It is Written  
Romans 12:2

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Series Reintroduction: We are memorizing key Scriptures.

Romans 12:2 (ESV)  
"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”[[1]](#footnote-2)

Sermon Introduction:   
Years ago, during a beach vacation with my family, I decided to take some time to relax in the ocean. I grabbed a large inner tube, waded out far enough to escape the noise of the kids on the shore, and leaned back with my sunglasses on, ready to unwind. Before I knew it, I had drifted off to sleep. When I finally woke up, I realized two unsettling things. First, I felt nauseous from the constant motion of the waves. Second, I didn’t recognize the beach in front of me—the current had carried me so far that I had no idea where I was!

This experience reminds me of the message in the book of Romans. It’s as if all of culture is like a river, flowing steadily toward a deadly waterfall. The prophets and apostles stand like watchmen, warning of the danger ahead, urging people to swim against the current. But many ignore the warnings, sit back, crack open a beer, and drift blindly toward their own destruction.

Dear Christian, passive Christianity is not neutral Christianity, it is surrendering to the current of culture.

With this in mind, let’s go to the text.

**Lectio:**

Romans 12:2 (ESV)  
"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”[[2]](#footnote-3)

**Meditatio:**

One of the great modern lies about Christianity is that it is simply a religion of self improvement. It is not. It is a total human makeover. **"Transformed" (*metamorphoō*):** signifies a complete change in form or nature.[[3]](#footnote-4) **"Renewal" (*anakainōsis*):** implies a continuous ongoing process.[[4]](#footnote-5)

Moreover, the phrase; **“…by testing you may discern what is the will of God…”** The person who resists the current of secular culture and leans into God will become someone who can discern and do what is right before the Lord.

Here is the bottom line.

We all offer our bodies to something. When you fully become what you prioritize, what will you become?

**Actio:**

Let me introduce a phrase. **Mindful living**: Mindful living is the act of waking up to where the cultural current is taking you and choosing to resist it.

Have you ever stood in a quick river and turned against the flow? You can feel it. You must dig your feet in and anchor yourself. The current of culture is towards destruction. It will take work to resist.

To be clear. When you are truly leaning into the transformed Christian life you will look weird to the world. Some will despise your counter-cultural behavior and others will be drawn to you. Real Christianity won't let you live in neutral.

Illustration:

Awhile back we had a Mindful Living moment. Like so many families we go through seasons where we binge television. Leslie and I started watching our go to shows. Everybody loves Raymond, King of Queens, Friends, sitcoms from our era. All the sudden it dawned on me. So many of these shows have the same theme. The marriage is miserable, the men are lazy idiots, the women are angry, kids are annoying and satisfying sex is outside of marriage. Then it dawned on me. As best as I can tell; “Authentic” marriage to secular culture is to exaggerate and to stay hyper focused on the hard until you become embittered. I also realized Leslie and I would treat each other differently when we would watch these shows. We would treat our kids differently. I finally told Leslie, the Mere Exposure effect of letting this stuff in our house is drifting us away from each other, our kids and even God. My wife agreed and started watching Little House on the Prairie with the little girls. It is wild how odd those old shows felt at first. Until it hit me. We are speaking nicer to each other. The kids to us, us to the kids and even to each other. The Mindful Moment living is making us better.

This leads to a great question.

How do you do live mindfully?

Prioritize time with the Lord before all else. Daily through personal devotions, weekly though the gathering of believers, and uniquely though seasons of counseling, retreats, service projects, and mission trips.

* *“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”* (Matthew 6:33, ESV)
* *“In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.”* (Psalm 5:3, ESV)
* *“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”* (Hebrews 10:24-25, ESV)
* *“Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.”* (Mark 6:31, ESV)
* *“Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”* (Galatians 6:2, ESV)

Be Christian counter-cultural with how you handle real world situations like work, sexuality, entertainment, and time management. Be oddly Christian and not merely a cultural person who knows about Christianity.

* *“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.”*(Colossians 3:23, ESV)
* *“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor.”* (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, ESV)
* *“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”* (Philippians 4:8, ESV)
* *“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.”* (Ephesians 5:15-16, ESV)
* *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”* (Romans 12:2, ESV)

See the act of generosity as an actual thing to invest in. Just like you would a 401k or IRA.

* *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.”* (Matthew 6:19-20, ESV)
* *“One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.”* (Proverbs 11:24-25, ESV)
* *“As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.”* (1 Timothy 6:17-19, ESV)

**Next Steps Cards:**

Is there a Bible verse or prayer that has transformed your mind? Would you share it with the rest of us by writing it on the board?

1. Crossway Bibles. The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2001. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Crossway Bibles. The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2001. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Moo, Douglas J. The Epistle to the Romans. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Dunn, James D.G. Romans 9-16. Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 38B. Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1988. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)