look, look, look! We're famous! Wherever that bus goes, it's talking about us: 'Egg and Bacon — the Great British Breakfast.'" And the pig slowly turns around. He looks at the advertisement, then he looks back at the chicken with a somber expression, and the pig replies, "It's all right for you, isn't it? You only had to make a contribution. But for me, it costs me my life."

J.John explains that many people approach their faith like the chicken. They're happy to make a contribution of their time, a little bit of their money, occasional energy, and then just walk away. But J.John points out that God is not looking for contributions. He wants a fully surrendered life. Amen. True discipleship requires total commitment — offering all that you are, mirroring the total sacrifice that Jesus modeled. So the question is: Are you a pig or a chicken? The chicken was involved, but the pig was fully committed.

Total surrender

What needs to happen for us to move the needle — to make the change? We go back to Romans 12:1–2: "Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Jesus demands first place. He wants to sit on the throne of your heart. A Christian who truly loves Christ must be willing to leave behind anything that competes with him. And so the sobering reality is that religious activity alone does not save. Church attendance alone does not save. The Christian label alone does not save. What matters is genuine faith that produces a life of obedience and devotion to Jesus Christ.

What we're talking about is people who love Jesus — they know that he loves them — but they've failed to surrender everything to him. So what does the Bible say about what it means to be totally surrendered, fully surrendered, to Jesus?

Luke 14:33: "Any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." Whoa.

Matthew 10:37: "Whoever loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Double whoa.

Matthew 22:37: "You shall love the Lord God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your mind."

Complete surrender to Christ means choosing God's will and authority over our plans, over our possessions, and over our desires. This is sobering. Think about it. Let it sink in. It's all a matter of the heart, isn't it? What we desire, our wants — where do we see our future?

And I think this is where we've been programmed to live for the American dream: get married, raise children, have a house with a two-car garage, and you'll be happy. That's not the Christian worldview, is it? We live in a world where there's no anticipation of Christ to come. There's no anticipation that we could go to heaven today, or even tomorrow. Amen. Listen: waiting for Christ is not a passive activity. It means living in obedience, holiness, faith, and love while faithfully serving the Lord God. Amen.

Don't waste your life

John Piper tells a story. He said this:

"About three weeks ago we got news at our church that Ruby Eliason and Laura Edwards were killed in Cameroon, Africa. Ruby Eliason: over 80, single all of her life, a nurse, poured her life out for one thing — to make Jesus Christ known among the sick and the poor in the hardest and most unreached places. Laura Edwards: a medical doctor in the Twin Cities, and in her retirement, partnering up with Ruby, also pushing 80, and going from village to village in Cameroon. And the brakes gave way, and over the cliff they went, and they were dead instantly. And I asked my people, 'Is this a tragedy?' Two women in their 80s, a whole life devoted to one idea — Jesus Christ magnified among the poor and sick in the hardest places — and twenty years after most of their American counterparts have begun to throw their lives away on trivialities in Florida and New Mexico, they fly into eternity with a death in a moment. Is that a tragedy? I asked. It's not a tragedy.

"Let me read you what a tragedy is. I've got an article here from *Reader's Digest*. This is a tragedy. The title of the article was 'Start Now, Retire Early.'" Sound good? "'Bob and Penny took early retirement from their jobs in the Northeast[2] five years ago when Bob was 59 and she was 51. They now live in Punta Gorda, Florida, and they cruise on their 30-foot trawler, play softball, and collect shells.' That's a tragedy. And there are people in this country who spend billions of dollars to get you to buy into that. Don't buy it. With all my heart, I plead with you: don't buy that dream. The American dream — a nice house, a nice car, a nice job, a nice family, a nice retirement, collecting shells as the last chapter before you stand before the Creator of the universe to give an account of what you did. 'Here it is, Lord — my shell collection. Look, Lord, my shell collection.' Don't waste your life. Don't waste it."

Renewing the mind

The Bible says that Christians are delivered from "this present evil age" in Galatians 1:4 — which Satan oversees, and which is marked by idolatry, fleshly lust, and rebellion. And the believer lives by "the powers of the age to come," in Hebrews chapter 6, verse 5, even while living and residing in this world.

And Paul says that we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds. The mind is the key to the Christian life. Our thinking must be changed — transformed from the old, ungodly ways of American-dream thinking into new, godly ways of thinking. We need to learn to control our mind. We need to learn to mind our minds. What we know in our minds to be true forms a conviction in our hearts of that truth, and that conviction in our hearts translates into action.

The only way to replace the error of the world's way of thinking is to replace it with God's truth. Amen. And the only infallible source of God's truth is his Word, the Bible. There are no shortcuts. There's no magical formula for renewing our minds. We must fill our minds with God's Word. As Jesus prayed to the Father, "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth," in John 17:17.

Those who wish to live for God must seek him in his Word. We must seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to apply the Word to our lives. Living for God means giving up ourselves and desiring God's will above all else. Listen, listen closely: as we draw near to God and come to know him more, his desires will become more natural and become ours.

Promises from God's Word

Can I share a few promises with you from God's Word? I love God's promises. There are thousands of God's promises in his Word, and we need to know them, don't we? I want to share some for you. But to make sure you're not sleeping, I want you to repeat the chapter — I mean the chapter and the verse. Man, anybody else have that problem from time to time? Yeah — hands up. Amen.

God provides for your needs. The Lord acts as your shepherd so that you lack no good thing. Psalm 23:1. *(Psalm 23:1.)* All right, y'all are waking up.

God will never leave you. He promises to stay close and never abandon or forsake you. Hebrews 13:5. *(Hebrews 13:5.)* Yeah, buddy.

God is in control. Human plans may shift, but the purpose of the Lord always stands. Proverbs 19:21. *(Proverbs 19:21.)* Say it like you mean it. Amen.

God works all things for good. He uses every circumstance to shape believers and fulfill his purposes. Romans 8:28–29. *(Romans 8:28–29.)*

God saves those who call upon him. Anyone who comes to him in faith will be accepted and saved. John 6:37. *(John 6:37.)*

God strengthens the weak. He acts as a fortress and renews strength when we feel tired and overwhelmed. Psalm 28:7–8. *(Psalm 28:7–8.)*

The Holy Spirit prays for you. The Spirit intercedes on your behalf when you do not know how to pray. Romans 8:26–27. *(Romans 8:26–27.)*

And I like this one: **Jesus intercedes for you.** Christ sits at the right hand of God and pleads on behalf of believers. Romans 8:34. *(Romans 8:34.)*

Jesus will return. Christ promised to come back for his people just as he ascended. Acts 1:11. *(Acts 1:11.)*

And then one more: **God will make all things right.** I like that. He promises an ultimate restoration where pain, crying, and death are wiped away. Revelation 21:1–5. *(Revelation 21:1–5.)*

Conformed to the image of Christ

Surrendering to the work of the Holy Spirit that lives in you, and to the power of God's Word, is what transforms us into the likeness of Jesus Christ our Lord. And remember Genesis 1:26–27. God says, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness." And he created them male and female.

Listen: our central aim is being conformed to the image and the character of Jesus Christ. Did you get that? Okay, I'll say it one more time. **Our central aim is being conformed to the image and character of Jesus Christ.**

John Piper again challenges us. He says, "The opposite of wasting your life is living life by a single God-exalting, soul-satisfying passion." I like that, don't you? "The well-lived life must be God-exalting and soul-satisfying because that is why God created" you — Isaiah 43. "And 'passion' is the right word because God commands us to love him with all our heart," in Matthew 22, "and Jesus reminds us that he spits lukewarm people out of his mouth," in Revelation chapter 3. "The opposite of wasting your life is to live by a single, soul-satisfying passion for the supremacy of God in all things." In all things. In all things.

So can work or leisure or relationships or eating or lovemaking and ministry all really flow from a single passion? Is there something deep enough and big enough and strong enough to hold all those things together? Can a house or car or work or war or changing diapers or

doing taxes really have a God-exalting, soul-satisfying unity? The apostle Paul thought so. He said that his life and ministry were riveted on a single aim. He said, "I decided to know nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified," in 1 Corinthians 2:2. He is pushing us to see our lives with a single focus, and for the cross to be that focus.

The people who make a difference in the world are not the people who have mastered many things, but who have mastered one great thing. If you want your life to count for something great, long for your life to have eternal significance. Don't coast through life without a passion. Here's a desire for something infinite, great, and beautiful and valuable and satisfying: the name and glory of Jesus Christ. "Your name and renown are the desires of our hearts." Whatever you do, find the God-centered, God-exalting, Bible-saturated passion of your life, and find your way to say it and to live it and to die for it. And you will make a difference that lasts. You will not waste your life. Amen.

What will you do?

Romans 8:29:[3] "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many believers." "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will."

So what are you going to do? What changes do we need to make? What are the next steps as we walk out of here? Only you can decide. But please, please don't do nothing. Seek God with all your heart. Seek God with all your heart. Get to know him through his Word, and allow the Holy Spirit to give you a love for Jesus Christ. Amen.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "Matthew chapter 6, verse 27"; "No one can serve two masters" is Matthew 6:24 (Matthew 6:27 is "And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?"). Source: Matthew 6:24, 27 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "in the Northwest"; the *Reader's Digest* article Piper read (February 1998) says Bob and Penny retired "from their jobs in the Northeast." Source: John Piper, "Boasting Only in the Cross" (Passion OneDay 2000, Memphis, May 20, 2000) and "How to Make a Difference in the World," desiringgod.org. ↩
3. Transcript note: spoken as "Romans 29"; the verse quoted ("For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son…") is Romans 8:29. Source: Romans 8:29 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩