# How Do I Know if I Am REALLY Following Jesus? (Part II)

**Romans 12:2:** *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

In Part I of this two-part series, we focused on the magnificent gift we receive as Christians when we accept the redemption for our sins available through Jesus' sacrifice. We talked about the magnitude of this gift and how, as true disciples of Jesus, we are also required to give back as a result of receiving it. According to Scripture, the action of "giving back" is accomplished through our responsibility to care for it reverently. This care is clearly identified by how we choose to live our lives as genuine followers of Christ. Fortunately, we have clear and concise instructions waiting for us in the Scriptures!

**Part I focused on Romans 12:1 to help us define what it REALLY means to follow Jesus:**
**Romans 12:1:** *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

Jonathan

In Part I, I mentioned polishing silver for one of my clients, which required a great deal of care to do it properly. Similarly, our gift of being called to follow in Jesus' footsteps also demands tremendous care and maintenance.

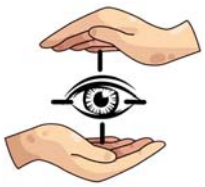
This serves as a great analogy for what it means to follow Jesus, as it requires specific areas of focus and care.

***Required Care for the Gift of Discipleship: Recognition***

**The end of Romans 11 sets up chapter 12, showing the great privilege we have been given:**
**Romans 11:33:** (KJV) *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!*

We have been given incredible, undeserved gifts—redemption for our sins and the opportunity of discipleship. As followers of Jesus, it is important we recognize and receive these.

**REQUIRED CARE FOCUS (OUR MAINTENANCE FOCUS) IS THREE PIECES**



- **Awe**
- **Gratitude**
- **Humility**

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**Awe:** **1 Peter 2:10:** *For you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.*

We have been given something beyond our comprehension. We look at it with awe.

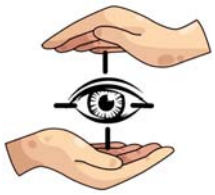
**Gratitude:** **Ephesians 2:8:** *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

We say thank you when we receive a gift. When that gift is truly unmerited, we might struggle with how to properly thank God.

**Humility:** **1 Corinthians 1:27:** *But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong.*

Realizing how small we are helps us keep proper perspective.

All of these **REQUIRED CARE FOCUSES** bring us now to the action required as a result of these reactions to our receiving this incredible gift, as found in **Romans 12:1**.



**REQUIRED CARE FOCUS: (ACTIONS)**

- **Intentional self-denial**
- **Adopting a NEW mindset**
- **Full engagement**

**Intentional self-denial:** **Luke 9:23:** *And he was saying to them all, If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me.*

**Adopting a NEW mindset:** **1 Corinthians 3:16-17:** *16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you? 17 …for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.*

Jesus' true followers are likened to a temple of God where His spirit (His power and influence) dwells. This realization should inspire us in an entirely different way of thinking.

**Full engagement:** **Philippians 3:13-14:** *13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

*Forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward* is what full engagement with the God's plan looks like for us.

Our summary of **Romans 12:1**: **recognition, awe, gratitude, humility, intentional self-denial, adopting a new mindset and full engagement.**

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**In this episode, we will focus on Romans 12:2 and the transformation discipleship brings:**

**Romans 12:2:** *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

There is so much to learn about being a Christian from this verse!

**What does it actually mean to be transformed by the renewing of our minds? Here is a glimpse:**
**Philippians 1:21:** *For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

**Why would dying be considered gain?**

*To die is gain* because it is a big change in who we are. Dying means the old is put aside, put away from us. We do not need it anymore because something new has come.

**This may sound sad; however, once we see what this death ultimately leads to, the whole picture changes:**
**Revelation 19:7-8:** *7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to him, for the marriage of the lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready. 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

If you are part of the bride of Christ, a faithful follower, then you have "made yourself ready." But ready for what? Many people don't see a future purpose for a Christian other than being saved and going to heaven. This gives us a glimpse of what being saved and going to heaven are all about; what going to heaven produces.

Getting to heaven is not the end; it is actually a beginning!

*His bride*—all the faithful followers of Christ. They have many descriptions, including *a temple of God* as we discussed, and the *body of Christ* of which Christ is the head.

**What are they ready for? What will this marriage accomplish?**
**Revelation 21:1-4:** *1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth… 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men…*

This picture intentionally describes the *new Jerusalem* as *a bride adorned for her husband.* The governing power over the world—the *bride of Christ*—comes down from heaven. This is not an end; this is a beginning.

*…and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.*

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We can now see how dying is gain because it brings about the promise *there will no longer be any death*. The death of the faithful followers, the heavenly bride, is part of the process to remove death forever, for everyone! We can't wish for a better gain than this!

The transformation we are called to engage in is bigger, broader and far more powerful and focused than anything our feeble human minds can comprehend.

**THE TRANSFORMATIONAL WALK OF TRUE DISCIPLESHIP**

**We have already established the concepts surrounding self-denial and full engagement. Seeing this lofty prophetic view of the future of Jesus' disciples, we now need to clearly understand the two main points of Romans 12:2:**
**NOT CONFORMING, AND INSTEAD TRANSFORMING.**
**These hold the key to what a REAL CHRISTIAN LIFE looks like!**

It's great to love Jesus, but we are now seeing that there certainly is more to living a true Christian life than that wonderful beginning.

**How do we understand what this nonconformity and transformation are, and how do we engage in all they require?**

These ARE two absolutely fundamental foundations for living in a Christlike fashion. Understanding them comes in steps, and applying them is no different.

To begin, we need to start where the Apostle Paul started—not conforming.

**As usual with biblical teachings, there is far more to this than we might imagine:**

**Romans 12:2:** *And do not be conformed <4964> to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind…*

**Conformed**: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #4964 *suschematizo*;
to fashion alike, i.e. conform to the same pattern (figuratively)

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: 1) to conform one's self (i.e. one's mind and character) to another's pattern, (fashion one's self according to)

We are not to fashion ourselves in the pattern of the world. As a reminder from Part I, we are to be IN the world but not OF the world.

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Notice the major contrast between being *conformed* and being *transformed*. Paul is telling us we cannot be transformed unless we first take ourselves out of conformity. What does this mean?

We are to adhere to two basic levels of nonconformity:

1. **Romans 12:2** teaches us *NOT* to *be conformed to this world*—to this age. This nonconformity is the external, big picture of what we are to be OUT OF ALIGNMENT with.

Sometimes our car might pull to the right or left because the wheels are out of alignment. That is the way we should be. We are supposed to be "out of alignment" with the world—we should make the car pull to the right. It doesn't seem natural, but this verse is saying *not to be conformed to this world*.

**Here is one example of Jesus modeling this action:**
**John 18:36:** *Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world <2889>. If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, my kingdom is not of this realm.*

**World:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2889 *kosmos*; orderly arrangement

This scripture references the coming kingdom of God, which will replace this current world order. God will remove the old order; it will no longer exist. It will be replaced with something new. Not *conformed*, but *transformed*.

As the Messiah, Jesus was dramatically out of conformity with all that was happening around him. As his footstep followers, we also are to be out of conformity in our time. We are to be radically out of alignment with this world's precepts and corruptions. *Do not be conformed to this world.*

The disciples did not understand Jesus' mission. Their expectation was that he would bring down the Roman rule over Israel and establish a Jewish state at that time.

**Could there be false expectations today, similar to those of the disciples at Jesus' first advent?**

Yes, like his disciples back then, it is easy to mix our understanding of what Jesus wants from us with our own desires. The purpose of Jesus' first advent wasn't to bring about Rome's downfall. He came to do something much bigger. So there was a disappointment—and a reappointment—of their hopes.

This word for *conform* is only used one other time in the New Testament.

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2. Peter encourages us to be nonconforming in the more personal parts of our lives.

**1 Peter 1:13-14:** *13 Therefore* (because you were called to follow Jesus)*, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed <4964> to the former lusts* (longing, desire or craving) *which were yours in your ignorance.*

In other words, take a stand; walk away from "self." Don't be conformed to your old ways and worldly mindset.

This is the personal, internal picture of what we are to be OUT OF ALIGNMENT with. We are supposed to be pulling the car to the right, away from alignment with our former self, because we are to be out of alignment with our human nature. We are no longer aligned with what we once knew and followed as acceptable ways of living, thinking and processing our emotions. We now have a higher calling.

The call to Christ involves radical changes. Nonconformity requires a different, higher perspective on what our vocation (what we do for a living) will be. Most people work for a living, but our focus is to be followers of Christ as our primary job.

**Let's look at this new vocation:**

**Matthew 4:18-20:** *18 Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 And he said to them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed him.*

Their true vocation was to be *fishers of men*. There is a dramatic difference between our earthly jobs and our true vocations. We are no longer in alignment with our former desires, so our vocation in life should reflect our alignment with the will of God, not our own will. Our own will should be left in the past.

**Nonconformity requires a different, higher perspective regarding what our comfort in life looks like:**

**Matthew 8:18-20:** *18 Now when Jesus saw a crowd around him, he gave orders to depart to the other side of the sea. 19 Then a scribe came and said to him, Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go. 20 Jesus said to him, The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.*

Jesus was comfortable with no place to call his own because it was his Father's will. Let's remember, the levitical priesthood had no inheritance in the land (**Deuteronomy 18:1,2**).

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Jesus was comfortable not owning anything. However, we are not saying Christians should not own anything. We see that early Christians owned land and had possessions (many used these in service to the brethren—Jesus and the apostles often stayed with their brethren on their journeys). However, their homes, jobs, finances and focus were all dedicated to the will of God through Christ.

That's nonconformity with our own comfort. We should be uncomfortable if our priority is our own comfort. Our comfort should come from serving God through Christ, rather than from the accomplishments or possessions we have accumulated.

**Nonconformity requires a different, higher perspective regarding what our focus in life will be:**
**Luke 9:23-24:** *23 And he was saying to them all, If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake, he is the one who will save it.*

Our focus in life is to lose ourselves through self-sacrifice, laying down our own interests so that we may become more Christlike. This is what nonconformity, being out of alignment with the world and our own desires, actually means. It is radical, and this is the only way we can get to transformation.

Notice, we haven't talked about transforming yet, because we cannot get to transforming until we get to NOT conforming. That opens the door.

**Nonconformity requires a different, higher conformity to be firmly put in place:**
**Philippians 4:12-13:** (KJV) *12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

You may be thinking, *My Christianity doesn't look like this. What should I do?* We need to remember that this is not an instantaneous or emotional thing. We have to work at this. We need to intentionally decide to be nonconformists by putting away behaviors, mindsets and even acquaintances that could hinder our growth in Christ.

**THE TRANSFORMATIONAL WALK OF TRUE DISCIPLESHIP:**

**Our transformation begins with the decision to dramatically step out of conformity with the ways and influences of the world, as well as stepping out of conformity with the thoughts, feelings, habits and direction of our individual earthly lives.**
**This nonconformity MUST be INTENTIONAL and not merely consequential!**

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Rick's Experience

A good example of this is having a personal trainer. Going to a gym on our own to exercise is different than having a personal trainer. My wife has used a trainer who makes her do exercises she wouldn't normally do and doesn't want to do. But she does them anyway.

That nonconformity with how we feel opens the door to being able to conform to what we need. We need a clear picture of how all this works, dead-set in our minds, so we understand, *If I want to be a true Christian and really follow Christ, these are the things I have to put in place.*

This is a big message the Scriptures are presenting loud and clear. True discipleship is not in any way conformed to this world!

**Now that we see this powerful message of nonconformity so clearly displayed, how do we translate it into the necessary transformation of discipleship?**

It is so important to realize that the genuine transformation of true discipleship cannot begin to firmly take root until we have a working understanding of self-denial and full engagement, along with a grasp of the broad scope of our needed nonconformity.
Now we can begin to delve into what the power of transformation in Christ looks like.

Nonconformity is a huge foundation to open the door for transformation.

**Here is where nonconformity with the world and our flesh is going to bring us. This is what transformation looks like:**
**2 Corinthians 5:14-16:** *14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and he died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and rose again on their behalf. 16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him in this way no longer.*

The Apostle Paul says that because Christ loved us and all those he died for, his love controls how we should look at others. We no longer recognize people the way they used to be; we look at them with spiritual eyes, seeing them with the same love Christ has for them.

Many people—including Paul himself before his conversion—knew Jesus *according to the flesh*, meaning they saw him as just a man, a teacher or even a threat. But after encountering the risen Christ, Paul realized Jesus must be understood spiritually—as the glorified son of God.

**Therefore, we are no longer conforming to the way we have known one another up until now:**
**2 Corinthians 5:17:** *Therefore* (because of our nonconformity to our old ways) *if anyone is in Christ, he is a new <2537> creature<2937>; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

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**New**: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2537 *kainos*; of uncertain affinity; new (especially in freshness)

**Creature/Creation**: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2937 *ktisis*; original formation (properly, the act; by implication, the thing, literally or figuratively)

In other words, you are a fresh, original creation that has never existed before. When God created the heavens and the earth and saw *it was very good*, that was a finished creation. We are new creations—something that wasn't created back then. This is something fresh and new. This is why nonconformity to a sinful world and our old lives is incredibly important!

**With this glimpse of what a new mind looks like, let's now further define transformation:**

**Romans 12:2:** *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed <3339> by the renewing of your mind…*

**Transformed/Transfigured**: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3339 *metamorphoo*; verb to transform (literally or figuratively, "metamorphose")

The King James Version translates this as transfigure 2 times, transform 1 time, change 1 time

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: to change into another form, to transform, to transfigure

This word *transformed* means to change into another form. It is only used in three New Testament contexts.

1 The first is in **Romans 12:2**.

2 **It is also used to describe what happened to Jesus in the vision on the Mount of Transfiguration:**
**Matthew 17:2:** (KJV) *And was transfigured <3339> before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.* (Also cited in **Mark 9:2**)

This was a vision; it didn't actually happen. In that vision, Jesus went up to the mountain as a man and was changed from an earthly form to a spiritual form. This vision modeled a higher, transformed spiritual way of being.

3 **Paul contrasts the "veiled" approach of Judaism under the Law with liberty in Christ:**
**2 Corinthians 3:14-18:** *14 But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. 15 But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; 16 but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the spirit, and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed <3339> into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the spirit.*

The Jews could see the provisions of the Law, but it was as though they were looking through a veil; they couldn't understand them fully because Christ hadn't come, and the holy spirit wasn't yet given to them to help them understand.

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This transformation *from glory to glory* is from human to spirit—*a new creation*. The human is looked at as "glory" because God created humanity in a glorious fashion to have *dominion* (to rule responsibly) *over the earth*. It is a glorious creation. But that glory is transforming into a NEW glory—the *new creation*.

The Jews of the Old Testament saw God's plan, but only through a metaphorical "veil" over their hearts. Without the holy spirit working in them, they could not see more. Because of God's power and influence working in the *new creation*, faithful followers can see more by His grace, creating a transformation.

**Transformation is a gradual process, and even the Apostle Paul had to work on it:**
**Philippians 3:13-15:** *13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on* (*press* also means to flee, pursue or run swiftly) *toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you.*

Leave what was, just like the caterpillar transforms into a butterfly. It's a process of dissolving the old and reforming it into a new being. It's a complete remaking of what we are. While who we are remains the same, what we are is completely transformed.

**Scripturally, the person transforms even to the point of being given a new name:**
**Revelation 2:17:** *He who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.*

In the process of our transformation (remember, Revelation is a book of symbols), we are amply fed with the food that brings immortality—that is, *hidden manna*. The overcomer is identified with a *white stone* (pure) engraved with a *new name*.

Being a true follower of Christ takes a lifetime of effort. When we fall, we have to get up and ask for forgiveness and start again, and on and on. It is hard, but SO worth it!

**THE TRANSFORMATIONAL WALK OF TRUE DISCIPLESHIP:**

**Our transformation is a PROCESS that requires our intentional, focused, sacrificial development here and now. While we are not expected to become perfect in this life, we are expected to bend our will, intellect, emotions, words, actions and our character towards Christlikeness, knowing our Father will see our efforts as those of His new creation, not of a fallen human being.**

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We are thankful that God sees us by looking at the new creature growing within us and not the old creature we are struggling to leave behind. We press toward this incredible transformation of every part of our lives.

This whole concept of being transformed challenges us to see far beyond what is easy and comfortable. We need to stretch!

**We are to be nonconformists to the world and our flesh and then transformed by the new mind of Christ. Where does all this lead?**

The next piece of this discipleship puzzle that the Apostle Paul is fitting together for us gives us a solid conclusion for our daily Christian lives here and now. As big as the ultimate heavenly results will be later, our focus needs to be on knowing what to do and how to do it today.

**Romans 12:2:** *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove <1381> what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

**Prove**: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #1381 *dokimazo*;
to test (literally or figuratively); by implication, to approve

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: 1) to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals 2) to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy

**Two other examples of this word being used:**
**1 Thessalonians 5:21:** (KJV) *Prove <1381>* (examine) *all things; hold fast that which is good.*

**1 John 4:1:** (KJV) *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try <1381>* (scrutinize) *the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

We need to *prove*, to scrutinize, whether what we are being taught is from God. It is not going to come down in a lightning bolt on our heads so that we always know the correct answer. We have to work at uncovering true understanding through study, prayer and fellowship with our brethren.

**Our proving the will of God means we are to LEARN TO KNOW what our right courses of action are.**

**Romans 12:2:** *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good <18> and acceptable and perfect.*

**Good**: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #18 *agathos*; a primary word; "good"
(in any sense, often as noun)

**An example of how this word is used:**
**James 3:17:** *But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good <18> fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.*

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**Our LEARNING TO KNOW the will of God considers only that which is "good" from a godly perspective.**

God's goodness is based on His four main attributes of justice, wisdom, power and love.

**Romans 12:2:** *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable <2101> and perfect.*

**Acceptable**: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2101 *euarestos*; fully agreeable

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: well pleasing, acceptable

**Examples of how this word is used:**
**Ephesians 5:10:** (KJV) *Proving what is acceptable <2101> unto the Lord.*

**Philippians 4:18:** (KJV) *But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing <2101> to God.*

Epaphroditus brought Paul a financial gift from the Philippians to support him while in prison. This was a beautiful and appreciated gift because it was given from pure and godly motives, and it was evidently a sacrifice for the Philippians to send this to help Paul. This made the gift *an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice* even more *acceptable, wellpleasing*—not only to Paul—but to God.

We strive to do only those things which are *acceptable and wellpleasing* to God.

**Our LEARNING TO KNOW the will of God follows only that which is acceptable and wellpleasing to God.**

**Perfect**: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5046 *teleios*; complete

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: brought to its end, finished

**Romans 12:2:** *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect <5046>.*

**Examples of how this word is used:**
**Matthew 5:48:** (KJV) *Be ye therefore perfect <5046>, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect <5046>.*

None of us is perfect; we are to grow toward being complete.

**Colossians 4:12:** (KJV) *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect <5046> and complete <4137> in all the will of God.*

We just defined *perfect* as "complete" or "finished," but this verse added a different Greek word translated into English as *complete*.

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**Complete:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #4137 *plēroō*; to make replete, fill (up)

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: 1) to make full, to fill up, i.e. to fill to the full
1a) to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally

Think of your spiritual life like a living room undergoing a renovation. First, the construction work is completed: the old walls are removed, new ones are built, the windows are replaced and the flooring is installed. At this stage, the room is structurally sound, stable, and fully developed—nothing is missing in terms of its construction. This is what Paul means by *perfect* (*teleios*): mature, well-rounded, brought to full growth.

But even though the room is now beautifully built, it still isn't ready to be lived in. It needs furniture—a place to sit, a table to gather around, lighting, and the personal touches that make it functional. When all of that is added, the room becomes "complete" (*peplērōmenoi*; the root word is *plēroō*)—fully furnished, fully supplied, equipped for its purpose.

In the same way, God not only matures us (building the "room"), but He also equips us with everything necessary for spiritual life and service (furnishing the "room"). The construction makes the room whole; the furnishing makes it usable. He fills our lives with the qualities, experiences and spiritual tools we need to function as mature Christians. The renovation makes us whole, but the furnishing makes us useful.

That's the difference Paul is highlighting in **Colossians 4:12** with the Greek ideas behind *perfect* and *complete*.

**Our LEARNING TO KNOW the will of God strives towards only that which is complete and wanting nothing in the sight of God.**

Now let's pause a moment and look at what this transformation is NOT. There is another Greek word translated into English as "transformation/transformed." This, however, is an external change. Though it is sometimes used in a positive sense, it is definitely used as a warning against "outside-in" transformations—transformations that look good from the outside but really aren't.

**Transformed**: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3345 *metaschematizo*;
to transfigure or disguise; figuratively, to apply (by accommodation)

This transformation can be negative, so we have to be aware of the context and the possible deceitfulness of this transformation.

**What is the difference between our transformation and the transformation here?**
**2 Corinthians 11:13-15:** (KJV) *13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves <3345> into the apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed <3345> into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also*

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*be transformed <3345> as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*

This transformation is the deceptive kind. Lucifer deceived Eve and made it sound like it was to her advantage to disobey God. Ministers of false Christian ideas can be in this same disguise, knowingly or unknowingly.

We must always test ideas and concepts with the Bible for truth, clarity and harmony with other scriptures, not taken out of context.

Some translations more plainly say, *disguising themselves.* Satan and his servants do disguise themselves—from the "outside in." They do NOT become something they're not; they pretend. They pretend to be angels of light and apostles of Christ.

Why do they do this? TO ATTEMPT TO STOP THE TRUE, "INSIDE OUT" (INTERNAL CHANGE) TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRUE CHURCH!

They want to stop our being NOT conformed to this world and in being transformed into a *new creation*. We need to be on our guard by continually going to the Bible to determine truth and not just tradition or our own preferences.

**Our defense against their disguises is the conviction that a life lived for Christ is a life of ultimate overcoming:**

**Romans 8:35-37:** *35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written, FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED. 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us.*

We conquer not through our own strength, nor even by relying on each other, but through Christ. We need the clarity of this conviction in his ability to conquer all our tribulations, to leave everything else behind and to rely on him to guide us through.

And he will, if we have been given God's spirit. We cannot be separated *from the love of Christ* if we choose to remain comitted nonconformists and be transformed into this *new creation*.

**Our defense against Satan's disguises also comes with the confirmation that NOTHING can separate us from God's love because we are His!**

**Romans 8:38-39:** *38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

*I am convinced*—the Apostle Paul drew a line in the sand. He decided. He made the choice to be loyal to God, no matter what. Nothing can derail a truly dedicated, sanctified follower of Christ who has God's power and influence working within him.

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Nothing can *separate us from the love of God.* This is what being a nonconformist to the world, our own feelings and emotions, and our own preferences means. This is what being *transformed by the renewing of your mind* means.

**THE TRANSFORMATIONAL WALK OF TRUE DISCIPLESHIP:**

**Our transformation is the process of learning to be out of alignment with the world and our desires and instead to be intentionally focused on developing Christlikeness from the inside out. We need to be continually aware of the disguises and deceptions Satan uses while continuously covering ourselves with Christ and light.**
**Our transformation is continuously fed and encouraged by our heavenly Father and through our Lord Jesus!**

How do we know if we are truly following Christ Jesus? This two-part series was designed to analyze just two verses of the Bible. **Romans 12:1-2** tell us how to know if we are really following Jesus through God's grace and mercy.

Get up and walk forward—leave those old inclinations behind. Grab onto godliness instead of humanness and see how you can be blessed!

**So, how do I know if I am really following Jesus?**
**For Rick, Jonathan, Julie and Christian Questions…**
**…Think about it!**

*All scripturesc ited are from the NASB1995 translation unless otherwise noted.*

## Next episode

Episode 1419: How Do God's Promises Change Your Life? (Part I)

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## Bonus Material and Study Questions

### Recommended additional study:

**Ep.1170: Does Being a Christian Have to Be Difficult?**
***Examining what discipleship is and what it is not***
https://christianquestions.com/program/1170-following-jesus/

**For children, parents and Bible class teachers, continue your studies on this topic with these short, animated videos for kids at ChristianQuestions.com/YouTube:**

- **What happened on the Mount of Transfiguration?**
  https://christianquestions.com/cq-videos/videos-cq-kids/mount-of-trasfiguration/

- **What does the holy spirit do?**
  https://christianquestions.com/cq-videos/videos-cq-kids/what-does-the-holy-spirit-do/

- **What does the Bible say about Satan?**
  https://christianquestions.com/cq-videos/videos-cq-kids/facts-about-satan/

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# Study QUESTIONS

**Ep. 1418: How Do I Know if I Am REALLY Following Jesus? (Part II)** **See:** CQ Rewind SHOW NOTES
https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1418-follow-jesus-part-ii/

1. **Romans 12:1** Review the foundation by describing the focuses and essential actions found here:
   a. Recognition (Romans 11;33)
   b. Awe (1 Peter 2:10)
   c. Gratitude (Ephesians 2:8)
   d. Humility (1 Corinthians 1:27)
   e. Intentional self-denial (Luke 9:23)
   f. Adopting a new mindset (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)
   g. Full engagement (Philippians 3:13-14)

2. Why would dying be considered "gain"? Who is the bride of Christ? For what has she made herself ready? Who "gains" from her death? (Philippians 1:21, Revelation 19:7-8, 21:1-4)

3. **Romans 12:2** *And do not be <u>conformed</u> to this world…*
   a. Why is it important we be in nonconformity with the world externally, in the time in which we live? (John 18:36)
   b. Why is it important we be in nonconformity with our old selves—the internal part of us that longs for and craves our former lives? (1 Peter 1:13-14)
   c. What does nonconformity require of us? (Matthew 4:18-20, 8:18-20, Luke 9:23-24, Philippians 4:12-13)

4. Which "conformities" in your life are hindering your growth in Christ?

5. **Romans 12:2** *but be <u>transformed</u> by the renewing of your mind…*
   a. In what way are Christ's followers "new creatures"? (2 Corinthians 5:17)
   b. What practical changes should result as a new creature develops? (Philippians 3:13-15)

6. **Romans 12:2** *so that you may prove what the will of God is…*
   a. Why is it important to prove (to try, to scrutinize) whether what we are being taught is truly from God? What does this gain us? (1 Thessalonians 5:21, 1 John 4:1)
   b. How do we do this?

7. **Romans 12:2** *that which is good and acceptable and perfect*.
   a. What do these things tell us about expectations for our behavior? (James 3:17, Ephesians 5:10, Philippians 4:18)
   b. Are we expected to be perfect in our behavior and mindset as developing new creatures? Explain. (Matthew 5:48, Colossians 4:12) What is the definition of "perfect"?

8. Compare the transformation in **2 Corinthians 11:13-15** with the transformation expected of Jesus' followers? What are our defenses against these deceptions? (Romans 8:35-39)

9. In what ways do you see transformation happening to you in your walk with Christ? Which activities (like prayer, Bible study, fellowship with other believers) would support and strengthen your transformation?

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