



Rom 12:1-2 CLOUD THEOLOGY in 1-11; "therefore" I exhort you and the CARPET THEOLOGY of 12-16.

Positive = present your bodies a living sacrifice; Negative = don't be conformed to this age but be transformed!

"Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within" [J.B. Phillips' paraphrase of V2 in *The NT in Modern English*]. "Paul's major challenge as a missionary and planter of churches was to ensure the moral transformation of his communities ... to resocialize them and provide a common ethos and shared practices" [James Thompson, *Moral Formation According to Paul: The Context and Coherence of Pauline Ethics*, 207]. "The center of Paul's thought is a theology of transformation ... transforming the community of faith until it is 'blameless' at the coming of Christ" [James Thompson, *Pastoral Ministry According to Paul: A Biblical Vision*, 19-20].

This outline and these emphases are also evident in non-Pauline Letters:

Book of **James** >>doers of the Word; genuine religion; faith and works; a transformed tongue.

Book of **1 Peter**>>obedient children, not fashioned; a chosen generation to show forth the moral excellences of the One who called you; repetition of the word "lifestyle."

As the Bible presents it, GOOD WORKS are important for varied reasons: [1] they show genuine faith; [2] believers demonstrate gratitude to God for saving them; [3] the believers' assurance is confirmed because God has said they are an evidence of sonship; [4] good works edify others; [5] a testimony to non-Christians as believers "adorn the Gospel"; [6] they glorify God [see *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapters 16, II; in *The Creeds of Christendom*, ed. Philip Schaff, III, 633].

"The Christian, therefore, is a person who is fundamentally different. Men always view with suspicion people who are different. Conformity, not distinctiveness, is the way to a trouble-free life. So, the more early Christians took their faith seriously, the more they were in danger of crowd reaction. Thus, simply by living according to the teachings of Jesus, Christians were a constant unspoken condemnation of the pagan way of life." "It was simply that the Christian ethic in itself was a criticism of pagan life. Fundamental to the Christian lifestyle and the cause of endless hostility was the Christian's rejection of the pagan gods" [Bruce Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 54]. "The whole social, religious, and political climate of the empire was antithetical to Christianity." "It is clear that by John's last days the church faced a society that was hostile." "A band of believers, united in worship of one master, with a growing body of followers in far-flung areas of the empire and opposed to the cultural and moral patterns of the day was bound to become the object of scorn, ridicule, and angry opposition" [Richard Niswonger, *NT History*, 273-274, 278]. "The moral and social values of the early Christians brought them into sharp conflict with the Pagan society in which they lived. In part, this was because of the way that Pagan religion was present in so many of the Empire's social practices and institutions" [e.g., official state occasions, public entertainment in circus and theatre].

"There were other aspects of Roman society that Christians opposed on ethical grounds" [e.g., the gladiatorial arena was the most popular form of entertainment]. "Christians also rejected the widespread Roman custom of abortion [killing unwanted unborn children] and infanticide [killing unwanted newly born children]. They opposed easy divorce." "Not surprisingly, this rejection by Christians of so many areas of Roman life made them highly unpopular with their Pagan neighbors, who accused Christians of being self-righteous and anti-social" [Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power: Volume I, The Age of the Early Church Fathers*, 81-82]. Christians are different, God's special people being transformed into Christ's image.

**NOBLESSE OBLIGE!**

Ephesus was an important first century cosmopolitan city, so when someone was saved there was a lot of “unlearning” to do and not allowing the surrounding culture to squeeze one into its mold! Eph 1-3 is the WEALTH of the believer [belief], and 4-6 is the WALK of the believer [behavior]. “Thus, our identity—our ‘being’ in Christ or our ‘union’ with Christ—is foundational for the way in which we ‘live out’ our Christian commitment on a daily basis. This is the programmatic point Paul makes by organizing his letter in two parts, where the first part deals with believers’ identity in Christ [theology; chs. 1-3] and the second part discusses how they are supposed to live out that identity in practical ways [ethics; chs. 4-6]” [Andreas Kostenberger and Gregory Goswell, *Biblical Theology*, 571].

Eph 1-3 Note the vocabulary for riches [1:7,18; 2:7; 3:8,16; see 2:4] and abundance. God is never stingy when He opens the clouds of heaven to pour out His goodnesses!

Eph 4-6 Note Paul’s emphasis on “walk = lifestyle” [4:1,17,17,22; 5:2,8,15; also see 2:2,3,10]. Let’s summarize sanctification in six areas [in Ephesians and the NT Letters].

**SANCTIFICATION: A process by which the Holy Spirit is at work in the life of a believer on a daily basis to conform him to the image of Jesus Christ.** [See 4:13.]

1. Christ is our EXAMPLE 4:20,32; 5:1-2, 25,29; see 6:6-7,9
2. PUT OFF ... PUT ON 4:22,24 These are words for “undressing and dressing,” so you get the picture.
3. OLD MAN ... NEW MAN 4:22-24
4. REPLACE: Don’t ... but 4:25-29; 5:4,18 The Christian life isn’t simply “don’ts” but the positive opposite!
5. NITTY-GRITTIES “Life on the carpet” includes everything:
  - a. relationships
  - b. speech
  - c. honest work
  - d. attitudes
  - e. believer-to-believer [especially “one another,” 4:2,25,32,32; 5:21]
  - f. avoiding anything that would grieve the Holy Spirit [4:30].
6. VICE LISTS and VIRTUE LISTS. 4:17-19 is a “spot-on” paragraph describing the lifestyle and thinking of unsaved people. “They base their lives on pointless thinking, and they are in the dark in their reasoning. They are disconnected from God’s life because of their ignorance and their closed hearts. They are people who lack all sense of right and wrong, and who have turned themselves over to doing whatever feels good and to practicing every sort of corruption along with greed” [*Common English Bible*]. Vice lists include 4:31; 5:3-6. Virtue lists include 4:2,32; 5:9.

**SONG:** “O To Be Like Thee!”

Thomas Chisholm gets “picky” and concludes, “Stamp Thine Own Image deep on my heart.”