Would you begin by reading it to us real loudly and clearly? This is 2 Corinthians 3:18:

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.

Alright, now then, if you have a pen, take that verse to Scripture; there are two changes that should be made in it. 2 Corinthians 3:18, the word "beholding in a mirror", the word "in" is not there, and if you mark it out, you come up with a very unusual-looking verse. The other word is the word "changed" in 2 Corinthians 3:18, it is exactly, identically, the same word used in Romans 12:2, which says, "and be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed", so change the word from "changed" to "transformed" and then you end up with a verse that says –

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.

Alright, who had the next verse? Galatians 4:19 - *My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you…*

…until Christ be formed in you. Brother Paul was speaking to a church that had gone through a great deal of trouble…it was churches…the churches in the Galatian area, and he has spent a great deal of time there with them, but some brothers…we assume they were brothers from the church in Jerusalem…came up there and began to tell them they needed to be baptized, they had to do things a certain way, and gave them a lot of terms and things and they began to adopt them, and Paul said, 'I travail as a mother until Christ is formed in you.'

Okay, the next one, Romans 8:29 - *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

Alright, that he was the firstborn of many brethren…*to be conformed to the image of the Son.* Conformed to the image of his Son. So we've got transformed, formed, conformed, and each one of them has a little bit of a different aspect.

Was there another verse? Alright, Philippians 3:10 - *that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death*…

Alright, we're going to come back to all of these verses a little bit later. Let me share with you now Romans 12:1-2, which you're so familiar with.

I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

If you will go back and read the book of Romans, you will find it follows a very definite pattern. You see, Paul was in Corinth at the time he wrote to the brothers and sisters in

Rome, and though there were many brothers and sisters there, he knew he was primarily addressing it to people he had never met and who had just recently found the Lord, and the approach that Paul makes in the book of Romans has been one of the most powerful and prevailing things throughout all of church history. Some historians got together once and tried to list ten pieces of literature that have affected human history the most, and instead of coming up with the Bible, they came up with the book of Romans. I think you're all familiar with the fact that St. Augustine was greatly affected by the Book of Romans. Luther was converted through reading St. Augustine's commentaries on Romans. John Wesley was converted in reading Luther's commentary on Romans, and there has been a trail like that throughout history.

Now then, here is the Book of Romans. Romans 1,2, and 3 present the condition of man before he is saved. Romans 4 presents, along with Romans 3, God's breaking into history and bringing man up, redeeming him. Romans 5 introduces man to not only redemption, but also goes a little further and says that we are saved by his life. That verse would read, if we could express it thusly, *we are continually being saved by his life*, this active life within us, this higher life form.

Now then, Romans 6, 7, and 8 begin to move into our experience as Christians. Romans 6 gives us a real presentation of our problems in the flesh. Romans 7 gives us a real presentation of our problems in the soul. And then the incomparable Romans 8, when we are really introduced to how to live by Christ as Life, by setting the mind on the Spirit and not setting the mind on the flesh, and we learn just a little bit about how to sense this life within us, because it is a life that has as its attribute the sense of peace. We follow the peace. And we've been looking at some of the things that brothers and sisters need to know about how to really exercise our spirit and be in the spirit.

Now then, you all have heard, I'm sure, at some time or other, that Romans 9,10, and 11 are parentheses. How many of you have never heard that Romans 9,10, and 11 are a parenthesis? Well, it isn't a parenthesis. If you will read the book of Romans this way, it will be beautifully clear. Read Romans 1,2,3,4, and 5, and then read 9,10,11, then read 6,7, and 8. Because Romans 5 ends with the situation with the unconverted Jew, and that's all that 9,10, and 11 are about is Israel and its relationship to God as an unconverted people. Then, when you read it this way, you see the continuing saga: man's lost condition, man's finding redemption, the situation with Israel, then man having redemption and the fight with the flesh, then the soul learning to be in subjection to - this is Romans 7 - the way, the condition of man is he tries to live for God without living in the Spirit. Then Romans 8, so beautifully explaining to us how to be in the Spirit, and even Romans 8 ends by giving us the real secret of praying in the Spirit, by the groaning, and by praying with the Holy Spirit as He prays within us. Groaning always goes with what is going to follow.

It's very interesting that there are two passages in the Scripture that deal with this really clearly, and both of them mention groaning. But anyway, as we read the Scripture, we come from Romans 8 into Romans 12, with 9, 10, and 11, going with another topic. Now then, brothers and sisters, this is really interesting, and this is where we've come. We have to

know that we have a life in us. We have experienced what it's like to live in the flesh. We have experienced what it's like to try to live for the Lord in the soul. That's Romans 7, a chapter of utter defeat. Then Romans 8 is a chapter that tells us all about living in the Spirit. Then, after we learn to live in the Spirit, brothers, we have been moving little by little upward. For most of you, about a year or two or three ago, you were lost, you were in Romans 1,2, and 3, then you got saved, and you came up to Romans 5. You then entered into some of the experience of Romans 6, and a lot of the experience of Romans 7. Now we are just beginning to open up into the beautiful experience of Romans 8, and then after 8 always comes Romans 12, with 9, 10, and 11 belonging somewhere else.

Alright, after the introduction to Christ, His life, and walking in the Spirit, which is walking by that life, we come then, just like this, after we've reached this point, brothers, in the order of God, we come to Romans 12:1-2, but actually, we come to more, but I'm going to keep it a secret for a minute. Romans 12 now says you have the life, you're learning to walk in the Spirit, you're learning to groan, you're learning to pray with the Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit prays within you. You are learning to live by the life, and then, just like this, the call. I now beseech you brothers, looking back at Romans 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 and 8, all the mercies, in sin, down to hell, now saved by the precious blood, going into the flesh, learning the wilderness of the soul, now finding the joy in the Holy Spirit, I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you do the only thing you can do, that you present yourselves utterly, wholly, totally, what? Completely, forever…your body...*a living sacrifice*, that you might prove what is the good and the acceptable and the perfect will of God.

Brothers and sisters, there are three wills of God. There is the good will, there is the acceptable will, and there is the perfect will, and we have to go past the good and past the acceptable, into the perfect. The Lord calls us to a moment of consecration. When we say, Lord, alright, up until now, it is what you have done for me; from now on, Lord, it will be what you will do in me. Not what you will do for me, for you have saved me, but from this moment on, what you will do in me.

It was at this point in the disciples' lives that some turned back. And the Lord said, Will you also go? And Peter, that precious Peter, one time he really came through. Oh, Lord, to whom should we go? But look at Peter's life afterward; there's so much there. You could almost ask Peter, "Peter, we're the ones who turned back, better off?" The Lord calls us at this point.

Now, brothers, what is the perfect will of God? What? You know, brothers, this verse of scripture has been so perverted. When I was a kid, many years ago, I don't know what they do nowadays, in the conferences, in the conferences, we would have seminars on how to know the will of God, and we would all come in, and everybody would read that verse, and then they'd take off into the ectoplasm. Oh, what is the will of God, and how do you find the will of God? Brothers and sisters, there is a way to know and have the perfect will of God, but you have to have Romans 12:1 first, then Romans 12:2, and then, brothers, you move on.

Brothers, this is where we're going to count tonight, at Romans 12:1 and 2. This is where we are, and this is where we've got to go from. Do you see now where we are? Do you get

where it is? Have you followed me? We have to come to the consecration, and then we have to come to the transformation, and then we can know the perfect will of God. Brothers, according to this passage of Scripture, according to this passage of Scripture, what is the perfect will of God? Do you know? According to Romans chapter 12.

Last week, the last time I was here, I told you what the perfect will of God is. Brothers and sisters, if you will go home tonight and open the book of Romans and see it as Paul wrote it, from the chapter of Romans 12 to the end of it, it is so very clear that the perfect will of God *is the church.* Will you read verse 5? *So, we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of one another,* and from this point on, from Romans 12:1 on, the Lord is dealing with the church.

Now, brothers, if you get in the church, if you give yourself to the Lord, if you live by his life, and if you are members with one another, then, brother, you know the perfect will of God. And you know it all the time. I want to tell you something, even the good will and the acceptable will of God...this matter of, 'do I go here, or do I stay here', brothers, in the body, this is so dangerous. There is nothing quite as distressing for the Christian as to always be wandering around wanting to know what the Lord's temporal will is for this particular planet.

Brothers and sisters, in the experience of the local church, you may really know the lord's will. You may really know. Well, maybe we can learn a little bit; I think that's a little bit of what we're trying to do. I'll answer your question right now. Romans 12 deals with brothers and sisters being consecrated, being transformed, and being members, and all the rest of the book of Romans deals with nothing but being members. Now, sister, we cannot be members until we're consecrated. We cannot be members until we know something of transformation. All of this comes together.

Paul…if Paul had not written this chapter in experience, may the Lord cover me, and may I say this humbly, I believe I could have written at least part of it because I've really learned some lessons here. You're not going to make it into membering without something of transformation, and you're not going to work at it. You're not going to go along with the transformation without first the consecration. I'll turn that around. There has to be the consecration for the transformation which gives us the membering. That is just as much a part of the Christian life as knowing you were lost, knowing that Christ came and died for you, then that your sins were forgiven, that Christ put his life in you, that we live sometimes in the flesh, that there is the wilderness of the soul, that there is a higher life, the life of the Spirit to live in. Then we come to consecration, to transformation, and being membered. This is the place the Lord continues to take us.

Well, you know, this is a word, too, that has really been perverted, and all I can say is it is a word that I think you understand. I think you understand. It has the notation of being separated apart. Now, not separated, like I'm not going to chew gum anymore, or I'm not going to use oil on my hair, I'm going to comb my hair dry, or anything like that. It is being separated from and offered up to the Lord. It's so simple, but it has to be done and really

done. Now, I cannot say anything to you about consecration. All I can say to you is that for us to go on in the Lord, we have to seriously come before the Lord and say Lord, I am going to go along with you. I give myself to your eternal purpose, and I give myself, Lord, to your perfect will. I give up father and mother, house and land. I give up ambition. Lord, I give up all the outward things, but Lord, most of all, I give me up. Here I am, Lord, on the altar, living, just exactly like the dead sacrifice offered up on the altar; I'm still breathing, that's the only difference, Lord. I am here to be burned by you, to be just consumed as an incense to you.

Now, brothers, that means we lay down even the desire of working for God and becoming something great for God, for a sacrifice doesn't do anything but lay down on an altar to be consumed by God. Now, then, there is a chapter in Romans that really deals with transformation, but brothers and sisters, besides that chapter, there is a whole book that deals with the matter of consecration and transformation in the New Testament. A whole book; one whole book. It is just that one thing. Do you know what book it is? II Corinthians.

I think that we should just we just need to stop here and just read a little bit. In verse 16, I'm going to read out of my translation, II Corinthians 3:16. *Nevertheless, when the heart shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.* This is the end of a parenthetical close. I don't know if anyone here has one of the translations that show this, but 7 through 16. Does anyone have 7 through 16 enclosed in parentheses? It is a parenthetical enclosure. So, I want to go back and read II Corinthians 3:6. *Who also has made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.* Then, verse 17: *Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face, beholding as a mirror, the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by whom? The Lord, the Spirit.*

Alright, how are you transformed, brother? By the Spirit. The Spirit transforms you. Well, there are two or three things about transformation, and I want to put them all together here. This sounds so beautiful; so very beautiful, just lovely. But brothers, we sometimes forget to read the whole chapter that follows after that, and that chapter is dealing with nothing but transformation. I would like to just skip down and read some of it. In II Corinthians 4:7, and we'll just read a little bit. *But we have this treasure in an earthly container.* What is the treasure? Yes. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, brother. I'm so glad you said that. *That the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. That whatever emanates from that body, whatever excellent thing comes from it, it will be of God. Not of the man, but of God. We are troubled on every side yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed. Always bearing about in the body…*this is the body that was offered up, where?

I am in verse 7; this is the body that Romans 12:1 speaks of…just my body; just yours; brothers, this is the individual body. *…always bearing about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be manifested out of my body.* Out of my body. Out of our body, then. Paul is speaking of the apostles. All of the apostles. He is speaking of what brothers and sisters, and he particularly says the apostles, here. Okay. *For we which live are*

always delivered unto death, for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus might be made manifest. Brother, excuse me. This is not the passage on the apostle, I'm sorry. This is...I'm sorry. This is not that passage. This is dealing first with Paul saying, My body, what the Lord has done in me, and then telling the brothers and sisters what will happen to them. *For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believe, and therefore have I spoken, knowing that he which raised up Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sake, that the abundance of grace through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God, for of which cause we faint not. But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* That glory, that exceeding weight of glory, is the Lord Jesus Christ being glorified and expressing himself out of us.

Alright, now, brothers and sisters, I want to go back to each of these passages of Scripture. These are the two passages where Paul speaks so clearly on transformation. He says, first, present your body, and then the second thing he says in that same passage is be not conformed to this world, but be transformed…how? By the renewing of your mind, then in II Corinthians, he says, we are transformed by two things: by beholding Christ. Beholding Christ as a mirror, this is very interesting, as a mirror beholds the person who stands in front of it. If you take the word "in" out, this is what it says. The mirror beholding the true image. The mirror reflecting the true image. And then he says, by the consuming of the outer man. And he speaks of this so very, very clearly throughout all the rest of II Corinthians. By the consuming of the outer man.

Now, brothers, the Lord brings us to … in our experience. And he stops, and he says right here, you have to offer your body a living sacrifice. And brothers, you have to stop and offer your body a living sacrifice. You have to do it; otherwise, you can't go on. I'll even say, brothers, if you don't, you may well turn back. I do not say this to you because I want you to do it. I do not say this to you because I'm in any way involved. Brother, if a year from now, I meet you, you will say to me or to some other brother that this is absolutely necessary. I have found it experientially. I have to offer my body as a living sacrifice to the Lord. Then, come to the next step.

The next step is be not conformed to this world, and you know, we would like for the next step to be the part in the suffering; be not conformed to this world but be transformed, and we're going to offer ourselves up to the Lord, and it's going to be the whittling away of the outer man so that the inner man might be released, but we just overlook "and be not conformed to this world."

Now, brothers, I am not a negative brother. What a brother does in his life is of no concern to me. What kind of toothpaste you use, or hair oil, or shoes, I do not care, but I must be faithful to the scripture. The Lord says, "Be not conformed to this world." We must not be legal. We will not draw up rules. And we will never judge another brother. But for our own personal life, we have to settle "be not conformed to this world." Now, all of us can really

pick a spot where we're not conformed to this world. I can boast about the fact that until five months ago, there had never been a television set in my home. I've been married 15 years, so for 14 and a half years, I could really tell you that I was separated from television. I have two little girls now who have just gotten up so big that we had to deal with this matter. Otherwise, we would have lost our testimony completely with them. So, they have a TV set; if you've been in my home, you've seen it. The reason I mention that is if it was made in 19...it was the first model that ever came out. We got it for $10 somewhere. Anyway, see how proud I can be, brothers, of my TV set, and how proud I can be of my relationship to TV.

No, brother, I will not, we will not set standards on anybody else on the whole earth. Brother, to everyone else, you must be utterly liberal; you must be blind. But to yourself, you must come to the matter of “be not conformed to this world.” And put that standard on no other brother or sister in the world. Let me go to the positive part. Brother, it may be that I have a weakness in my life that God knows about, and he really puts this thing in me, and therefore I have got to utterly drop something; that's the way the Lord deals it. This brother has perfect strength in this field. The Lord has dealt with me. I cannot wear purple ties. Now, brother, I see you with purple ties all the time. Now, brother, don't you know that it's wrong to wear purple ties? I must never do this. Let God speak to my heart. But now, brother, for you, you have to come to the Lord and say, Lord, show me wherein I'm conformed to this world. I did not say, "Come to him and say,' Am I conformed to this world? '" Brother and sister, I assure you; you are conformed to this world. You cannot be a babe in Christ or a young Christian in this world today without having been unconsciously conformed to this world. There are things in all our lives that have got to be dealt with and dropped. We must not be conformed to this world. That is between you and God, but you have to come and deal with the matter with the Lord.

I would not say, brother, what is it that has you? What is it that controls you? What is it that interests you? What is it that dominates you? What is it that captures you? What is it that has your attention? Your mind? What is it that has your body? What is it that keeps you from the spirit? I do not know. I would not say, but brothers and sisters, for all of us, there has to be, as the people in Acts that came and took all their stuff and burned it, every one of us has got burning to do. There are things in our lives that have to be taken out and burned. Now, you may do that physically; it may be that you really have to do that physically. Or it may be that you can deal with it in a much more private manner, but there are things in your life that have got to go. We must not be conformed to this world. I will never tell you what that is, but brother, will you be faithful to do it?

Now then, there are two kinds of people. I want you to listen to this very carefully because as we learn the church, we need to know this. There are two kinds of people: there are those people who before they were converted, they were very, very weak, and they have given in to many things. Then there were people who, before they were saved, were rather moral and strict. I'm going to tell you something that will really surprise you. Generally speaking, the man who has been strict can go on with the Lord much quicker than the brother who has been very weak toward temptation, because he knows something of discipline. That's

not a big thing, but for what I'm about to say, to a brother who has really been weak before his salvation, I just want to say a word to you. This is completely parenthetical. You may feel that you are very strong in the will because you are like that.

You know, where I come from, we have strong men. I mean, in the part of the country where I come from, men take great pride in being not just physically, but in the will. They're all the John Wayne type, or they try to be, but you will notice that some of these men are so weak towards sin. They look so strong. They can command people, do things. Now there is a man who's strong in the will, but he's really not. He's very weak in the will. He's strong in personality and projection, but he's weak towards sin. My brother, if that's you, perhaps you come to something that you really know is of the world, and you cannot give it up. All I say to you, brother, is you have to offer it to the Lord, and then you have to come and be so dependent on the brothers and sisters. And every day you have to offer it to the Lord. And every day you have to turn to the Spirit to have more and more of the Lord in you, and don't ever count much on your own ability. You just have to keep telling yourself and telling the Lord, Lord, I look strong, but I'm not; I'm weak. Oh Lord, I look like a big tough guy, but I'm very weak. I've been very sinful in my past life. I've been very weak towards sin. Lord, I pray, just work yourself in me. This is something that I do not yet have in me. You do not have enough ground, Lord. Take this every day, offer it to him, and ask the Lord to deposit more and more and more.

Brother, you really need to be dependent on the church if you had a really weak experience before your conversion. That's one. Now then, for the strong brother, maybe you've lived a fairly moral life as the world counts morality. You've been able to, maybe you got something attached to you, you were able to give it up, it doesn't matter. Brother, you know what your great danger is. Do you have any idea? Egoism, pride, religion. These people make the greatest religion in all the world. Oh, brother, I don't do this, this, and this, and this. I don't do anything, and you shouldn't do that either. This brother is really hard on the weak brother. So, each of us has a real danger.

We really need to be so dependent on one another. Now, brothers and sisters, I can't say to you which is better off; it does not matter, but I say to you that you have to come to the Lord and say, “Lord, deal with me in the matter of dealing with the world.” Be not conformed to this world, and this comes with the offering of the fact of yourself as a sacrifice. Don't argue with me or anyone else. Brother, I just don't believe Ipana toothpaste is wrong; I just don't believe it. Now, I know that Colgate is good, but I don't believe Ipana is wrong. Brother, don't go try to convince somebody that what you're doing is right.

Deep, deep down inside, you already know; right now. You already know. Yes, you do. Deep down inside, you already know, and as you come to the Lord, He enlightens you even more. You must offer yourself to the Lord, and you must not be conformed to this world, but rather, be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.