

## Conformed To The World

*"Abstain from all appearance of evil." 1 Thessalonians 5:22*

For quite some time now it has been my observation that many professing Christians are being conformed to the world instead of to Jesus Christ. We Christians are not our own any longer. *"For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God"* 1 Peter 1:18, 19. As we go about our lives, Christ is continually working in our lives to conform us to His image. *"And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask?"* Romans 12:1. Why should we be open and receptive to God's will? Because His will is perfect. *"But let the Lord Jesus Christ take control of you, and don't think of ways to indulge your evil desires"* Romans 13:14

By marking our bodies as do many worldly people, we become transformed to the world our selves. Thus, we are no longer distinguishable from those in the world. We who have been born again are no longer of this world. Remember, we are sojourners only passing through. Yes, we are in the world but not of the world. Our bodies are not our own, they are the temple of God. We have no right to mar these bodies, to say nothing of what it does for our witness. *"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."* 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17.

What are the marks? Piercing and tattooing are worldly expressions that non believers do to their bodies and in most cases they are an expression of sexuality. These markings are something that people do to themselves that are, for the most part, in rebellion against God. These people lack knowledge of the scriptures. Some professing Christians have allowed themselves to be tattooed, and in some cases they have allowed these marks to be placed on an area of their bodies that shouldn't be exposed to the public. Yet exposing these tattoos to the public seems to be the reasoning behind the tattooing. This is a deviation from the conforming work of Christ in a believer's life. These brothers and sisters in Christ have accepted a mark on something they no longer own. *"For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?"* 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.

The piercing of the ears has always been something seen as attractive on women. It has now become fashionable for men to have pierced ears. It seems as though the more outrageous and shocking the better. Worldly people now pierce just about every part of their bodies in an attempt to show just how sensual they can be. For Christians, my dear brothers and sisters, this should not be so.

Christians should shun these procedures and not allow themselves to be caught up in this frenzy. *"You used to live just like the rest of the world, full of sin, obeying Satan, the mighty prince of the power of the air. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passions and desires of our evil nature. We were born with an evil nature, and we were under God's anger just like everyone else. But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so very much ...For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago"* Ephesians 2:2, 3, 4, & 10.

So, when the natural man (those who are unsaved) looks at the life of a Christian and doesn't see any difference between his life and the Christian's, we lose our witness. Think about it this way, why would

the unsaved listen to what we proclaim about the Gospel of Christ, when they see us living and doing the same things as they? We must not conform ourselves to the world, and we must not allow the world to conform us to it. *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,"* 1 Corinthians 6:9. And again we read, *"You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it useful again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless"* Matthew 5:13.

*"in the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."* Matthew 5:16. We who are born again are warned against conforming to the world. We are to be a light that shines out of the darkness of the world, showing the way to Jesus Christ.

I have a decal stuck on the back window of my truck which reads, *"Body Piercing Saved My Life"* and along with this writing is a picture of a hand and part of an arm with a nail going through it. It also includes what resembles blood flowing from the wound. This is representative of the body of Christ as he hung on a cross and was pierced with nails. I'm not glorifying piercing; I'm announcing to the world what I believe. My Saviour and LORD died for us all. This is precisely what the scripture means when it says: *"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house."* Matthew 5:14, 15. God Himself had to die. Only His sacrificial death on that cross almost 2000 years ago could've paid the complete payment for our sins.

*"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is"* Romans 12:2

Therefore, dear friends, be conformed to Christ Jesus and not to the world. *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.* Ephesians 5:11

God Bless you all,  
Ron Graham