

# **THE ANATOMY OF A CHRISTIAN STEWARD**

## **II. A Body that Behaves**

Romans 12:2

Think of it! God is pleading with us to yield ourselves – to give ourselves as living sacrifices. This body is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. (I Corinthians 6:19-20) Could anything be more amazing and empowering?

Now that we are His; have given ourselves in complete surrender; He tells what His expectations are of us. We are here to do His will, and as we are told in Romans 8:28-29 to be “conformed to the image of His Son” – to be like Jesus.

In order for this to happen there are two things that must take place – one negative and one positive.

First, we are exhorted not to be “conformed to the image of this world.” Look about you. What is the “world” like? On every side we see the mad pursuit of the dollar, indifference to anything spiritual, lusting after the flesh and any sexual perversion that mind can imagine. This is our world.

The phrase that is used “don’t be conformed to this world” means “don’t let the world squeeze or pressure you into its mold.” How often do you hear – “everyone else is doing it.” This is the “world” trying to force you into its way of thinking and acting. Refuse it!

Don’t let the “world” set your standard of conduct. You have a higher calling – “looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” (Hebrews 12:2) Keep your eyes on Him.

Next we are told to be “transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The picture is that of the transformation of an ugly caterpillar into a beautiful butterfly. It is the same root word as “metamorphous” or a complete change.

This is the positive that happens in the Christian life. Since the Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, it is not the Christian, but the Spirit who makes this change or transformation possible. All the memories, the habits, the desires, the ways of the world are changed from the old to the new. The new person emerges. Love takes the place of hatred. Generosity replaces selfishness. Peace replaces turmoil. God’s will replaces ours.

In today’s world Madison Avenue is constantly bombarding us with commercials urging us to do this or that to improve our outward beauty. Every hour there are products

promoted that are guaranteed to make one a “beautiful person.” Their concern is that we all physically conform to a pre-conceived ideal.

Of major importance for the Christian, however, is that one be “transformed” into the image of Christ. It is this inner beauty that God is concerned with.

The purpose of this is that we might “prove” or “test” what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Think on this. The Holy Spirit is saying that you can “learn from your own experience that His ways will really satisfy you.” (Living New Testament)

Consider those through the centuries who have tested God’s purpose and found it to be glorious. Abraham found it to be so. Moses experienced it in his life. Isaiah discovered it. So did Stephen, Paul, Mark, John and the others in the Scriptures. So can you!

For twelve years I served as a trustee on the Board of the largest foreign mission organization in the world. Every volunteer who was to be appointed and sent to a foreign field of service was required to write and then verbally give his/her testimony. Time after time I heard them say, “I had ‘planned’ to be a doctor, lawyer, teacher, etc. And then God ‘called’ me to serve Him this way. I struggled, denied and even refused His calling. It was only when I said ‘yes’ and surrendered to do His will that I came to know real joy, happiness and peace.”

Many times I would see these when they returned on furlough or when I visited them on their field of service. In every case, they would say something similar to this – “I have learned from experience that God’s will is the only way to happiness. His way is the only way to satisfaction.”

It stands the test and is proof to us and to others. It is proof that His will is “good”. His will is always good – not always easy, but always good. It is “acceptable”. Since it is God’s will (not ours) we cannot do less than accept it. His will is “perfect” in that it achieves the desired end – what life is intended to be.

We will discover this in coming days as we seek to know His will in our giving. He may lead us to do what is beyond our apparent means – a real sacrifice, but we’ll come to see that it is His will – good, acceptable and perfect.

This is where sacrifice becomes a reality. It is when real happiness and peace is experienced. It is what God intended us to be and do.

Think about it! When your body becomes a “living sacrifice” all is blessed:

- The life is blessed by lifting it to an elevated plane of God’s grace.
- The heart is blessed by making it receptive to God’s will.
- The hands are blessed by making them willing to do God’s work.

- The mind is blessed by giving it the satisfaction of achieving God's purpose.
- The eyes are blessed by seeing God's work done.
- The ears are blessed by hearing the Savior say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."
- The church is blessed because you have done God's will!
- God is blessed because His children have honored Him.

*Lord, help me to be a living sacrifice on your altar of love.*