

# The World's Pressure To Conform

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[0:00] Take your Bibles and turn to Romans chapter 11. Romans chapter 11 and verse 33. We'll be reading 11:33 through 12.

! Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments and His paths beyond tracing out!

Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Who has ever given to God that God should repay Him? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

[1:20] The Christian lives in a sinful world that is ever pressuring us to conform to its sinful ways. So, you're a freshman and you're in biology class at a secular university and the professor is teaching macroevolution as if it were a scientific fact.

And he's poking fun at creationism, the idea that God created everything out of nothing. And people are all giggling and laughing in class. And then the professor asks, Is there anyone here that still holds to that old-fashioned idea?

What is it at that point that makes it so hard for you to hold up your hand? Well, it's in part probably the fact that nobody else or few around you are holding up their hands.

Why would it be easier to acknowledge that if you were asked that question in Sunday school class? Or why would it be easier if you were in the privacy of your dorm room and you were filling out a survey and you simply had to check the box?

Yes, I believe in creationism. You see, there is a pressure from the world upon us to conform to it, to be like it. And we feel it, don't we?

[2:44] It's real. Peter's denial of Jesus Christ is partly explained by that same pressure from the world. As you read the gospel accounts, it becomes clear that each time someone connected Peter with the unpopular Jesus, it was in front of others.

So the servant girl said, You also were with Jesus of Galilee. He denied it before them all. Oh, there were more there than just the servant girl and Peter.

He denied it before them all. So he goes over by the gateway. And there another girl saw him and said to the people there, This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.

And he says, I don't know the man. You see, To all the people there. And then, of course, the servants and officials gathered around the fire. Yes, you are a Galilean.

You were with him. No. And he denies it with an oath. You see, there was pressure. The pressure of the unbelieving world. And that partly explains Peter's denial.

[3:59] I say partly because there was also the devil sifting Peter. And there was also his own flesh that was weak and wanting to please the world that was pressuring him.

And so they were working together to get Peter to sin. It's that pressure that explains why it is that we sometimes sit silently by.

When we have an opportunity to stand up and speak a word for our Savior and for his ways. Maybe as you're sitting in a chair at a hair salon and something is said and a wonderful opportunity for you to speak.

But there's a hesitancy. There's a pressure from the others in the room. Or it may be in the locker room.

The break room. And I'm afraid that this pressure explains all too much about our lives. About what we do and don't do. It's the world's pressure to conform us to its ways.

[5:03] And it may be affecting the movies you watch. The music you listen to. The things you buy. The way you dress. The way you talk. The friends that you choose to hang out with.

The thoughts you think. The goals that you pursue. The values that you have. And sometimes we're very aware of that pressure.

Other times we're not. But it's there. Always pushing. Always alluring. Always tempting us to sin. And that is the world.

And our kind Heavenly Father loves us so much that he will not leave us unwarned about the dangers of this world.

And that's the third enemy that we find spelled out in Scripture that works with the flesh and with the devil in that trinity of evil. To get us to sin.

[6:01] To get us to hell. To get us to dishonor God. The world works with the flesh and the devil. Now turn to Ephesians chapter 2.

We began our series in this passage. And I simply want to show you how it does speak of this enemy of the world. Ephesians 2.1-3.

Paul is writing to Christians at Ephesus. And we see the world listed along with the other two. Ephesians 2.1-2. As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world.

There it is. Notice, the ways of the world are the ways of the devil.

You see that? Satan is called the prince, the ruler of the world. So we shouldn't be surprised that the world's ways line right up with his ways. We live in a world then where Satan's lies prevail.

[7:09] Where a world is blinded to the truth but alive to Satan's lies. And so they work hand in hand to tempt the believer to disobey God.

Notice as well that the ways of the world are the ways of the flesh. Because in following the ways of the world, verse 3 says that we were gratifying the cravings of the flesh. And we were following its desires and thoughts.

Well, were we following the ways of the world? Or the ways of Satan? Or the desires and thoughts of our flesh? Yes. They were all working together to bring us down away from God.

And they reigned in us. But even now as Christians, these same three enemies work together against us. So we find that the world has the same anti-God, sin-loving agenda as the flesh found within us.

Christian, that's why the world still has such appeal to you. Even as a Christian. Christian, that part of you called the flesh wants what the world offers.

[8:26] It agrees with its message of self-indulgence, self-sufficiency, self-promotion, self-rule. Do what you want to do. There's something in our flesh that agrees with that mantra of the world.

In fact, one writer refers to the world as corporate flesh. And I find that helpful. What is the world? The enemy of the Christian?

It's corporate flesh. Now, we've been studying the flesh for two weeks. And we know by experience something of the power of that down drag of the flesh. That force of gravity within that pulls us away from God and pulls us down towards sin.

Now, consider all the fleshs of unbelieving people combined together. No wonder we feel the power of this down drag of the world upon us.

It is corporate flesh. The world is fallen humanity in organized opposition against Christ and his commands. Powerfully working together to encourage sin and rebellion against God.

[9:36] So you read in Psalm 2 of the nations being united in raging against the Lord and his Messiah. And what is their song? Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us.

That's how they view God's law. Chains, cords. Let's throw them off. Let's be our own gods. The whole world singing in unison in rebellion against God.

We will not have this man to rule over us. That's the world. And Isaac Watts asks in his hymn, Is this vile world a friend to grace to help us on to God?

Have you found the world encouraging you to get alone with God and pray and read his word? And to become more like Jesus Christ?

Or have you not found the world's influence to be at enmity with God? Pulling you away from God? Yes, that's the world.

[10 : 41] It's ever exerting a power for us to follow its sinful ways. To follow it. Years ago, World Magazine told of one silly sheep over an eastern turkey that jumped off a cliff to its death.

And it was immediately followed by 1,500 other sheep that followed it over the same cliff.

And it reveals something of the herd mentality, a propensity to follow the one in front, even if to their death. Now, in this case, only about a third of them died because as they kept falling over the cliff, there was a furry pile at the bottom that kept growing and it was enough to cushion the shock.

And so only about a third of them actually died. But you get the point. One following the one in front, even though it was to their death. I don't tell you that story to suggest that mankind has evolved from sheep and that's why we have this same propensity.

But I just say that the Bible uses this likeness between sheep and humanity. And it helps us understand something about the power of the world over us.

[11 : 59] Where Isaiah says, we all, like sheep, have gone astray. Not just one or two, but all of us. The whole human race together. And Romans 3 and verse 12 says, all have turned away.

They have together become worthless. You see, this straying away from God is something we do together. The temptation to stray is increased and reinforced by others around us straying from God.

That is something of the powerful influence of the world. And the Lord Jesus warned of this deadly following, this herd mentality. When he speaks of the blind leading the blind and they both fall into a ditch.

Or when he speaks of the broad road and the narrow road. The broad road leading to hell. And there's many on that road. And no doubt one reason that makes it easy for everybody, many people, most people to be on the broad road is that so many are on it.

And the person in front of them are on it. And they're following and doing what everyone else is doing. The broad road has the endorsement of the world.

[13 : 18] And so the world normalizes sin. It can't be wrong when so many people think it's right. And the fact that everybody's doing it finds some traction in our own flesh.

And young people, beware of the world's pressure to conform. The world's endorsement of the broad road doesn't make it right.

There's destruction at the end of that road. But you see the pull when you have multiple people going that way. And temptation gains power the more people that are found doing it, thinking it, living it.

And so there's a tremendous power given when a whole culture and the vast majority of a culture holds one perspective and outlook in life.

There's something about combined flesh that puts powerful pressure on us to conform. And it brings out the worst in us. It brings out the flesh in us.

[14 : 26] And so the Bible's teaching on the fallen world is that sin is contagious. That we are not only defiled, we are defiling to each other. Sinners are not good for each other. That's what the Bible says.

They do not pull each other up to God. They pull each other down to sin. We have the problem, misery loves company. And the Bible would say sinners do too.

They love company. They love others doing their sin along with them. So they'll pressure you to join them. Proverbs 1.10, My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them.

If they say come along with us and we'll show you a good time and you'll get great gain, do not go along with them. Don't even set foot on their paths. But notice how evangelistic the world is.

Come with us. You see, they want you with them. There's that desire to have you join them in their evil plans. Let's pressure and entice you to go along.

[15 : 32] When Augustine was finally converted, he sat down and he wrote out his confessions of sin to God for his previous life without the Lord Jesus.

And in those confessions, he confesses that as a 16-year-old boy, he stole pears from a neighbor's tree along with other boys. And he says it wasn't because he was hungry or he particularly liked pears.

He didn't steal them to eat them. He threw them at the pigs. No, he did it just for the fun of doing what was wrong and doing it in front of others.

Quote, The itching of my desires was inflamed by the excitement of accomplices. Since my pleasure was not in those pears, it was in the offense itself, which the company of fellow sinners occasioned.

For when it is said, let's go, let's do it, we are ashamed not to be shameless. Which means we're ashamed to be the one who backs down and fails to be as bad as the others who are encouraging us.

[16:44] That's the encouragement, you see, of the world. To gather others. To join them in sin. Today, a new game among high school boys is replaced pear snatching.

And it's called knockout. Maybe you've read of it. A group of young men walking along, gang or whatever they may be. And one of them is dared to knock out an unsuspecting pedestrian coming their way.

And they'll pick the person at random. Maybe a woman. And the dare is this. Can you knock them out with one blow to the face? And lives have been lost.

But the thing that gives that sin pleasure is the rest of the guys. It's the dare to do it in front of them. It's not being done by itself. Guys are out doing this on their own. There's this pressure, you see. That's the world. That's the world's pressure. To bring others in with them.

[17:46] And Augustine confessed there was no joy in doing it alone. It was the excitement of fellow sinners present that drove him on. That's the world.

Out to draw others in. Now please turn with me to Romans chapter 12. A second text that we want to really concentrate on this morning.

Because here God gives us instruction on how to fight against this enemy called the world. And he says in Romans 12 too, Do not be conformed.

And I'm going to use that translation because most translations do translate it as a passive. Do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world. But be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is. His good, pleasing, and perfect will. So now here's two commands.

[18:50] Here's something to not do and something to do. There's a negative and there's a positive command. First the negative. Do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world.

The Christian has a new pattern for thinking and behaving. A new pattern. My mother used to make dresses. And the first thing she would do is spread out the material on the dining room table.

And then she would lay her pattern on top of the material. She'd pin the pattern to it. And then with that white chalky like pencil would draw around the pattern.

And then take her scissors after she'd removed the pattern. And cut carefully where the lines were. And when she was done she had a piece of material that looked just like the pattern.

And that's the way you used to live. You used to follow the ways of this world. You chose the world as your pattern. And so you looked and saw what the world was thinking.

[19:56] What the world was wearing. What the world was driving. What the world was pursuing. And that's what you copied. You imitated. You followed the pattern of this world.

You used to walk in lockstep with the world. You walked to the beat of its drum. You followed the herd. But now you are to do so no longer.

That's the command. You're to stop it. Jesus Christ has come along and has powerfully called you to himself. Saying as he said to Matthew long ago. Follow me.

And with the same power that went out with his word to Matthew. That caused him to get up from his tax collector booth and follow Jesus. The power of God came with that command to you. And you got up out of your sin.

And came to Jesus to be saved by him. And the command is still follow me. Follow me. I'm the new pattern here. Some of you have been.

[21:00] Have had many years conforming to the pattern of this world. You have years and years of deeply ingrained, long-standing habits of patterning your thoughts and your ways after the world.

But now you're to do so no longer. You don't belong to the world any longer. You now belong to Jesus Christ. He's purchased you with his blood. So you are not to conform any longer to the pattern of this world.

That must stop. That's the first command. You see, it's a call to action. This world is not passive.

We've just seen that over and over. The world isn't passive. And neither are you to be Christian. You can't afford to be passive when the world isn't. It's exerting its pressure to try to make you conform to it.

So you've got to push back. You can't let it do so. And J.B. Phillips' paraphrase brings out this point well. When it paraphrases this verse, don't let the world squeeze you into its own mold.

[22:09] Don't let it squeeze you. The point is, it's trying. That's the world. It's trying. Some of you are going to make Christmas cookies this month.

And you'll roll out the dough in very thin fashion on your counter. And then you'll take the mold, the cookie cutter. And you will press it into the dough.

And you will make the dough conform to your mold. So that when you lift it up, you have the little Christmas tree that looks just the shape and form as your mold.

Your cookie cutter. And that's what the world is trying to do with you, Christian. It's trying to push you into its mold. It's trying to squeeze you into its shape.

To make you look like it. So don't let it. Don't let it. The world wants to see you deny Christ like they're denying Him.

[23:13] The world wants to see you behaving and thinking like they do. Spending your time and money the way they do. Pursuing the same goals that they do. Christian, do you know what you have to do to be conformed to the world?

Nothing. It'll see to it for you. It is squeezing you. It is applying pressure upon you. To do nothing is to be conformed.

That's what it is to live in this world that is forever pushing and squeezing and alluring us to be like them. So do not let it happen.

Do not be conformed. Do the negatives of Scripture concern you? Do they bother you? We must get over this. There's such a positive attitude in the world today that we almost are embarrassed about negatives.

Do you know that eight out of the ten commandments come in the negative form? We must get over this allergic reaction to negatives.

[24:23] The Bible's full of them for our good, isn't it? God is coming to do us good when He says, do not. Do not. He wants to bless us.

So every positive requires a corresponding negative. If you're going to be like Jesus, if you're going to be more like Jesus, you're going to have to be less like the world.

You'll never live a godly life unless, by God's grace, you learn to say no to ungodliness and to worldly passions.

Titus 2, 11 and 12. So the negative is necessary precisely because the world is positively trying to squeeze you into its mold.

You've got to consciously reject it and say no and push back against you. It's pushing you. Now you've got to push back and refuse it or you will end up like it.

[25:24] It's kind of like the current in a stream. The world's corporate flesh altogether creates a current in this world. A current that makes it easy to go along with it, that makes it very difficult to go against it.

If you've ever done any canoeing, you know what I'm talking about. You get in the canoe and you're paddling downstream and it's so, so easy. You don't even know there is a current. You don't even need your paddle.

You just kind of get carried along slowly on the stream. As soon as you say, oh, it's time to head back. And you turn the canoe around and start paddling. You suddenly realize there's a current. And it's rather forceful. And you've really got to work against it. That's the world. And to do nothing is to float downstream with the world to hell.

If you are ever going to grow in holiness, you're going to have to paddle upstream all the way home.

[26:32] It's an upstream swim. An upstream journey. Because the world has a force that's going away from God.

The alternative to swimming upstream is to be conformed to the world. That's why there's no room for passivity in the Christian life.

Just let go and let God. No, you've got to grab the oar with both hands and paddle like crazy.

There's no room for passivity.

There's no room for complacency. There's no room for stagnation. There's no room to not be at our best. There's no room for resting. To rest on the world's rivers to float downstream with them. So that's the negative command. And don't be conformed to the pattern of this world any longer. Peter would say later, you've served this world long enough.

[27 : 34] Okay? No longer. Now it's high time to serve the Lord. Now the positive command in dealing with the world. Don't be conformed to the pattern of this world.

But, on the contrary, be conformed, be transformed by the renewing of your mind. So it's not enough just to resist being conformed to the world.

No, that's not enough, Paul says. Something more needed. You must positively pursue being transformed according to a different pattern.

The pattern of Christ. He says, follow me. Be like me. Imitate me. Jesus himself is our new pattern. And by the way, if you're a Christian, do you know that God predestined you to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ?

Romans 8, 29. We've been predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son. You see, it's conformity to Christ that keeps us from being conformed to the world.

[28 : 50] Now, this is not something we can do ourselves. It's not by raw self-reformation. You know, I did walk according to the ways of the world, but I'm going to just grip my teeth, and I'm not going that way anymore.

As if we had it in ourselves to do that. Notice that the language is clear. It's not something that we can do ourselves. The language is be transformed. That's the passive voice.

It's something that must happen to you. Be transformed. In the same way that you don't want to be conformed to the world by its pressure upon you, now you need to be transformed by the pressure of the Holy Spirit.

You're transformed by the indwelling Spirit of the Lord. There's a passage in 2 Corinthians 3, 18 that speaks of this process. Paul says, Praise God for the Holy Spirit.

Amen. Who has a power to transform us that is stronger than the power of the world to conform us to its ways.

[30 : 17] Again, without the Holy Spirit, we're gone. We're going to be conformed to the world. But God has put His own Spirit in us to transform us after a new pattern.

Not the world's ways. Christ's ways. Christ's heart. And that's what the Spirit of God is doing in you. He is shaping you. Transforming you into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

He's the one who transforms our lives from the inside out. Our very heart and its thoughts and affections and desires and will is being changed.

And so, no wonder our lives are different. It's the work of the Spirit transforming us. And so, we become less and less like the world and more and more like Jesus.

Now, the Greek word for the word be transformed is the word from which we get our word metamorphosis. It's the glorious change in which a rather ugly caterpillar is changed and becomes a beautiful butterfly.

[31 : 27] It takes six to eight weeks for the monarch butterfly to go from the egg through this metamorphosis to the beautiful butterfly. Six to eight weeks. How long does it take for the Christian to go from conformity to the world to being just like Jesus?

Well, the transformation is never done in this life, is it? It starts at conversion. When the Holy Spirit comes and takes up occupancy in our hearts, right then, we are being more and more from one stage of glory to another changed into his likeness.

And one day, 1 John 3, 2 says, when we see him, we will be like him. And that will be the beautiful monarch. We will be like Jesus and there will be no sin.

And we will feel no pull toward the world. We will have no flesh. There will be no devil. We will be like Christ. The believer's metamorphosis is ongoing in this life.

Indeed, the very form of the verb represents this. It's a present, both in Romans 12 and 2 Corinthians 3. It's continuous, ongoing action.

[32 : 41] It could be gone being transformed. Now, think about that. None of us, I trust, would say, we've arrived.

The transformation is complete. Do you like the butterfly? No, we'd be embarrassed to say that, wouldn't we? And we know enough scripture not to say that. But once we've said that, once we've admitted that there is more to the transformation in my life that needs to take place, we're

acknowledging that there are right now still thoughts and behaviors in my life that are patterned after this evil world.

Have you made that confession recently? That I have thoughts and habits and things that I do that are patterned after this world that still need to be transformed after the pattern of Christ.

I wonder if we're aware of them. I wonder if we could identify. Where is the world having success in squeezing me into its mold?

Because that's precisely where I need to repent. That's precisely where I need to come to the Lord Jesus and confess my sin. That the blood of Jesus might cover it.

[34 : 07] And that his spirit might give me power to become more and more like him in those areas. You see, it's not if ever any worldly comes up, well then I'll want to remember Romans 12 too and plug it in.

No. No, the assumption is that much of the world still lingers in my way of thinking and living. And under temptations from this world, I might find that reasserting itself in my heart and life, even in new ways.

So it's be transformed by the spirit or be conformed by the world. You see, it's an either or thing. And so to not be conformed to the world is also to be met by being conformed, being transformed by the spirit.

Now though the spirit of the Lord must transform us, you must notice that this is something each of us is to pursue and we're told how to do it.

Be transformed. That's a command. You need to obey it. It's in the imperative mood. Even though the spirit must do it, to be transformed is a command I must obey.

[35 : 26] And then I'm told how to do it. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Mind renewal. That's how the transformation happens.

Interesting. As you quit thinking like the world and start thinking like God, the more your mind is renewed by God's thoughts and ways, and the more you quit living like the world, and the more you start living like God wants.

Figures, doesn't it? So how do you pursue the renewing of your mind? Well, let me just say, here's a whole book of God's thoughts. How do you get your mind to think God's thoughts?

Well, you read what his thoughts are. You stew in it. You seep your mind in God's thoughts, and you start thinking God's thoughts.

And as you're walking through life and you're walking through your day, this is the verse that makes sense of what's happening right now, right over there, right in here. And you start thinking God's thoughts.

[36 : 36] Your mind's being renewed. And I guarantee you, as it's being renewed, you're looking less and less like the world and more and more like Jesus. The way you think and live.

The Bible. The Bible. It's here that we learn what is good and pleasing to the Lord and perfect. It's here that we are able to test and to approve.

What is that perfect will of the Lord? It's here in the word of God as the mind is renewed with the book of God. This is where we behold the glory of the Lord.

And as we contemplate him here, this is where you meet Jesus Christ in the scriptures. And as we behold him here, we are being transformed more and more into his likeness, which comes by the Lord who is the spirit.

We've noted the predominant role of God's word in the Christian warfare. At every enemy, haven't we?

[37 : 40] So how do we fight the devil? The devil spreads his lies in the world and in our minds. And how do you fight the lies of the devil? Look at Jesus in Matthew 4.

It is written. It is written. It is written. So the devil pushes with his lies and Jesus pushes right back with the scriptures.

How do you fight the flesh within? Well, you sow to please the spirit. You keep in step with the spirit. Where's the spirit going?

Where's the spirit leading? It's right here. This is where he's leading. In these paths of righteousness. And so we fight against the flesh by sowing to please the spirit.

Doing what we learn here the spirit wants us to do. And where he wants to lead us. And how do we fight against the world? By the renewal of our minds according to the same scripture.

[38:40] Well, more on the world next week, Lord willing. But I want to close with three applications and then we're done. So if you would not let the world squeeze you into its mold, first of all, commit to daily and weekly mind renewal.

I say daily. Daily Bible reading. Memorizing. Meditating on scripture. Every day. You know you're being bombarded by the pressure of the world to squeeze you into its mold.

You know every day you're being bombarded to think the world's thoughts. So every day you need to push back with mind renewal. But then there's weekly renewal.

Did you know that Jesus Christ has a plan for your mind renewal that includes the preaching and teaching of God's word? He gave gifts to some to preach and to teach.

Why? So that the whole body of Christ could grow up in the knowledge of Christ, the grace of Christ. So I say not only daily mind renewal.

[39:48] Commit to weekly mind renewal in the church under the appointed preachers and teachers from the Lord Jesus. Secondly, if we would not let the world squeeze us into its mold, choose your friends carefully.

Choose your friends carefully. A lot of the deadly pressure of the world to conform comes through worldly friends. That's why the Father says, my son, if sinners entice you, don't give in to them. And if you find your friends constantly enticing you to sin, it's time to get new friends. Because that's the world and you're playing with the world. Proverbs 13.20, he who walks with the wise grows wise.

But a companion of fools suffers harm. In other words, we are affected by those that we make our companions. And if they are worldly companions, they will move us to follow the world's ways.

If they're godly companions, they will move us to follow Jesus' ways. So use this judgment upon those that you hang out with.

[41:02] Those you make your companions. To spending time with her or him, draw me closer to Jesus or push me further away from him.

Proverbs 17.12, better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool in his folly. Here's one of those better proverbs. A comparison of two things, and one's better than the other.

The first, a bear robbed of her cubs. Now there's not much more dangerous than meeting a mother bear who's had her cubs just robbed from her.

I mean, that's dangerous. But wait, that's better than meeting a fool in his folly. I'm sure that there are many young people that think that Solomon got it wrong here.

What's so dangerous about a fool? I must remind you that a fool in the scriptures is not someone who has a low IQ. They may be the top student in the class. But a fool in the scriptures is one who does not fear God.

[42:15] In fact, they say in their heart there is no God. They live as if God did not exist, as if they're God. And so his law, his commands mean nothing to them. And if you meet a fool in his folly and you walk with a fool in his folly, that fool will affect you.

In ways worse than meeting a bear robbed of her cubs. And so, don't underestimate, young people, the danger of choosing wrong friends.

That's the second lesson from not being conformed to the world. Choose your friends carefully.

Thirdly, commit yourself to a local church. Commit yourself to a local church.

1 Timothy 2.22. Paul tells Timothy, flee the evil desires of youth. Run from them. And instead, pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace.

Along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. You see his message there? A three-point message? Run away. Flee from evil desires of youth.

[43:26] Run toward righteousness, faith, love, and peace. And do it along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. That would be the community of God's people, the church.

You see, our battle against the world is not to remain an isolated thing. It's just me and the world.

That's not the picture of the Bible. In fact, right after verse 2 of Romans 12 telling us not to be conformed, it launches into a section that's talking about our life in the body of Christ.

Where the gifts are being exercised. We're helping each other in this fight. So we are not to fight the world alone, but along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

You know, the world gangs up on us. It's corporate flesh pulling us down. We are now to gang up with God's people and fight against that influence in our lives.

To resist together. I read this week of a man who travels in his business. And he got this point. And so before he went on his business trip, he said to a Christian brother in his church, please pray for me while I'm gone.

[44:43] That God would keep me from temptations. And when I get home, I want you to ask me what I watched on TV in my hotel room. You see, he got it. I'm going to resist evil.

I'm going to run after righteousness. I'm going to do it along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Young people, make this a priority you refuse to compromise on.

Don't let the world pull you away from the meetings of the local church. Away from developing meaningful, vibrant relationships with the saints here.

They're part of God's answer to the down drag of the world. Thank God for them. If you've not trusted in Jesus Christ as your Savior, you still are the world.

The world is you and you're on the broad road to hell. And I urge you to forsake the world and to come to Jesus Christ. And to find in him all the resources to fight against your enemies, your spiritual enemies.

[45:47] And if you are a Christian, our text is preceded by a sweet motivation to obey it. Do you need motivation to not be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind?

There's some times when you don't just feel like bounding out of bed and reading your Bible and praying. Well, verse one is for you. I beseech you, I urge you, in light of all of God's mercies, don't be conformed to the world.

Keep the mercies of God front and center. Remember, it was God who sent his one and only son into the world to save you from this present evil world.

Remember, it was Jesus who laid down his life for you, shed his blood for you, to save you from that broad road that leads to destruction. Remember, he gave you his Holy Spirit to live in you and to help you be transformed into the likeness of Jesus.

And when the world comes calling, just remember that. Remember what the world does with your God. It hates your God. It wants to pull you away from your God eternally.

[46:58] And that should motivate you. The mercies of God. Now don't be conformed, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

May the Lord help us. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your words that wake us up to the reality that we live in every day. The pressures of this world to conform us to sin.

And please make us aware. Please make us sensitive. But oh, please work by your spirit in us that we would take your word up and we would see our Savior here and we would be transformed more and more into his likeness.

So keep us this day. We thank you, Jesus, that you have overcome the world. And in that, we take great comfort that you overcame for all of your people. and the decisive victory has been won.

Draw others out of that world and bring them to yourself. And get glory then this week as every victory is won. May you be glorified. We pray in Jesus' name.

[48:04] Amen. Amen.