

- ***READ Galatians 1:6-9*** It did not take the Galatians a whole lot of time to really mess things up, and Paul wasn't going to waste any time in letting them know just how disappointed he was in their *"so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel."* These people, as many continue to do today, had taken the pure good news of Jesus and His grace and mercy and had polluted it by trying to bind that which has been fulfilled and made obsolete through the sacrifice of Jesus. Paul's admonition and instruction was for these people to return to the pure and unadulterated Gospel which was God's power to save man from his sins.
- Just as men have polluted the Gospel, so have the polluted many things found in God's Word. Where He inspired Paul to write that there is *"one faith," (Ephesians 4:5)*, men have taken that faith and twisted it into something different. The very same thing can be true about God's design for discipleship. Where Jesus said that if one desires to follow after Him that they must take up his cross, men have said that to be a disciple truly doesn't require that you give up so much.
- In fact, there are many people who claim to be disciples of Jesus and a part of Christianity when in reality they belong to something I refer to as Churchianity. These are those people who would claim that they are Christians and disciples when the degree of their faith can't be seen going any further than simply showing up for the appointed times of worship assemblies with a particular local church. This type of discipleship *which is really not another* is characterized by three main issues and problems.
 - The first is **compartmentalization**. What I mean by this is that those who are Churchians have placed their faith in a particular portion of their lives and it stays there. Imagine that our lives are divided up into different boxes. There is our personal life box, our public life box, our family life box, our work life box, our fun life box, our spiritual life box, and so on. Those who are Churchians will allow God to have place in their spiritual lives that consist really only of those times spent with the church, but you'll be hard pressed to find God's influence in any other part of their lives. God has His part and box, but He won't find Himself allowed into any other portion of the Churchian's life.
 - This feeds into a strong and extremely problematic self-deception within the Churchian's mind. It is one thing for God to have no part in our lives, but to simply have Him in His box, even if it is no more than 2-4 hours a week, gives them a peace of mind that allows them to go on as they please without any true change in their lives. They are comfortable in their small degree of discipleship because they see simply being a member of a local church as being enough. Sadly these Churchians are not true disciples...they are really something else all together...they end of being hypocrites above all else.
 - **Hypocrisy** is quite possibly the most destructive part of Churchianity. Where that person might sit in the worship assembly and sing *"Live For Jesus"* they truly do no such thing. Where they might sit in an assembly and listen to God's word demand a love for all people, they have no such love. Where this person might sit in an assembly where they are implored to die to self, their will lives on as strong as ever. While this type of discipleship obviously hurts and stunts the growth of the individual, it is also extremely harmful to others who might observe the hypocrisy. Think of the seeker who might be looking for truth, and they see this type of person who claims holiness and yet their lives are anything but holy. That isn't just problematic, but it downright harms the cause of Christ, and God expects more from those who claim to be one of His followers.
- But what exactly does God demand from those who claim to be His followers? What does true discipleship look like? How does it differ from Churchianity? To answer these questions, let's take some time to consider what Paul writes in **Romans 12:1,2**. These two verses completely contradict the mindset of the Churchian. They demand true discipleship and leave no room for one's compartmentalization, self-deception, and hypocrisy. What does true discipleship demand of us? Let's look to see how Paul would respond to such a question.

True Discipleship According To Romans 12:1,2

I. Our entire lives must be given to God. *"present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice"*

A. Paul says we are to present our bodies as living and holy sacrifices to God.

1. Obviously the sacrificial language brings to mind the sacrifices of the Old Testament times, and no where within those sacrifices can I think of God demanding anything less than best and full sacrifices. Those commanded to sacrifice would only be reprimanded for giving God anything less than the best they had. Certainly the best we have is our full lives.
2. God expects for us to give Him everything of ourselves. Jesus said that those who desire to follow Him must take up their crosses and deny themselves. **(Mark 8:34)** There is nothing that qualifies those words as being anything less than deny everything of ourselves. Sure Jesus wouldn't accept someone who is willing to give them only half of themselves. In fact, I think of the rich young ruler who seemed to be willing to give every part of his life to Jesus...except for his wealth. **(Mark 10:17-22)** This man wasn't willing to give himself as a true and living sacrifice...he was only willing to give part of himself when Jesus demands everything.

B. This especially has an effect on the worship that we offer up to God when we do come together.

1. I certainly don't want to minimize the importance of worship. Certainly our worship together is of the utmost importance in regards to the glory it gives to God and the encouragement it gives to others. We must be a people who have the strong habit of gathering with the saints when the time is appointed to gather together.
2. However, we must recognize that only giving God 2-4 hours a week in worship and then completely forgetting about Him the other 160+ hours will never allow for us to truly be able to worship Him as He expects for us to worship Him. We cannot live like heathens all week long and then expect to come together and worship Him like true saints. One cannot live like a heathen and worship like a saint. Our giving up of our lives as living and holy sacrifices is directly linked to our worship and the two cannot be separated. We must live holy if we want to worship holy. Just as God would not accept a lame and broken lamb for sacrifice neither will he accept us offering up ourselves in worship if we continue to willfully live in sin. God must find Himself in every area and box in our lives.

II. We must refuse to be made like those of the world. *"do not be conformed to this world"*

A. We must not allow ourselves to be made into the shape of someone who belongs to the world.

1. When I read this verse I can't help, but think of jello, play dough, and the like. Jello can be made in almost any shape you want as long as you have a shape or a mold to pour it into.
2. Play dough is designed to be pliable and moldable into whatever shape we might desire. The molder might have to put in some effort to make the play dough into the shape he wants, and the jello maker might have to make the jello and select a mold, but the play dough and the jello don't have to do much of anything.

B. In much the same way, it doesn't take much to become like the world around us.

1. It would be nice if we were all surrounded on every side by righteousness and godliness, but we know that simply isn't this life. Sadly, we are all often surrounded every day, on every side by those who don't live for God but only live for self, and sometimes that type of life can seem very appealing and enticing to us.
2. We look at people around us and we don't seem them having to make big sacrifices in their lives in order to be as someone else would want for them to be. They often go where they want, think like they want, say what they want, and do what they want. They only seem to answer to their own desires, and Satan wants for us to see that as appealing.

3. On one hand Jesus demands that we die to self and our own desires, and on the other hand Satan is telling us to live only for ourselves! If we're being honest...at face value Satan's advice is much more appealing! Our natural inclination is to do as our heart desires, but we know from God's wisdom that following our own desires only leads to destruction and death. **(James 1:14,15)** It certainly doesn't lead us to a true measure of discipleship.

III. We must be determined to be changed from the inside of ourselves outward. "*be transformed by the renewing of your minds*"

- A. Instead of being conformed, Paul says that we need to be transformed or made different than.
 1. What are we being made different than? We are being made different than the person we were before we came to Jesus. For some of us...that wasn't a very pretty picture. I think of what Paul says to the Corinthians along these lines in **I Corinthians 6:9-11**. Paul lists a great number of sinful actions that would result in someone being kept from the kingdom of God, and Paul reminds the Corinthians that they were even counted among such people. "*Such were some of you.*"
 2. The key word of what Paul says is "*were.*" These people had been sinners who practiced such things, but they had been changed. They had been transformed through their washing, sanctification, and justification. They had seen the horrible error of their ways, and they had made a true change of direction in their lives. They had been made different than what they were before. They had been made into something different than what they often saw in the world all around us. We, too, must be changed to be different from what we see all around us.
- B. If we are wanting to be true disciples then that starts with being changed from the inside outward.
 1. Sometimes people might wonder, "well how will I know if Jesus is having the influence on me that He ought to have or that I want Him to have?" The answer to that isn't some magic formula or measurement. The evidence is quite simple: has your life been changed? Even the best of people will be made drastically different if they stop living for self and begin living wholly and fully for God as living sacrifices.
 2. The principle is taught time and time again through Scriptures, and it is often applied to false teachers....you will know them by their fruits. Jesus, speaking of false prophets, says they will look like harmless sheep, but they are really just wolves in sheep clothing. **(Matthew 7:15-20)**
 3. So it is when it comes to disciples. There are many who like to wear the name Christian and act as if they are truly committed to Christ, but their true colors will eventually find them out. If they have compartmentalized their faiths and deceived themselves into thinking they are living faithfully in that way then their fruit will eventually become ripe and others will see them for who they truly are. The Churchian will be known by his fruit, and the true disciple will be known in the same way. If we find ourselves changed to be made more like Jesus then we can be confident that He is alive and well within us and transforming our hearts so that our actions will be that of someone who has truly been washed, sanctified, and justified.

IV. We are blessed to do this because of the immense mercies of our patient God.

- A. Paul begins this section of writing by imploring the reader by the great mercies of God.
 1. "*Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God...*" Paul draws motivation and weight from the fact that God, through His perfect love and mercy, has even allowed for us the opportunity to present ourselves to Him as living and holy sacrifices. It is only through His mercy that we have the opportunity through His powerful Spirit to be renewed within ourselves.
 2. If God, who we have wronged, is so gracious to allow us this chance to give ourselves to Him instead of sin and Satan then how could we not but give ourselves wholly and fully to Him in real discipleship, and not some shame parading around as such? Following Jesus is a privilege that we are so very undeserving of.

- B. This is where the true problem lies. Churchians don't see discipleship as a privilege...they see it as a burden and a chore.
1. Those things we see as burdens and chores are not exactly things that we try to find excuses to do. I was tasked with taking out the trash as a kid, so you best believe you wouldn't find me filling up the trashcan quickly because I didn't want to have to take it out!
 2. In much the same way, those who see being a disciple as a chore are not going to go out of their way to involve their faiths in every other area of their lives because they know that will require some changes to take place. It will require true transformation. That change and transformation takes real and substantial effort, and if we don't see that change as privilege then I just don't see why in the world anyone would be willing to give such an effort.
 3. So it is for the Churchian who is quite comfortable coming to this place at this time and going through the things we have done this morning and yet checking their faiths as the door as they exit to go about living their lives as if nothing at all has been changed within them. Instead of being transformed into something different, they are continually being conformed to look more and more like these world and those who only live for themselves and their lusts and desires. The mercies of God await for them to repent and turn, but comfortable lives of compartmentalization, self-deception, and hypocrisy are quite cozy and nice in their minds. Friend...brother and sister...may we never find ourselves in such a dangerous place.

What a sad day it will be when the Lord returns and those who practiced Churchianity in this life are found guilty of living conformed lives having never fully given themselves over as living sacrifices to our great God who so patiently waiting for them to do so. What a sad day it will be when all of the Churchians hear the dreadful words "*depart from Me, I never knew you.*" What a sad and awful day that will be. But on the other hand, what a glorious day it will be for those who were willing to sacrifice themselves fully to the God of heaven who was merciful and gracious to them as sinners. May each of us be of that group that hears the joyous words, "*well done.*" May God bless each of us in our discipleship so that we might be of that number who receive the wonder crown of glory. It won't come easily, but our loving God will supply us if we resolves ourselves to giving ourselves fully to Him. Churchianity...it's not for me, and I surely hope its not for you, either.

PRAYER *Our great God in heaven...it is in the name of Jesus that we approach Your throne of grace so thankful that You are so merciful and patient with us. We ask that you would help each and everyone of us to be fully devoted to our following of Your Son. Help us to give our lives fully to Him. Help us to be transformed from our very hearts and souls so that we might live lives that show the transformation that has taken place within us. Help us to holy lives so that we can worship you as holy saints. Thank you so much for your grace, mercy, and patience. Please help us to always live in Your way, so that we might be able to spend all eternity with You in glory. Strengthen us to follow you better each day. May we die more to self so that we can live more for You. It is in Your Son's name we pray...amen.*