

JOKE: An Air Force Major that was promoted to Colonel got a new office. The first morning he was in his new office, an airman knocked on the door and asked to speak to him. The Colonel, feeling the urge to impress the young airman, picked up his phone and began talking. "Yes, General, thank you. Yes, I will pass that information along to the President this afternoon. Yes, goodbye, sir." Then, turning to the airman, he barked, "And what do you want?" The airman said, "Nothing important, sir. I just came to hook up your telephone."

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When Jesus rescues us, He begins a process within us that takes us where we are in that moment to where He desires us to be.

Let me just say this from the onset, it is true that Jesus loves us just the way we are, but it is equally true that He loves us too much to leave us just the way we are.

Jesus gave His life so that I, so that you could have ours. Not just to have a mediocre life. But, His desire is that His kids live an abundant life fully surrendered to Him.

We started a series last week called collision course. Today I want to talk about being transformed. But you need to understand this church, transformation is not a quick drive-thru and pick up your order, neither is it an over-night process.

It takes time, dedication, and commitment on my part. So, the question has always been I'm I willing to be patient in the process?

We are continuing our series we started last week, "collision course." We kicked things off by looking into the biblical principle of standing firm in our faith. The world try's to get us to adhere to a different set of values, one that includes things that are often times

seductive, but ultimately they are always inconsistent and difficult to stand on. We talked about those “rough patches.” Where we have to wonder if our feet will land on solid ground.

So how do we pursue the things of Christ?

We allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit into all truth. When we do, we will start to experience the abundant life Christ came to give us.

But how do we keep that experience going day to day?

I believe God desires three things from us as we move forward in the journey. The first one I want us to discuss today: is being transformed. I will talk about getting truth next week and finish off this series with loving what matters the week after that.

How many remember the movies about, “Transformers.” There were five of them. Ordinary cars would transform into super heroes and when they transformed they had some amazing abilities. Once that ordinary vehicle transformed they were extraordinary.

I believe God desires the same work to happen in my life in your life.

Many of us have been tempted to follow the patterns of the world.

We get caught up in behavior that is not God honoring and that doesn’t ultimately fulfill us.

Let me date myself a moment, growing up there was a TV series called Father Knows Best. It actually ended a couple years before I was even born but was still running when I was a young whipper snapper. Dad seem to know how to cope with the struggles of family.

And you know what I have learned? Father does know best. My Heavenly Father truly does know best.

There's a verse in the Bible that talks about this transforming thing. Surprised?

Turn with me to Romans 12:2. This is Paul writing, and here is what he has to say. . .

Romans 12:2 (NIV): Do not conform 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.

Right here in this one verse, I believe Paul gives us an equation.

First, there is a subtraction, then an addition, and finally an outcome. I want us to break this down together to find the keys to transformation in our lives.

### **Point 1: No to the World**

The first thing Paul invites us to do is simply say “no” to the patterns of this world. I believe that in everyone's life, there is a rhythm of some kind.

Good or bad, we all have a rhythm. I may not be able, you may not be able to keep a beat, but you have a rhythm.

For example, you wake up early each morning, drink your cup or three of coffee, spend some time in God's Word and in prayer, and then you complete a morning workout before work or school.

Now, just so you know my rhythm is nothing like that. I plump out of bed, go use the little boys room, wash my hair. Kiss the wife, most days. Then go off to work. No coffee, no workout. Prayer on my drive. More prayer and Word later in the day.

We need to come to the conclusion that what God needs from us is a willingness to simply say “no.”

In your life right now, maybe the first step toward transformation for you is some internal dialogue between you and that habit.

Maybe it sounds something like this, “Sin, you have been creeping back into my life every time I convince myself you are gone. And even if you continue to present yourself to me as a temptation, I am telling you that the answer in advance is “no.”

Hear this church when you responded yes to Christ you became a new creation. What that means is that you no longer have a sin nature, that died, what we have a sin habit and that needs sanctification, that needs a transformation.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV): Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5:17 (TPT): Now, if anyone is enfolded into Christ, he has become an entirely new creation. All that is related to the old order has vanished. Behold, everything is fresh and new.

Listen, your not the only one who struggles with doing what’s right.

Hear what the Apostle Paul said,

Romans 7:19–20 (NIV): For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do

what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

Romans 7:19–20 (TPT): My lofty desires to do what is good are dashed when I do the things I want to avoid. 20 So if my behavior contradicts my desires to do good, I must conclude that it's not my true identity doing it, but the unwelcome intruder of sin hindering me from being who I really am.

If you have an unhealthy rhythm in our life right now you need to allow the Holy Spirit to a transforming work in your life.

That is the subtraction that must take place. We say, “NO.”

But what do we add in its place?

## **Point 2: Yes to the Way**

Once you are aware of the ungodly patterns you have been following, then space is created for God's transforming work to take place in your life.

Jesus desires that we live a life that is constantly seeking to grow, to be more like Him. To be able to say as John, “I must decrease so that Christ can increase.”

In other words, more of God, less of me.

In order for a plant to grow you can't just bring into the house and water it once and expect it to live. You keep watering it so that it will grow. Church, you need water your life, with the Word of Life.

In our Romans 12:2 passage that we looked at earlier Paul seems to be concerned with how we think.

Look at it once more. . .

Romans 12:2 (NIV): Do not conform 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.

Our thought process is important when it comes to growth potential in the kingdom of God. More times than not the temptation to follow those worldly patterns or values begins with a thought.

But the same is true for the patterns Christ wants in our lives. Spending time reading and studying the word of God will give us the right type of thoughts, and will help us respond well when we are confronted with those wrong things.

And just like a plant, we can't simply "water" our minds and hearts every once in a while. It must be a healthy routine and rhythm we enter into.

Psalms 1:1–3 (NIV): Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, 2 but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. 3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers

David gives us a great example of the importance of meditating on God's Word day and night. God desires that we not just have the Word near us, but actually in us. In our minds, in our hearts, and through our lives.

Paul said it like this. . .

Philippians 4:8 (NIV): Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Philippians 4:8 (TPT): So keep your thoughts continually fixed on all that is authentic and real, honorable and admirable, beautiful and respectful, pure and holy, merciful and kind. And fasten your thoughts on every glorious work of God, praising him always.

The work of transformation will only be done when we allow God to do it.

Maybe something needs to change in your morning or evening routines to allow God to transform you from the inside out by spending time with Him.

The more you focus on Him, the more successful you will move the worldly distractions out of the way. And that will allow God to come and do a transforming work in your life.

This transformation begins in your mind. Paul closes out Romans 12:2 with an outcome once we take these steps toward transformation. He says, “Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”

### **Point 3: Discern your Purpose**

We know even though Paul wrote this letter long before today, it is amazing that God knew what we would need even now.

There are some here today, listening today that have spent time searching tirelessly for their purpose in life. You’ve tried to find it in the things of the world, and hopefully you figured out you couldn’t. You’ve tried to find it in a relationship, and hopefully you figured out

you couldn't. You tried to find it by achieving a certain social media status, and again hopefully figured out you couldn't.

Truth is, Christ is the only one who can give you meaning and purpose in your life. He has called you to do great things for His kingdom here on earth. You have gifting and abilities that no one else has, for the building up of the Church.

But I wonder how many of us have yet to sense a calling from God because we have allowed our unhealthy rhythms to distract us from relationship with Him. We haven't been able to sense God's leading because we haven't spent time with Him.

The good news is this: there is still time to rewire your life.

The Bible is full of instances where God makes it clear that there is still time to give Him your life.

Saul found Him on a road to Damascus after wrecking havoc on the church. The thief hanging on a cross next to Christ had time to receive from God His grace.

Joel 2:12–13 (NIV): Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

All the way back in Joel, the Lord invites us to give Him our lives.

Christ came to reconcile us back into right relationship with Papa.

Jesus Christ came to this earth, was tempted by the same worldly things you and I are tempted by, yet He did not sin. Ultimately, He



died on a cross for our sins so that we could be transformed into walking, talking, reflections of Him.

You are not out of the game.  
He has a seat for you at the table.

### **Share a little of my testimony**

It's not too late.

In fact, as long as you have breath in your lungs, it's never too late to allow Christ to be your Lord and Savior.

For some of you today that will mean returning to a vibrant faith and relationship that you've allowed to grow cold. You've allowed the distractions of life to collide with your faith and you've felt distance from God for some time, but haven't mustered up the energy to do anything about it... yet. Today is *your* day.

For some of you this may be a new step of faith into a relationship that you've heard others talk about but were never ready to make your own.

Believe me when I say a life of faith is the most wild adventure you'll ever take, and the eternal reward is worth every moment.

Let's pray.