

CHRISTIANS ARE NOT TO BE LIKE THE WORLD

Romans 12:1-2

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: At one time or another, everyone has mimicked or copied somebody else - either their manner of dress, their hair style, their way of speaking, just about anything that one admires or is jealous of. Children grow up imitating characteristics of their parents. Sometimes one's life is totally changed by imitating someone else in some way or other. When a person becomes a Christian he/she is to stop being like everybody else and focus on being as much like Jesus as he/she can, however still living in this world, it is very difficult to not imitate or "conform" to the world's ways. Christians are warned to not be conformed to this world and need to know the dangers of staying with the world's ways after becoming a Christian.

I. WHAT IS "CONFORMING"?

1. A definition of "conformity:"

- To conform is to imitate, someone else's pattern.
- It is the desire to be like someone else:
 - It is to do what others do.
 - It is to say what others say.
 - It is to wear what others wear.
- It is to accept the ideas, fashions, way of walking, talking, etc. that has become popular.
- One who "conforms" is someone who:
 - Is afraid to be different.
 - Feels the need to be like everybody else.

2. Conforming to today's society:

- There is a lot of pressure to conform to the standards of some group:
 - Adults even feel the need to change their ways and conform sometimes.
 - Young people with clothes, cars, tatoos, etc.
- Teenagers feel the strongest pressure to conform:
 - Many have low self-esteem.
 - They want to be accepted by others.
- Advertising complicates the problem by:
 - trying to market and sell their products
 - trying to get people to change over to use their products, etc.

3. There is a danger in conforming:

- It can quickly and easily lead one to do something he/she knows is wrong.
- When everybody else is "doing it" the pressure to conform is great.
 - They don't want to be made fun of.
 - Giving in for the first time makes it easier to do it again and again.
- Conforming to the ways/things of the world will separate one from God - 1 John 2:15-17
 - Conforming causes one to give in to the lust of the flesh which leads to immorality.
 - Conforming causes one to give in to desiring what one's eyes see.
 - Conforming causes one to become a bit arrogant and prideful.

II. HOW DOES ONE DEAL WITH THE PRESSURE TO CONFORM - TO IMITATE OTHERS?

1. Instead of being one who conforms, be one who "transforms:"

- A "conformist" is one who:
 - goes through a superficial, shallow change.
 - becomes a cheap imitation by letting others do the thinking, etc.
- A "transformist" is one who:
 - undergoes a real change
 - experiences a true, genuine "renewal"
 - which begins with being saved, converted - Titus 3:5
 - which brings a renewal of one's mind - Romans 12:2
 - which continues as one goes through his/her life - 2 Corinthians 4:16
- What does becoming a "transformist" mean?
 - It reveals the reasons why so many imitate, conform:
 - a feeling of insecurity (yet Christians learn that God loves them and they are special)
 - a desire to follow the crowd, even though Christians learn the ultimate end of those who follow the world - 1 John 2:15-17
 - It points out the difference between"
 - Genuine Christians, those who have been truly saved, converted.
 - Those who are shallow, imitators of true disciples of Christ.

B. Christians are to be leaders, not followers:

- A transformist is a leader.
 - One who "proves" to others what is good, acceptable and perfect - Romans 12:2
 - Presents his/her body as a living and holy sacrifice - Romans 12:1
 - Has the courage to say "NO" to things that are wrong.
 - One whose example helps others fight off the pressure to conform, imitate.
 - Giving others the courage and strength to say "NO."
 - Encouraging others to do what is right - Joshua 24:14-15; Judges 2:7
- A conformist is nothing but a follower:
 - Who lets others do the thinking for him/her.
 - Who lets others lead him/her into doing bad, dangerous things.

CONCLUSION:

1. Everyone sooner or later experiences the opportunity, the pressure to conform, imitate the standards and practices of this world.
 - Especially the young who are so impressionable
 - The older who are looking for positions of power and influence and popularity.
2. Everyone has a choice:
 - Either give in and be led by the things of the world affecting body, mind and soul.
 - Or look to Jesus, the ONLY true non-conformist, and allow oneself to be transformed by the renewing of his/her mind.
3. Christian, conform to, imitate, the image of Jesus Christ - Romans 8:29
 - It will require a total transformation of the inner being, person.
 - Which are YOU? An Imitator or a Transformer?

