



Worship – Part 9
Transforming Worship – Part 6
GCSP – 06/23/2007

Years ago there was an advertising campaign that had the slogan, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." I believe it was for what was then called the Negro College Fund. The slogan is a great truth for all of us.

God has given us the tremendous ability to think. God has blessed us with the human organ called the brain. And as far as medical science has gone over the last several decades it has only scratched the surface on understanding the human brain.

Our minds store a tremendous amount of information. Our minds control all of our bodily functions. Our minds are what allow us to apply logic to the situations we face. Our minds tell our lungs to breathe and our hearts to pump. Our minds cause our eyes to see and our ears to hear. Our minds create and invent and dream. And yet science tells us that even those who are labeled as geniuses use less than 10% of the brain's capacity in their lifetime. I know many who use far less than that.

What a blessing it is that God has given us the ability to think and to use our minds in so many amazing and miraculous ways. To be able to read and comprehend the great teachings of Scripture and of great men and women of faith through the ages who have shared with us the accumulation of knowledge God has blessed their minds with on the printed page.

And as a side note: **Hebrews 13:7** tells us, "**Remember those who led you, who spoke the Word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith**" (NASB). We obey this command by listening to and by reading what they have to say. Keep good Christian books in your home. Keep sermon tapes and CD's in your car. Devote a portion of each and every day to expanding your mind with the knowledge that is available to you through the teaching and writing of others.

And with this tremendous blessing, God challenges us to use this tool for His glory – a thought we will explore this evening.

But first, let me quickly review the ground we have covered over the last two weeks:

We began two weeks ago by looking at what Scripture has to say in regards to what God's will is for our lives. God's will for you and I is not a mystery. The Lord clearly has told us in His Word exactly what His will is for our lives.

1. It is God's will for you to be saved.
2. It is God's will for you to be Spirit-filled.
3. It is God's will for you to be sanctified (set apart from sexual immorality).
4. It is God's will for you to submit to authority.
5. It is God's will for you to suffer for the cause of Christ.
6. It is God's will for you to respect those who are over you in the Lord and teach you God's Word, to live in peace with one another, to confront sin, to encourage one another, to help the weak, to be patient with one another, to not seek vengeance, to do good to one another, to rejoice always, to pray always, and to be thankful for all things.
7. It is God's will for you to worship Him (by renewing your mind).

Before we complete our review, turn with me in your Bibles to **Romans 12**.

Romans 12:1-2

Let's pray.

Last week I spoke about the desire in many a Christian's heart to get more of have more from God. They want more blessing, more wisdom, more peace, more healing, etc. And while this seems to be a great desire to have it is actually a faulty and unbiblical desire.

If you are a genuine Christian, you first must understand that God has already blessed you with every spiritual blessing and you already have the fullness of the Holy Spirit living within you. There is no more to "get" from God in that respect. The problem does not lie in you somehow having been shortchanged by God, but it lies in you receiving and appropriating all that God has already given.

We then looked at how spiritual blessing comes not by what we get from God but from what we give to Him.

We saw last week how Peter calls us a royal priesthood, and the duty of the Old Testament priest was to continually offer up sacrifice to God and to worship and to lead others into worship.

But above all else, our duty and our supreme act of worship are to offer up ourselves, wholly and continually to God as living sacrifices.

Sadly, it is painfully obvious that most Christians do not experience the fullness of joy and blessing that is theirs. This fullness of joy and satisfaction and peace and blessing and contentedness can only come by surrendering all that you have back to Him. We must surrender all of our material, physical, emotional, and even spiritual means. We must surrender our possessions, our families, our job, our will, our attitudes, our heart, mind, and soul - everything. In return you will experience the fullness of God in your life. You can't out give God in any respect.

Well, let's look at our text tonight and open our minds and hearts to what the Holy Spirit will teach us tonight.

v. 1

We spent some time with this verse last week and found through our study that God already has our souls. **Ephesians 5:25-27** told us of how Jesus Christ already paid for our eternal souls and is now in the process of sanctifying and purifying us to be able to present us to Himself one day in heaven as a spotless and holy bride.

The piece of the equation that we have within our control is presenting our bodies to Him. Our souls, the inner person, already belong to Him, but He desires for us to present our bodies, the outer person, to Him as a living sacrifice. And by bodies, Paul means all that incorporates our humanness. He means the physical, the emotional, the mind, and the will.

It is a frightful thing to know that our flesh, our bodies, our "old man", as Scripture refers to it, can overrule or thwart our redeemed souls within us. Every time we submit to sinful behaviors, sinful passions, sinful indulgences, sinful thoughts, sinful reactions, and sinful attitudes, we are witnessing our unredeemed outer person gaining the victory over our redeemed inner person.

v. 2a

Let's begin with the phrase, "**And do not be conformed to this world.**" It is my opinion that the church, in general, has by and large ignored and disobeyed this command of God. Most churches across this land have adopted the exact opposite of this command. Conforming to the world has become the goal of so many churches and ministries.

Entertainment is the focus. Elaborate stages, Broadway lighting, orchestra pits, special effects, and hired professional singers and actors are crowding out and replacing the Word of God and the preaching of a biblical sermon.

Most surveys and studies show that what the Bible calls sinful behavior is committed in the same proportion and severity by those who call themselves Christians as by those who are unbelievers. Divorce rates within the church are almost identical to those outside the church. Pornography and adultery are almost as common within the ranks of the church as outside its ranks. And the list goes on with similar results for just about any sin you can imagine.

And it is all because the church has ignored this command of God. This is one of the most well known verses in the Bible, but it is quite possibly the most ignored.

Beloved, we are in the world but we are not "**of the world**" (**John 17:16**). We are called out and set apart. We are to be like Jesus Christ. We are to imitate the great men and women of faith. We are a peculiar people, "**a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of the darkness and into His marvelous light**" (**1 Peter 2:9** – NASB).

We have been called out of the darkness. So why does the church continue to crawl back into the darkness? Why are we conforming to this evil world that is in the primary control of Satan and his evil hoard of demons? Why do we mimic the strategies and philosophies of human invention and ignore the principles and precepts and tenets and commands of God Almighty?

While we were in Kansas a few weeks ago, the church there was about to embark on a campaign that was tied to the new movie "Evan Almighty." The premise of the campaign is a good one – reaching out to the community with random acts of kindness. But it was Hollywood. John Goodman is the spokesman and the campaign suggests you play clips from the movie and give John Goodman (via video) time during the church service. Now I don't know if John Goodman has become a Christian or not, but even if he were, he has a long way to go in rejecting his former life and embracing and living according to God's Word before he would be given time in the time the church has set aside to corporately worship.

It grieved my heart as my good friend and his youth director talked about implementing this campaign in their church.

Whatever happened to **2 Corinthians 6:14-18**? "**Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can goodness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the Devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: 'I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore, come out from them and separate yourselves from them', says the Lord. 'Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you. And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters', says the Lord Almighty**" (NLT).

Bless God, that by His infinite power, and by the precious blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, and by the leading of His ever-present Holy Spirit, that each and every one of us would take this

command seriously, that we would repent of the times we have conformed to this world, and that we separate ourselves from the evil things of this world! We are children of the King of kings and Lord of lords and it is high time we get up out of the gutter of this world and started acting like it!

- The world holds grudges – The King’s children forgive.
- The world says sexual immorality is okay – The King’s children keep themselves pure.
- The world says divorce is okay – The King’s children understand true commitment.
- The world says always look out for number one – The King’s children look out for others.
- The world says lies and deceit have their place – The King’s children speak the truth in love.
- The world preaches self – The King’s children preach service to others.
- The world tolerates sin – The King’s children take a stand against sin.

And we could go on and on. **“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Galatians 6:7-8 – KJV).**

Beloved, we cannot conform to the world and expect to gain the blessing of God. When we act like the world we are mocking God! How dare we! How dare we mock the Almighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Holy One, the Great Jehovah, the All-Powerful, All-knowing, Ever-present God of the universe!

Yet we do indeed mock Him every time we conform to the world. And beloved we must be so careful. It is so easy and so tempting to adopt the strategies and philosophies of the world and bring them into the church. And I am not saying that we do not employ human wisdom when it is in compliance with God’s wisdom, and I am not saying that we are to isolate ourselves from the world and have no contact or dealings with the people of the world. But I am saying we must know God so well (and that comes by knowing His Word so well) that it is supremely obvious to us when we cross the line into conformity with the world.

v. 2b

“...but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

Hold your place in **Romans** and turn to **Philippians**.

Philippians 2:5-8

Do you want to know what it means to transform your mind? It means to have the mind of Christ. Having the mind of Christ means knowing and obeying the Word of God. It means emptying yourself of all of your own desires and submitting to the desires of God the Father. It means humbling yourself in complete obedience, to the point of death if necessary, just like Jesus.

Our minds get polluted on a daily basis. We are bombarded with ungodly images, ungodly language, and ungodly behavior. Even if you locked yourself away in the remotest part of these mountains we live in, with no electricity, no phone, no computer, no television, no radio, no newspaper, and no other people within 50 miles, you would still have to contend with your depraved mind. Your mind is self-polluting and it needs to be washed, or renewed on a daily basis.

In **John 13**, Jesus gathers His disciples together for the Last Supper. Before partaking of the Supper, Jesus grabs the basin and a pitcher of water, wraps a towel around Him and stoops to

wash the dirty, grimy, filthy feet of these men. One by one Jesus cleaned away the dirt, the mud, and most likely the manure that is common in an agrarian society in which they lived. Take a walk in the pastures we have out here in open-toed sandals and you will get the sense of how the feet of the disciples was like by this time in the evening.

Jesus approaches Peter, and Peter protests. **"Peter said to Him, 'Never shall You wash my feet!' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me' Simon Peter said to Him, 'Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.' Jesus said to him, 'He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean'" (John 13:8-10 – NASB).**

There are several amazing and important principles for us to learn from this account, but what I want you to grasp are just two:

First, Jesus is illustrating, that as a Christian, you are clean from the ultimate consequences of sin. The blood of Christ has washed your sins away. Your sins have been paid for from an eternal perspective. In this respect you are spiritually clean. But as we go through our day we pick up some of the dirt and grime of this world. We have allowed ourselves to conform to this world, if only in a small way. So on a daily basis we must wash away this filth by renewing our minds with His Word.

Secondly, if we do not submit to this cleansing, Jesus says you will have no part of Him. That is a startling and frightening statement! Practically speaking, if you will not submit to the teachings of God's Word, this statement says you are not a true Christian.

We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds and that will not happen apart from the Word of God.

Lastly, and back in Romans, it says:

v. 12c

"...so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

And if we go back to the end of verse 1, we will see that this will of God is worship. And pure and genuine worship only comes when we are clean before Him by rejecting conformity with the world and embracing the renewing of our minds by His holy Word.

Let's pray.