

Romans 12:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Analysis

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. The command **be not conformed** (μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε, mē syschēmatizesthe) means 'stop letting yourselves be pressed into the world's mold'—the present imperative suggests ongoing resistance. **This world** (τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, tō aiōni toutō) refers to the present evil age, the system of values opposed to God. In contrast, **be ye transformed** (μεταμορφοῦσθε, metamorphousthe) is the verb from which we get 'metamorphosis'—the same word used at Christ's transfiguration (Matthew 17:2). This is passive voice: transformation is God's work in us, not self-improvement.

The means of transformation is **the renewing of your mind** (τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοός, tē anakainōsei tou noos)—Christian discipleship involves radical intellectual reorientation, learning to think God's thoughts after him through Scripture. The result is that believers can **prove** (δοκιμάζειν, dokimazein, 'test and approve') God's will, which Paul describes with three adjectives: good (beneficial), acceptable (pleasing), and perfect (complete, mature). Romans 12:1-2 forms the thesis statement for Paul's ethics: total consecration and mental transformation enable discernment of God's will.

Historical Context

First-century Rome was the center of pagan culture, with emperor worship, polytheism, gladiatorial games, and sexual immorality woven into daily life. Christians faced constant pressure to conform—attending banquets with meat offered to idols, participating in trade guilds with pagan rituals, navigating imperial loyalty oaths. Paul's call for mental renewal addressed believers who had been shaped by Greco-Roman philosophical categories, Jewish legalism, or syncretistic religion before conversion.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What specific thought patterns or assumptions from contemporary culture have you unconsciously absorbed that need intellectual 'renewing'?
2. How does conformity to the world's values show up in your spending habits, entertainment choices, or career ambitions?
3. In what areas of life are you seeking God's perfect will, and how is Scripture renewing your mind to discern it?

Interlinear Text

καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ ἀλλὰ
And not be G3588 world to this but
G2532 G3361 G4964 G165 G5129 G235

μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοός ὑμῶν, εἰς τὸ
be ye transformed by the renewing mind of your that G3588
G3339 G342 G3563 G5216 G1519

δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ τὸ ἀγαθὸν
may prove ye what G3588 will G3588 of God G3588 is that good
G1381 G5209 G5101 G2307 G2316 G18

καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον
And acceptable And perfect
G2532 G2101 G2532 G5046

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 1:14 (Parallel theme): As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

2 Corinthians 5:17 (Parallel theme): Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Colossians 3:10 (Parallel theme): And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

Ephesians 5:17 (Parallel theme): Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

Ezekiel 36:26 (Parallel theme): A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

1 Peter 4:2 (References God): That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Romans 12:1 (References God): I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

John 15:19 (Parallel theme): If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Psalms 51:10 (References God): Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Romans 13:14 (Parallel theme): But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

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