

# Be Not Conformed to the World

by Paul Washer

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*Paul Washer emphasizes the necessity of presenting our lives as living sacrifices to God while resisting worldly influences.*

**Duration:** 49:58

**Scripture:** Romans 12:1

**Topics:** "Worldliness", "Holiness", "Transformation"

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## Description

Paul Washer emphasizes the call to not conform to the world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, urging believers to present their bodies as living sacrifices to God. He highlights the importance of worship as a holistic act of obedience and service, rather than merely singing songs. Washer warns against the powerful influences of the world that can lead believers astray and stresses the necessity of knowing God's Word to discern His will. He encourages a deepening relationship with God through understanding His attributes, which in turn fosters a greater love for Him. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a radical commitment to holiness and a rejection of worldly values.

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## Transcript

Now I'm on. I feel like almost the steward at the wedding of John Chapter 2. Hearing that music this morning, just both groups, I have to tell you, you've done us all a disservice. You saved the best line for last.

Oh my. Just amazing, the talent of these children, and then, yes, those two voices. I'll do a couple of songs.

That was beautiful. There are some people who give too much emphasis that Martin Luther, during the Reformation, actually believed that Europe was changed more by the hymns that were sung than even by his preaching, because the people would hear and remember the truth of God's Word that was being sung to them. And I think that's true for all of us, isn't it? I mean, I have to work so long to just memorize one verse.

Ephesians and Colossians, that means the worship of God has a specific purpose, that it's not only vertical, but it's horizontal. It is to teach songs and hymns and spiritual songs. We admonish one another, we encourage one another, and so there's a way in which that music is preaching, it's proclamations, it's bringing forth God's Word.

And also, that's a good word for a lot of the more modern music that sometimes, oftentimes, is not very theological. Theological? Well, it's theological, it's just not correct, and it's theology. Or, I have no problem with a lot of instruments, I guess, but sometimes there's so much noise, I can't even hear what's being said.

And it defeats the purpose of communicating truth. Man, I really, if I ever come back here again, please have those people sing more. If they'll sing more.

That was just beautiful, and it encouraged me. Let's go back to Romans, verse 1. Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your hearts, which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Now, just to summarize what we've learned so far, we have the Apostle Paul urging us, exhorting us, even begging us. Here we can see that the Apostle Paul cared only about truth. He cared about people.

And he was here, well, here we can see his pastor's heart. He genuinely cares for these people in Rome, and he's begging them, urging them to do the right thing. And what is that right thing? To present their bodies, but the greatest thing that we can do, the most reasonable thing, is surrender our lives totally to Christ.

Now, when Paul says present, it's a once, kind of a, he's not saying do this over and over, but it's a once and for all decision. Now, we know that's true, but at the same time, we have to make decisions every day, every hour. We have to remember that decision that we made to lay down our lives for Him.

And also, I want you to know that none of us have accomplished this totally, none of us. But we should all be like the Apostle Paul who says, look, I forget what's behind, and I keep pressing on, I keep pressing on to want to lay down my life more. One of the things that I loved about being in the mountains of Peru, whenever you would meet a fellow brother hiking through the mountains, maybe we were going up to take Bibles somewhere, and maybe if you asked them, if you said, how are you brother, they would always say this, which meant advancing, advancing, I'm advancing.

That's where believers ought to be. You know, I can be with, and I know that you can say the same thing, I can be with immature believers who maybe are really struggling in a lot of areas of their life, but if they are struggling, and if they are advancing little by little, I feel right at home. I feel right, no judgment.

It's the self-satisfied, carnal person that you have to say, look, I really don't have a lot of fellowship, but even with the broken, trembling, struggling, advancing believer, it's a beautiful thing. You know folks, Christianity is the only religion where we can admit that we are wrong without having to be afraid. As a matter of fact, it is a benefit.

If a person will just look at the Word, man, that's the first step. It's actually looking, well, he says, present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice. Remember again, we're a culture that always talks about his heart.

You know, I love Jesus in my heart, even though nothing in my life conforms to Christ's will, you can't judge me because you can't look in my heart. Well, none of that is true. What is in your heart is going to be revealed through your mouth, the direction of your life, the things you do.

So you see, he's telling us, look, let's not be romantic or poetic here, let's be real. Offer your bodies, offer your hands and your mind and your eyes and your lips and every part of you to God holistically. Everything that we have belongs to God and is to be for his glory.

And he says that he wants us to be a living sacrifice. He wants us to be zealous for good deeds, but he also wants us to realize that we cannot live for God apart from God's life in us. We need to be praying for constant, constantly praying for greater and greater manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

And this is true. The moment you were converted, you received the Holy Spirit, you were indwelt by the Holy Spirit and you are complete in Christ. And yet as Spurgeon so often said, we have faith, don't we? We are saved, but we cry out for more.

We have been given grace. We are Christians, but we cry out for more grace, don't we? We have been given the Holy Spirit, but should we not cry out for greater and greater manifestations of his life in us? And when I mean greater and greater manifestations, I'm not talking about necessarily, you know, these extraordinary miracles. I'm talking about the extraordinary miracle of a changed life, the fruit of the Spirit.

I mean, I would trade all these things that people often want to see, all these miraculous walking on waters and speaking in tongues and visions and dreams and all the things that so many people desire. I'd trade all of that just to have the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness.

If you want, go ahead, be a miracle man. I just want to look like Jesus. And that's my biggest problem.

It's my wife's biggest problem in relationship to me. It's my children's biggest problem is that their dad is not as filled with the Holy Spirit as he ought to be, and he's not bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit. And let me say something else really quick.

You know, we've talked a little bit about families. You know, you can put all kinds of rules on your family, and it's just going to lead to death. But a father, a mother filled with the Holy Spirit, now there's something that provides fertile ground for the growth of children.

A legalistic, mean-spirited, angry home is not going to produce anything but the filling of the Holy Spirit, joy. Well, so we're to offer our lives as a living sacrifice and as a holy sacrifice. My dear friend, listen to me.

The Word of God is just this beautiful revelation. And you cannot say that it's specifically about this certain thing or it's specifically about this certain thing. It's about so many things.

But there is one thing that I can say, just one of the small things about the Word of God is this. It teaches us to think as God thinks. And that means it teaches us to love what God loves, and it also teaches us to hate what God hates.

Really, truly. You know, there are some things that we should hate. Now, I said things, I didn't say people.

There are some things that we should hate. Those things that defile us. You know, I was listening to some stories yesterday from people here, you know, things that they were doing to try to help other broken people.

And I just kind of walked back to my trailer and I was I was really angry and I was angry at sin. Do you realize every problem in this world is attributed to sin? To people doing the things that God hates, the little children that are just destroyed in their minds, in their hearts because of sin, the things that go on in this

world, all of it is attributed to sin. And so God, God tells us that he hates him and he hates him because it destroys the very things that he's made.

We should we should hate it. I was teaching in a university years ago in Europe and I was talking about the law of God and I brought up the fact that that a lot of you are probably thinking this is what I told the students. A lot of you are probably thinking you don't want to hear anything about the law of God because it's so oppressive and restricting and restraining and it takes away your freedom.

You know, we've all heard that, haven't we? And I said, would you just think for a moment about what you're saying? You don't want God's law because it keeps you from doing the things you want to do. Well, OK, then let's look at the law of God and find out why does it make you so mad? OK, let's look at one of them. Love your neighbor as yourself.

You hate that law because it won't let you do what you want to do to your neighbors. Don't lie. You hate that's oppressive to you.

That means you must love lying that much. Don't take your neighbor's wife. That makes you mad and you consider that oppressive.

And I just went down through a whole list of things. Don't murder. And I said, so this is the law you hate.

What kind of people are you? As a matter of fact, I want to leave this building right now. I'm afraid. You see the point? God's law is good.

And if we hate it, it must say something about us. We're not good. One person said, well, yeah, but God, you know, everything for Him.

Well, the only option other than that is everything for you. That doesn't make much sense, does it? Doesn't it make more sense that all worship and honor and glory should go to the one who made the entire world? But the only other option, it goes to you. So you're lifting yourself above God.

So we ought to be a holy people. And it doesn't mean just rejecting sin, rejecting that which is wrong. But it also means clinging unto God, having a passion for God, loving God, seeing God as supreme.

Now, here's a good question. Well, it's a good statement to make. Preachers are real famous for telling people what to do, but not telling them how to.

So if I sit there and I say, you need to love God more and you need to see God as supreme. You're sitting there going, yeah, I know that. And you telling me that just makes me feel worse than I already feel.

But now here's the million dollar question. How do I do that? That's like telling a man to lift himself up by his own bootstraps. You know, it's impossible.

So if I tell you you ought to love God more and I tell me I ought to love God more, the next question is, well, how do I increase my love for God? You tell me I ought to see God as supreme. How do I increase my opinion? That's a good question, isn't it? Well, here's the answer. I love my wife now more than I did when we were married.

I mean, now I look back on my love for her when we were married, I see that it was pretty superficial compared to what it is now. Now, why do I love her more? It's because I know more about her and I've

experienced more time with her. Now, here's what you need to see, and I need to be careful here, because I don't want my wife to run up here and beat me up while you guys are watching.

I can say that about my wife, even though she's not perfect. OK, over the years I have known her, I love her more because I have seen more virtue. I've also seen more flaws, but I've seen more virtue and therefore I love her more.

Now, think about God. He is perfect. If your heart has been renewed by the Holy Spirit and you truly are a Christian, then the more you see of God's virtue, the more you will love him.

And that is why it's so important to teach on the afterlife. Literally, if I started a seminary, which isn't going to happen, but if I ever started a seminary, and let's say it was a three-year seminary or six semesters, every semester the student would have to take two classes. Now, there'd be other classes, but every semester there would be two classes.

One would be on the attributes of God and the other would be on... And they would study that all three years. And then they would be told that you have just begun to study the attributes of God. You don't even know anything.

You have just begun to study the gospel. So you need to know more about God. More about God.

How do you do that? Through his word. Through prayer. And through reading men and women who really knew God, knew the attributes.

Tozer has a wonderful little book on the attributes of God. Pink has a wonderful book on the attributes of God. And there are others.

So many others. It's very important. Now, so we need to be holy.

We need to be a people whose heart is knit to God. And we go on, and he says, an acceptable sacrifice. Whom do you hope to please? If you seek to please anyone above God that is idolatry, even children need to be taught that their obedience to their parents should not... The motivation for that should not be primarily to please their parents.

It should be primarily to please God. You see, even someone who serves God because God can fix their family, that's idolatry. We serve God because God is worthy, period.

Whether he fixes our family or not. Whether he heals us or not. Whether he does anything for us.

Our primary goal ought to be to please God. Now, in order to please God, you have to know what God wants. And in order to know what God wants, you have to study His Word.

I know people who sincerely, sincerely are Christians. And they sincerely have a passion for wanting to please God. But they will oftentimes do the very things that God most dislikes.

And it's not because they necessarily have a rebellious heart, as it is, as the Bible says, my people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge. They just assume that this is okay with God, but they have not checked it out. Now, so we want to be pleasing to God.

Now look at this. He talks about us making ourselves a sacrifice, offering ourselves as a sacrifice. And then he says, which is your spiritual service of worship.

Now, we talk about worship. And last night, I believe Brother Deutscher was discussing this with me. Talking about gospel worship.

We always think of singing. And singing most certainly is a beautiful form. But that's just one tiny aspect of worship.

Worship is when you lay down your life. That's worship. Worship is service.

Worship is obedience. Every moment of your life should be worship. Doing the will of God is worship.

And look what he says. He says, presenting your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable God, is your spiritual service of worship. You want to provide, you want to give spiritual worship.

I believe what we heard today was spiritual worship. There seemed to be a beauty about it. There was a beauty about it.

It was real worship. But even that kind of worship in a life that is not laid down, is not worship. See, laying down our life, giving ourselves.

It's like, if I look at it this way. Sometimes we think, you know, a man will think, well, I love my wife because I give her flowers the first day. But he may also beat her, mistreat her, talk bad about her.

Those flowers mean nothing. His I love you's on all those cards, they're worthless. It's the same way.

We can do acts of worship. But if we have not laid down our life, if we are not laying down our life to be more and more conformed to the will of God. Remember what Jesus said? These people honor me with their lips, but their heart.

Now the most perfect thing is, let's have our heart closed to Him. Now this term here, our spiritual service of worship, the most spiritual thing you can do is lay down your life. But the word also can be translated rational.

It's the most rational thing that you can do. You know what's irrational? This is what's irrational. To say that I believe that Jesus Christ is, that He is the way, the truth, and the life, that every moment, not live for Him, but I'm going to live in a way that contradicts it.

Now that is irrational. That's like when I go to the person who calls himself an agnostic. And I say, you're not an agnostic.

He goes, what do you mean I'm not an agnostic? I said, well, do you? If you are an agnostic, you're extremely irrational. And he says, well, the idea of God, the existence of God, is the most important truth that there is. If there is a possibility, even the most remote possibility, that there is a God, it is the most important truth for a man to discover.

And you, saying that you're an agnostic, you are at least acknowledging there is a possibility that there is a God. And yet, that being the most important truth, you're nonchalant about it. That's insane.

That's like screaming out of houses. You see, the most irrational thing, what's irrational is to make a claim to Christ and then seek all of these different things. And it's just totally irrational.

Or to do things that contradict the will. Now, verse two. Do not be conformed to this world.

What does it mean, this world? The word Paul refers to it, the world refers to every idea, every act, every concept, every motivation, every influence, every affection, everything that contradicts. And we look at our world. We look at our age.

And that's what we see, don't we? You turn on the night light. All these different places. What do you see? You just see an entire world running the opposite.

Fighting against God. Making decisions totally contrary to the will of God. And eventually decisions that lead to absolute.

And what he's saying is don't be conformed to that. You see, Paul is recognizing here how powerful. And why is it so powerful? It's very difficult for a person to swim up against the current.

It's very difficult when the entire, almost entire mass of humanity is going in one direction and encouraging one another in that direction. Applauding one another in that direction. And for you to turn and walk the other way, not only is difficult, but it causes those people to be angry with you.

And even people in the church to judge you. And to not like you and to say terrible things about you. And to eventually, and it will probably come a time in Canada, in the United States, to persecute you.

And take away your children. This world has a great and powerful influence. Another way in which the world really gets in on us is through the eyes.

Look over for a moment. Hold your place in Romans. Go to 1st John, chapter 2, verse 16.

For all that is in the world. Now, look at the way this is set out for us. The lust of the flesh.

Now, the word lust here, what is translated as lust, it's a proper translation. But the word can mean just desire. And desire is not necessarily bad.

For example, a desire for food, that's not bad. But an extreme desire of food, taking food as pleasure, that's sin. So what it's talking about here, it's just everything that has to deal with the flesh.

And there are some things that we desire as human beings that aren't bad. But when they take the place of God, become more important than God, then they become a wicked whore. I mean, even the study of even ministry can become something of a lust of the flesh.

Now, I know young men that start studying a little bit of theology and they just start devouring it because they can use what they know to devour other students. You know, so even good things can become bad. But there's this lust of the flesh that's so powerful.

Do you know that I've been told that there is more chemical things going on? These powers, OK? And the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, what we see with our eyes, especially men, is so extremely dangerous. So extremely dangerous. That's why we're supposed to guard our heart.

We're to guard our eyes. You know, I don't go to malls. I'm back home or whatever.

You know, every once in a while I have to go someplace to find something. But basically, I'm not going to go to a mall and I'm not going to take my children because what was 25 years ago, what was considered pornographic, is now put in their windows. See, I know.

No, there are certain things. You just don't go there. You just don't go there.

You just don't do that kind of thing. Why? Because I don't want to deal with it. I've got enough to deal with.

Instead of putting myself in the middle of it. You see, people say, well, you can't just hide from everything. No, but I don't have to pump it into my home.

You see, it's the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life. All that we, you know, we just want to appear as something great in the eyes of the eyes of other people that we don't even know. We want the biggest and the best and the flashiest and the shiniest in the homes and this and that and everything.

It's not right and it does not satisfy it. Ultimately, remember when I was coming here with my family, I watched this couple that were sitting right across from us in the airport and you could tell they were probably my age. Man and a woman.

I mean, he had a perfect haircut. Uh, he, everything he had on and his clothes were in style. It was all just a super, you know, brand or something that people wear.

The lady, her clothes probably cost more than my car. And she had, you know, she had her hair do, perfect makeup and even their travel. I mean, it was designer travel stuff and they all had their Kindles out and they were just, man, they were cool.

And I could just, but I'd look at the expression. I saw almost no joy and hard looks. And you see, they had what everybody's seeking for.

And they weren't happy. You could see they weren't happy. I mean, everything was so intricate for them.

They had to have the best of the best, the finest of the finest. When that went out of style, they had to make sure to send that to Goodwill and go buy something else. It's just, it's horrid.

Well, he says, well, don't be conformed. Let's go back to Romans. He says, don't be conformed to this.

The word conformed here means don't be pressed in the same mold. Now, here's how people get pressed into the same mold. Let's start with children.

Children follow children. I don't know if you've noticed that. You haven't.

And a child is born. And nowadays, maybe after six weeks or six months or something, mom goes back to this nursery. And that child, but here's what becomes more amazing.

The teacher doesn't even become the primary influence. The other kids do. And that's why when he gets old enough, when he comes home at three o'clock or four o'clock or whenever it is, if you get out of home, you get back.

And then you send them off to public school. And this is, they want to be with their friends. Their little brother.

They no longer want him around in the manor. They want to be with mom and dad at five o'clock to eat supper. And what happens is eventually the home turns into just a condo.

And the kid comes home and goes to his stuff. But here's what happens. The primary influence on that child's life.

What is shaping that child? It's not even his teachers. But it's the other kids. Other kids who when they were nine were.

And so your child, but in a filthy, dirty, secret way. And then this child is going to be there eight hours a day, at least five days a week. Being taught by teachers who are secular in their mind.

Being taught by kids who are not only secular, but very perverted. And you know, this is true. Young men, gentlemen, who went to public school like me.

Where did you learn all your filth? From your home. And then the father's not going to disciple. The mother's not going to disciple.

The father will yell a lot when the kid doesn't turn out. Father may take him fishing some. And of course, he'll go paint pictures of Noah's Ark every Sunday.

So all that, it's all the training he gets. And then you wonder why does this child conform to the age? And then, throw in television. Average is what? The North American has three hours a day.

Even the cartoons are grotesque. SpongeBob is an abomination. And so what's happening? We are doing the exact opposite of what God told us to do.

But then we come together and pray for our lives. So, so this goes on. Then the kid goes to the university.

Where university is basically, even when I was immoral in my life. And in the last 25 years, it is a Sodom and Gomorrah. And the professors give a secular worldview.

Then comes out and gets a job. And as most of you men who work know what a struggle you have in your jobs. Because you're just always kind of protected.

You're out there working with people who curse and swear and tell vile jokes. And then the child gets thrown in. So we have actually effectively lost.

We have done everything that God. Television, internet, everything in the home. And you have not only allowed just one generation after another.

You see, it's just true. I know that it's a battle in my own home. But there it is.

And to change things, it's going to require radical, radical, radical. In you, in you. Don't be conformed to this world.

You know, even our media guy, John Green. He called me in the office, in his office one day. And he goes, Paul, I want you to see this.

It was a trailer, you know, movie trailer for Spider-Man. I don't know what. Now, I looked at it.

There was, I mean, that thing, that guy was jumping all over the place. Music was bomb. It was visual.

It was power. Where can I get one of those suits? It was amazing. Now, here's the problem.

A child is raised in that. And he can no longer walk. He can no longer be excited.

You take a video game. A little child is playing. I mean, I've seen these things.

I mean, shooting people. I mean, the little kid thinks it's fun. I scored more points.

And then one day, he picks up a gun. That's why I go around. I talk about these things.

I talk to young people. I say, young peoples, you know that game where you pull the trigger and you shoot? I have grabbed a man off, taking towels and jamming it in the hole while blood's passing out, gripping on hold to him so that, you know, isn't it? Wouldn't it be neat, girls, if you did reach for a book and a boy reached for the book at the same time? And he, you can't read poetry anymore. Supposed to be an innocent.

One time when my, wow, you're a, you're a big boy and you're a fine looking boy. I bet you've got a lot of girlfriends. Don't you ever talk to my son.

Do you understand me? So I don't know what the problem is. I'm going to tell you what the problem is. My little boy is supposed to be thinking about tree houses and slaying dragons and hunting for birds with his broken BB gun.

And I will not stand here while he is soiled by someone as foolish as you. Bible tells me to protect his innocence. Do not allow love to be awakened too early.

He said, man, you can be kind of mean. Look, it's time that some men got some backbone. It really is.

Tame domesticated males. And at times there's something to be angry about. The protection of our children.

There ought to be a sense of, with rabies. Do not be conformed to this world. Men, one of our responsibilities is to keep ourselves pure.

One of our responsibilities, men, is to stand at the door and tell the world. No, you're not coming in. I may not whip you in a fight, but I can tell you this.

Now, it goes on. Do not be conformed to this world. But, but, it's just a big, this term now is just coming in here and goes, I'm going to show you the complete opposite now.

He says, but, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. This word transformed in Greek is the word. You see, the world tries to put this mechanical mold upon you.

But God says, I want to transform you. Metamorphosize you. To make you into something beautiful.

To change you. It's spiritual, it's life, it's power. It's not mechanical.

Be transformed. Okay, every one of us wants to be transformed. We do.

It's our longing. And most of us, like myself, if we have any sadness. If we are sad, because we are, I look at my life, I'm going to be, I look back and I think, I'm just, but that's one of the signs.

Love to tell this story. I was walking into the office. Very, very dark.

And I walked into this office one day, depressed. And I walk into the office, Dr. Hunt, I'm just not holy. I just don't know the word.

I'm just this, and I'm not this. And I want to be more like Christ. And I'm just miserable.

He stands up and walks, kind of like a deer looking in the headlights type look, you know. Brothers, I know that your heart is broken. But please understand, not because they hurt you.

But I also say these things. See, there's no difference. This is true.

I think I preach on it so much. Not because I think there's a hole. I preach on it so much because, and brothers, we need this.

I need this. You need these rebukes. I need these rebukes.

I mean, the boy has to be in danger.

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