

TALK TRANSCRIPTS

TALK 2 \\ NANCY GUTHRIE

\\ I NEED A CHANGE IN WHAT SHAPES ME



Dan and the rest of you, appreciate it so much for leading us in worship. Thank you Jonathan for speaking to us from your heart about the ministry of Katoomba. You ready for one more round? Excellent. All right, so here's my question as we head into this third and final session together. What is shaping you? What is shaping you? Now I'm not asking what's shaping your body, you see, because you're not fooling anybody with that full flat stomach and smooth curves. We know what's shaping your body. It's Spanx, right? You've got the Spanx going.

I remember when I was a little girl growing up, my mother wore a girdle. Don't you hate that word? Who would want to wear one of those? The thing is we know that Spanx is the same thing as a girdle but it does sound a little better, doesn't it? The truth is I have a collection of Spanx in my drawer and while I appreciate all of the hard work, Spanx can only do so much. That stuff, it's doing its best to condense and bring some shape to, it's got to go somewhere, right? This is a cartoon. I didn't take somebody's picture in the dressing room or anything, yeah.

Of course, when I ask you what is shaping you, I'm not asking what's giving shape to your figure. You knew that, right? I'm asking what is shaping the essence of who you are, what is shaping your perspective, your priorities, your pursuits, your opinions. What external forces are shaping your internal dialogue about what really matters? What pressures you to make the choices you are making about how you will spend your money, your time, your energies, and really are you, am I self aware enough to know what those pressures are that are shaping us?

We're all shaped by many things. Certainly, we're shaped by the home we grew up in and what was deeply instilled in us in those years about what is really worthwhile. We're shaped by the cultural mantras and even the advertising taglines of our culture, things like 'you got to be true to yourself' or 'follow your heart'. Don't do that, or 'because you're worth it'. We're shaped by what everyone laughs at or applauds when they watch late night television. We're shaped even by the questions, the line of questioning of TV anchors as they interview someone. We're shaped by what fashion and fitness magazines point to and put on their covers as beautiful. We're shaped by what social media tells us is trending.

Back to my question, what is shaping you? What voices are shaping your thoughts? What images are shaping what you aspire to, what you agonise over? If you continue to allow those voices to define your opinions and convictions and shape your perspective and your pursuits, who are you going to be now and increasingly over the years to come? I think really, many of us, most Christians really give this very little thought. We can tend to just go with the flow and never really scrutinise what's shaping our thinking or our desires.

Paul's letter to the believers in Rome challenges them and it challenges us to do just that. Paul has taken us to the heights to survey the depth of the riches, of the wisdom, and knowledge of God. As we moved our way into Romans 12:1, he told us that there is a particular way to worship God that makes sense in view of these compassions, in view of this incredible mercy and that is to offer up our bodies as a living sacrifice. How are we going to know what that should look like? Can we just admit that offering a dead animal in the days of Old Testament sacrifice was a little more cut and dry, a little less nuanced? If we're going to offer our bodies as living sacrifices that are holy and acceptable, how are we going to be able to discern day by day what that should look like? How do we know what God wants and what's going to be acceptable to him?

Well, that's the question Paul answers in the verse we're going to spend focused on in this session, Roman 12:2 which says this: "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." In other words, you can be shaped by the world around you or you can be shaped by the Word within you. When you're shaped by the Word within you, you're going to know how to live in the world around you. My paraphrase.

Let's take that phrase by phrase. You can be shaped by the world around you. We all are to a degree, but what Paul is saying is he doesn't want the world around us to have the upper hand in shaping the lives of those who have been called and foreknown and predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. It simply makes no sense that those who are predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ which is the way he described us back in Romans chapter 8, makes no sense that we would then be conformed to the image of the world. When Paul tells us not to be conformed to the world, the verb is passive. He's implying that if we don't actively and intentionally resist the thought patterns of this age, we will be conformed.

Now, we don't like to think of ourselves as being this impressionable. We like to think of ourselves as far more independent in our thinking, but my friends, ever since the day we were born into this world, this world has been at work pressing us into its mold. We are such products of the environment we live in and we breathe in this air for so long, we don't even realise sometimes the pressures that are shaping us. Perhaps we don't feel the pressure much because we simply give in to it so there's no real rub. On Paul's day, the world was at work to press people into its mold just as it is today. If you were a Christian who lived in Rome when this letter started off as a letter to the believers there, if you were a Christian who lived in Rome when this letter was received, you would've gathered with other believers at one of maybe 5 house churches around Rome, and this letter from Paul would have been read and explained.

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Now of course on the way to that gathering at that house church, you would have walked passed the Temple of Apollo Palatinus. That's where the God of music, truth, prophecy, healing, the sun and light, plague, and poetry was worshipped. You see, the music that played there was the music that got played on the radio and at the biggest concerts in town in the park. These were the songs that everybody knew the words to. This god of healing was the god that people called on when you went to the doctor. The god of prophecy worshipped there shaped the expectations about the future of everyone around you.

On your way to that house church meeting, you would've also walked past the local theater and you heard the crowds roar inside the theater. You would've walked past the images of the Emperor that were on all of the buildings, all of the temples, on all of the coins and benches. Likely, they were inscribed by 'Caesar is Lord'. You would've seen that before you got to the meeting place where believers were gathered to worship 'Jesus as Lord' and to 'seek for his kingdom'. When you got to that place where you came to worship with fellow Gentile and Jewish believers, you would sit down and hear this letter written by Paul read.

As the letter began which we now know as chapter 1, you would hear about how humanity by their unrighteousness suppressed the truth and how since they didn't see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil covetousness, malice. They're full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They're gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. You'd hear that read and you would think to yourself, that was me. The world around me had so shaped me that all of those things just seemed normal. I was just like everyone around me.

Then as you listen to the reader tell what God did as he read through the letter, explain what God did to make it possible for you to be declared righteous and saved from his wrath. After you heard the good news about how you're now free from slavery to that old life, you would hear the person reading the letter say, "Do not be conformed to the image of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." In that moment, you would begin to think about all of the pressures of the world outside that meeting place that were seeking to press you into the mold of being a good Roman citizen. All of the stories being acted out in the theaters and the practice of the dominant religion and the lifestyles of elite. As you talked there with other believers gathered, you'd agree that it wasn't one thing in particular but really the reality of everything in your life living in that place and time that was pressing in on you, seeking to press you into conformity.

Now imagine you're walking home through the streets of Rome and you're trying to make sense of how to live out this specific sentence from Paul's letter and you walk by a group of Roman soldiers and you begin to wonder how your ideas of power, and authority, and service, and submission, are going to become shaped more by the teaching of Jesus than by the ways of Rome. As you pass by some of your neighbors who are coming home from the market with everything they need to make sacrifices to their household deities, you begin to think through what it's going to mean to present your own body as a living sacrifice to the one true God.

As you made your way home, it would just begin to dawn on you just how different a life shaped by the gospel is going to be from the lives of everyone around you. You think about how you've been immersed in this way of life, this way of thinking and valuing your whole life, and you would wonder what's it going to take to keep the world around me from pressing me into its mold? Is the only real difference about me going to be that I go to the house church meetings of Christians instead of the temples to the Roman Gods? You've got a lot to think about after hearing what Paul has written in its letter. What's it going to take to keep me from being conformed to the world around me?

Surely you know that this challenge of the 1st century Christian in Rome that they faced has no difference than the challenge of the 21st century Christian woman living in Sydney or nearby. You see, as we glance through magazines in the waiting room and as we surf the net, and we click through channels, and we walk through the shops, and we chat on soccer sidelines, and participate in the political process, and navigate the educational system, are we going to be aware of the world shaping influence? More significantly, are we going to be engaged to resist it's shaping influence. If the world around us is isn't going to shape us, what will?

Paul says be transformed by the renewal of your mind. I said earlier, you can be shaped by the world around you, or you can be shaped by the Word within you. Instead of being conformed, you can be transformed. Notice the contrast here between something pressuring us from the outside that causes us to be conformed and something that's taking place on the inside that causes us to be transformed. What is this that's taking place? Where inside us is this taking place? Did you hear it? Where? In our minds. What's happening in our minds? They are being renewed.

The Word here really indicates that there is a renovation project going on. Now let me ask you, have you ever renovated anything? Can we all agree it is never as easy as these home improvement shows on TV make it look like? Yeah. This is never done on time. I think most of us

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would say, "Hey, send over old Scott from the Block or Johanna from House Rules, those people from Renovation Rescue and maybe I'll think about a renovation." I'd actually hope to show you a picture illustrating renovation. A number of you this morning stopped me to ask how are things going with the pots in the back of your house. If you don't know what I'm talking about, you didn't see the little video I did. Some of you are like, "What is she talking about?"

I did this little video for promoting OneLove where I'm standing on my back patio watering my plants. When my husband David panned the camera down to the pots on my back patio, I know a lot of you just got sick to your stomach when you saw these poor plants and how mistreated they were, like I'm committing a crime with these plants. That's pretty much how a lot of things are like with plants at my house. I think if you're a plant and you come to my house, once you're plant, you're on your own. I had this grand plan I was going to show you my pots and how bad they looked. Then before coming, I was going to do a renovation project of my pots and take a picture and show you. I did replant some things in my pots but let's just say there wasn't a picture to take that would show you a really great renovation project because those all died, too. I know. I'm not a good example in this regard.

The word here for renewing your mind means to renovate which literally means rip out the old and implant, put in the new. As we present our bodies as living sacrifices, we got to submit our minds to his words so that his Word will completely renovate the way we think about these things so that the Word will rip out the old way we think about things and then plant a new way of thinking about everything. It says be transformed. It's really those saying. It's a progressive Word. It's saying go on, keep on being transformed. It's whether you have been a Christian for 6 minutes, or 6 years, or 6 decades, you should be continually transforming. Don't be sitting here thinking I'm talking to somebody else. I'm talking to you.

Year by year, rather than just growing older, you should be going deeper. You should be coming closer and closer, to acting, and reacting, to thinking, and processing, and loving like Christ. This voice when it says be transformed, it's passive. In a sense, this is something being done to us or in us. God's spirit has flooded our lives. He is the one at work doing the transforming. As it says in Titus 3:5, "God has saved us through the washing of rebirth and the renewal by the Holy Spirit." The renewing agent, the one doing the renovation work is the Holy Spirit. You can try real hard. You can't make yourself new. This is a work the Spirit does. It's a supernatural work done by the Holy Spirit.

At the same time when it says be transformed, it is a command! There is something here for us to do. Paul says you've got to go on being transformed. This is going to be a work the Spirit does in you using the tool of his Word. That means you've got to expose yourself to the Word. You've got to bring yourself under the influence of the Word that the Holy Spirit is going to use to do this renewing, transformation work in your life.

I really like the way the late Jerry Bridges explained this in his book called 'Growing Your Faith'. He says it's like when you tell your son who's been out playing in the mud pit or the dirt pile and he walks into the house and you give him a command. You say, "Go take a shower." Now, it's a command. You want him to be clean and he can't clean himself apart from the soap and water. It's the soap water that's going to wash away all of the sweat and the dirt. What Tommy has to do is bring himself under their cleansing action and so we say to him, "Go take a shower." We want him to place himself under this cleansing water.

Likewise, when Paul says to us be transformed by the renewing of your mind, he is instructing us to bring ourselves under the transforming influence of the Word of God. Day by day, we need the Word of God to pour over us. We need its cleansing, renewing, renovating work in our minds. That means that when we open our eyes, before we start scrolling through our emails or watching the news, perhaps we read a passage of scripture and we read it carefully enough, that we might be able to meditate on it throughout the day. Maybe we turn on an audio Bible program on our phone while we put on our makeup or we drive in the car to wherever we're going.

Then we're able to bring what we've heard or what we've read into the conversation that we have around the table or over coffee with a friend. Because we want to be able to truly take in the Word that our pastor is preaching on Sunday, maybe we read through the passage that we know he's going to be preaching on this Sunday because we want to till up the soil of our hearts to be able to receive this Word that he's going to give us. Perhaps we commit to some kind of regular Bible Study with others because we know about ourselves, that if we don't set up some kind of accountability, we may go for days, or weeks, or months, without any real engagement with the scriptures - or am I the only one? In other words, we immerse ourselves in the one thing that God has promised to use to renew our minds, and therefore transform us into women who are just not the same as we used to be.

Do you ever fear that you can never change? Like this is just who I am. Accept it, everybody as I can never change. Maybe you think I can never change how I always seem to be in a conflict with somebody. You'll never be able to develop more self-discipline in the way that you react when you're criticised, or the way that you respond to needy people around you. You think you'll never be able to become more



generous, or more patient, or more gracious to others. Well, are you placing yourself under the flow of the water of the Word so that it can wash over you? Are you taking it in so that it can work its way through you? My friend, you are never going to change if you pick up your Bible only on Sundays. This isn't going to happen. If you will place yourself under its healing stream, let it wash over you day by day, oh the change, the Spirit will work in your life like you can hardly believe it because you see, you can be shaped by the world around you or you can be shaped by the Word within you.

A number of years ago, I was having a number of physical issues. I remember one day, a couple of my toes were numb and I said to David, "I think I need to go to a podiatrist and have my toes checked out." David said to me, "Are you trying to go to every specialist there is within a 6-month period of time?" He had a point because over those months, I had been to ... Let's see. I've been to the ear, nose, and throat doctor. I've been to the pulmonologist. I had been to the urologist, and the gynecologist, and the proctologist, and the psychologist, and I wasn't getting any better. It was about that time we moved to Nashville and I went and visited a Bible study. This friend invited me to come and it's a Bible study. It has lots of accountability like you got to do your lesson every week. You got to actually show up.

I had had some friends who did this Bible study and honestly, I thought that's really nice for them. They need it, but I know the Bible. At this point, I was desperate. In fact, I remember the very first week I went to the Bible study, the teacher was talking about the woman with the issue of blood, the hemorrhaging woman. She said about her the life was literally draining out of her. She said she needed nothing less than a miracle and she asked the question, "Is there anyone here today who senses that you need a miracle to come alive to God?" It was a situation where it really wasn't appropriate to raise your hand but it was all I could do because I thought 'that's me!'

I have such a rehearsed religiosity. It's going to take a miracle to break through years of stony silence between me and God, because as busy as I was for God and I was busy up to the hilt here. David and I serving in our church. I was working in Christian publishing. If you'd ask me about what's the Lord teaching you, I would've had a great answer for you about some project I was working on that would've sounded really impressive. The truth was I was really afraid of that question, what does God do in your life, because the thing was I wasn't talking to him and I wasn't listening to him.

I signed up for that Bible study and every week I went and I did my lesson and sat on the front row. I remember about a year later, one Sunday morning, David and I were headed to church and we did something. Now, I'm sure you guys never do this but we got there a little early and I looked at the bulletin, I looked over the order of service, and I saw that we were singing a song. What? It's one of the songs I would say it's ... I have a list, I haven't written it down anywhere but I have a list of songs I can go my whole life and never sing again. You have some of those? Especially ones you sang at youth camp and really, it just seemed like it was really about crowd control or something. It wasn't that meaningful.

I looked at the order of service for our church and there was one of those songs. I remember just saying to David, because we're good friends with the minister, we're like, "Why would he choose that song?" Then we got to that point in the service and I began to sing, "I've got peace like a river. I've got peace like a river. I've got joy like a fountain. I've got love for my Jesus." I remember that day just standing there weeping because it was like, "I do! I really do!" I don't feel like such a hypocrite anymore because God is at work in my life through his Word as I've been putting myself under the transforming influence of his Word. He's changing me. I've really changed.

Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that by testing, you may be able to discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. You can be shaped by the world around you. You can be shaped by the Word within you. As you are shaped by the Word within you, you're going to know how to live in the world around you. You see the promise here is as you take in and come under the Word of God, the Spirit of God is going to accomplish a renovation project on your mind. As that happens, your mind is going to begin to work right. Your thoughts are going to align more closely to the way God thinks. The way you value things is going to align more closely to the way God values things.

That means you are going to actually grow in your ability to know what God wants. You're going to grow in your ability to determine what does presenting yourself as a living sacrifice should look like in your context and in your circumstances. You see, you're not going to have to wait around and beg for some supernatural, outside of the Bible word from God to be spoken into your subconscious thoughts so that you'll know what to do. This says you're going to be able to discern the wise course of action. You're not going to have to wait to see if you have a peace about making a particular commitment. You're going to be able to discern if it's a wise way of being a steward of all that God has entrusted to you in light of the needs before you. You're going to be free to decide, and able to discern.

You see, nowhere in the Bible does it tell us to seek out signs, visions, or dreams or listen for a still, small voice. Actually, over and over again, the scripture urge us to listen to God's Word read and taught, to study and meditate on scripture, to gaze into what it says and then, do it.



Now do you see the beauty in this? Do you also recognise that this goes against the grain of so much mystical spirituality that is accepted wisdom in many of our Christian circles? In fact, some of you right now are wondering if I'm spiritual at all.

Every day, we have dozens of decisions and choices to make, decisions and choices about which there is no specific command in the Bible. Instead of obeying a specific command, we are called upon to decide, to discern. Somehow many of us have absorbed the assumption that if we're truly and sincerely engaged with God that we're going to pray about a decision and then expect that God is going to give us the answer, that's he's going to speak into our subconscious thoughts or arrange our circumstances in such a way that we're going to be able to interpret them appropriately.

Now certainly, God has promised to guide us, but how is this guidance given to us? You see, when you became a Christian, God did not take away your responsibility to make decisions by promising you that he's going to tell you exactly what to do at every step. Instead, he gave you his Word and his Spirit to renew your mind so that you will no longer be bound to the way the world thinks, but that you'll be able to think and evaluate things in an increasingly Christ-like way. Now if you think I'm off, let me just listen to a couple of ways Paul prayed for believers. For example for believers in Philippi. He said, "it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment so that you may approve what is excellent and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ." He's praying that they will grow in their knowledge and discernment so they're going to know and do what is right.

Here's how he instructed the Christians in Ephesus. He said, "Walk as children of the light and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord." You see, the Spirit had switched on the light so that they could see things now as they really are and now they can discern. They can see what's pleasing to the Lord. You see, there's a big difference between receiving extra biblical revelation of some kind, the kind that what might lead us to say God told me. There's a difference between that and being women who are growing in wisdom, increasingly able to discern because the spirit is at work renovating our minds, ripping out the old, putting in the new. He's doing this through his Word so that we're actually able to see and know what's going to be pleasing to God.

Often times, that means free to choose among numerous options that will all be acceptable to God. You see, being a spiritually mature woman is not defined by your ability to hear God telling you something that is not in your Bible and speaking that into your subconscious thoughts. To be spiritually mature is to know God's word as revealed in the Bible and to be increasingly able to understand it and have the Word of God arise in your conscious thoughts so that you're able to apply it in the ordinary circumstances of life. God doesn't make our decisions for us and then transmit his decisions to us. Instead like a good father, he's teaching us to decide. How? He's renewing our mind as we come under his Word. He is giving us the mind of Christ.

Let me tell you ladies, the world is seeking to press you into its mold. One way it's doing that, it's seeking to press you into the world's mold of using Sundays as a catch up day. Isn't that what the world does before the craziness of the week begins? It elevates the importance of our child's athletic development and the whole idea of not letting down the team above that of worshipping with our gathered brothers and sisters and being taught the scriptures.

The Word of God is transforming how we think about our week and how we think about our workload. It's instilling in us a desire to honor God on his day in a way that demonstrates we really do trust him to take care of us even if we don't spend Sunday catching up. As is promised, blessing of keeping the Sabbath day holy, set apart from the other 7 days works its way through you. You're finding that you're better able to discern what is pleasing to God in what you do and don't do with this day.

The world is seeking to press you into its mold of feminine beauty based on the size and shape of your nose, your breast, your waist, your thighs, even your ankles, the quality of your skin and hair, the style of your clothes. The Word within you is renewing your mind so that your eyes and attention and admiration are drawn to the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, and unwavering hope and confidence in the promises of God, a blossoming of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Instead of a young, toned, fresh body from the gym, you see beauty in the aging, retired missionary whose skin is marked by years in the hot sun. This woman whose teeth never got fixed but oh, how she loves people! And oh how she shuns the spotlight, and how she prays! The Word that's at work within you is making you want to have that kind of beauty.

The world is trying to press you into its highly individualistic mold. It's trying to convince you that you are free to pursue whatever life you want, to find happiness however you want, to be whatever gender you want, and even to die whenever and however you want. The Word within you seeks to transform you into a woman whose identity flows out of being a bond servant to Jesus Christ, no longer slave to your own independence or self-fulfillment. The Word of God is transforming you into a woman who doesn't just look after her own interest but after the interest of others. You're finding as you discover and pursue what is pleasing to God, it also pleases you, and satisfies you in a way that you never could've imagined.

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The world is seeking to press you into its consumer mold. It's advertising tells you that you deserve to have the best and it seeks to convince you that there's no way you could ever be content without what it is selling. The Word is at work within you. It's renewing your mind, it's transforming you into a woman who can say, "I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content, and I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound in any and every circumstance. I've learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

The world is seeking to press you into its mold regarding your thinking about sexuality as it seeks to normalise what God describes as shameful and dishonorable, but the Word is at work within you. It's shaping, or how I hope it is, shaping how you think about these things more than the culture is shaping how you think about things. It's giving you the ability to discern what lines up, not only with specific passages in the Bible, but the whole of the Bible's message so that you know what is good, and acceptable, and perfect.

The world is trying to press you into its mold of thinking that the goal of this life is comfort and security. It sets before us constantly, this goal of retiring with a big nest egg so that you can travel, and relax, and take care of yourself. The Word of God is renewing your mind so that you have very different aspirations than merely a comfortable retirement. The way it's impacting you is that you find that you want to expand yourself for the gospel until the day you die. You have a very different source of security than simply a husband or family who's going to take care of you or a big insurance policy to support you or even physical health to sustain you. Your security as well as your identity is in your belonging to God. You so deeply believe that your heavenly father is taking care of you and has secured a future for you in which you will gain everything that you're not so concerned about losing out here. You're forgetting what lies behind and you're straining forward to what lies ahead. You are pressing toward the goal for the price of the upward call of God and Jesus Christ.

Because the Word is at work in you, changing how you think about what will make you deeply happy, you find yourself willing to forgo the comforts of a bigger house, or a nicer car, or a bigger investment portfolio, or maybe even living in the comfort of Australia around your family. Instead, you find yourself wanting to invest your life and your resources in a ministry that serves to proclaim the gospel in every corner of the world.

The Word is transforming your apathy toward those who have no hope in Christ into an inescapable burden for them. That means your attitude about giving and serving, that's changing, too. The Word is even transforming how you think about where you want to live so that instead of finding the most comfortable, most prestigious neighborhood where you'll be surrounded by Christian friends, you find yourself perhaps drawn to the neighborhood that is desperately in need of the salt and light that you can bring to it.

My friends, the world around you is pressing in on you. It wants to press you into its mold and the reality is you can just relent. You can be shaped by the world around you, but you don't have to be. You can resist. Your life, your countenance, your perspective, your source of joy and satisfaction. What you are living for can be shaped by the Word within you. As you take in and think through and work out the Word of God, it's going to change you profoundly, pleasantly. As you're shaped by the Word within you, you're going to increasingly know how to live in a world around you. I've got to tell you ladies, it's going to shape you in ways your Spanx never could.

Right now, the Spirit of God is at work using his Word to transform you. He's at work even now to make you truly beautiful in a world that's filled with so much ugliness. He's making you genuinely hopeful in a world that is filled with so much despair. The Word of God is making you wise in a world filled with so much foolishness. The Word of God is going to shape you into a woman who thinks, and acts, and looks like Jesus Christ. Don't you want that?

Let's pray. Lord, we simply don't want to relent to the pressures of the world around us that's seeking to press us into the world's mold. Frankly, it would just be easier if we would go with the flow. Lord, we love you too much for that. We also recognise that our greatest joy will come as your Word goes to work on us, changing us. We know that how much joy it will be for us next year when OneLove comes around in 2017. We don't want to be the same women we are today. We want to have our roots deeper in you. We want there to be more solidity to our confidence in you so that we're not so easily shaken by difficult circumstances.

We want to grow in wisdom as women so that we're not so easily confused by the things going on in the world, about how to think about things. Instead, we want increasing clarity about the things that matter as your Word does its work, its renovation work, ripping out our old way of thinking and then planting us the mind of Christ. That's what we want. Lord, we don't presume upon you to just snap your fingers and do that. Instead, we want to be women who bring ourselves under the Word so that as it washes over us, the Spirit will use his Word to work in our lives and transform us, to make us into the women that you intend for us to be, women who think and act and look like Jesus Christ. Transform us in this way, please. In Your Name, we pray. Amen.