

**Romans**  
**Your Only Reasonable Response to the Gospel - Part 3**  
**Romans 12:1-2**  
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Today in Romans chapter 12, where I invite you to turn with me again, Paul is going to address for us the issue of worldliness. Now, as soon as I say that word I almost hesitate to do so because the moment most Christians hear the word worldliness they are tempted to fall into one of two extremes. On the one side is legalism. The moment we start talking about worldliness there are Christians who define worldliness as doing certain things that no passage in Scripture actually forbids. They come up with their own set of rules and guidelines and they call that worldliness if people refuse to walk in those self-made commands. On the other extreme is ignorant conformity to the world. There are many other Christians who, when they hear the word worldliness, immediately define it only as doing those things that are clearly contrary to Scripture. In other words, gross and obvious sins, and if they are not committing those then they are not worldly. In reality, they are actually being worldly in the biblical sense and are completely oblivious to that reality.

What Paul wants us to learn in Romans chapter 12 is that worldliness is extremely subtle. The influences around us can be far more powerful and evil than we can begin to imagine and that influence comes at us not by changing, at first, what we do, but rather by shaping our thinking, and through that changing our behavior. That's Paul's warning in Romans chapter 12. Let's read it again together, Romans chapter 12, we're looking at the two verses that are really the hinge between the explanation of the gospel in the first 11 chapters and the application of the gospel in the rest of this letter. Look at it again and you follow along as I read these verses, Romans chapter 12:1-2,

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which* is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

As I have reminded you, the theme of these two verses is simply this, the only reasonable response to the gospel, to the salvation that you have received in the gospel, is to give yourself body and soul to God. This is really a call for a radical total commitment of the Christian who has come to enjoy justification, a commitment to God.

Now we are learning two insights about this commitment. First, we discovered the grounds of a life of total commitment to God. That's the point of the first part of verse 1. And at the heart of that is the mercies of God. Then we were considering the demonstration of a life of total commitment to God. That is the rest of verse 1 and verse 2. Here is what that looks like. Paul makes his appeal for a total radical dedication to God using the language of Old Testament sacrifice. First Christian, you are to present your body to God, and we looked at that in great detail over the last couple of weeks.

The second exhortation comes in verse 2. We are exhorted to present our minds to God. Christian, Paul says, because of the mercies of God you have experienced, present your mind to God. Look again at verse 2, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." The sacrifice we owe God in response to His mercies and His salvation is not only our bodies but our minds as well. Our total selves no longer belong to us, Christ bought them, so our minds are not ours either.

Now in verse 2 there is just one basic exhortation about our minds, but that exhortation is expressed in two commands. First of all, the first half of verse 2 is a negative command telling us how not to think. The second half of verse 2 is a positive command explaining how we are to think. So let's look at these two commands about our minds. Now, in the interest of full disclosure, let me just tell you that we are going to get no further this morning than the first half of verse 2, so be prepared. So first of all, we are going to look at the negative command and it is this, reject the thinking of our age. If you are going to present your mind to God you must begin by rejecting the thinking of our age. Notice how Paul puts it in verse 2, "And do not be conformed to this world." Now first of all, notice the word conform. The Greek word means to form something according to a pattern or to a mold.

When I was a kid I loved to build and make things. I had a large set of Lincoln Logs. I had an Erector Set. I had a large collection, when I was younger, of Play-Doh. I remember one Christmas my parents gave me one of these Play-Doh machines; you cram your Play-Doh down in the holding tank and then if you exerted enough force on the lever, it pushed that Play-Doh out of the mold and as it came out of the mold it came out with the shape of the mold itself. That's what Paul is saying, don't let that happen to your thinking. Don't be put into the holding tank that the world uses and allow it to use enough force to force your mind into its shape.

Now the form of the Greek verb that is translated “be conformed” here makes several important points for us. Notice first of all, that “be conformed” in Greek, and in English, is passive. That means you are not the one doing the conforming, you are not the primary one doing the action. In fact, you are in danger of being acted upon, something outside of you is attempting to conform you to its shape. Notice also that “be conformed” is at the same time an imperative. That means that while you don't do the conforming you are responsible to keep it from happening. And then you will also notice, and you can't see this as well in English, it is clear in the Greek text, “be conformed” is in the present tense, meaning that this is an ongoing reality, this tension between an outside force that wants to shape you and your own will saying I will not be shaped. This is a continual constant battle.

Now, what is the source of this constant pressure? What are we not supposed to be shaped by or conform to? Notice how he puts it in verse 2, “do not be conformed to this world.” Now, there are two primary Greek words that are translated world in our English Bibles. The first one you are very familiar with, you have heard it, it has been transported into English, it's the word *kosmos*. When it's use negatively in the New Testament it is, as one author describes it, the satanically organized system that hates and opposes all that is godly. Make no mistake, Satan has created a world system that stands opposed to Him. That is this word *kosmos*.

That is not the word used here in our text. The other Greek word that is translated world is the one used here, it's *aion*. It means, and is often translated, age. So he says, “do not be conformed to this age.” Now “this age” could mean this current age, the church age, as opposed to the age to

come. But this word age, in both Greek and English, often describes the world as it exists at a particular point in time. For example, we talk about, in history, the age of enlightenment or the age of industrialization. In other words, it is a period of time in history, with its prevailing mindset, with its worldview, with its perspective about everything.

Here's how one academic author explains this word *aion*. He says, "All that mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world." So think of it as the group think of the time period in which we live. The Germans have a word for it, it is *zeitgeist*. It means the spirit of the age. The Oxford English Dictionary defines *zeitgeist* this way, "It is the trend of thought or feeling in a period as reflected in its literature, art, etc." It is the worldview, the prevailing worldview current at any period of time. It is important that you get this in your mind, every age, including ours, is dominated by certain ideas. And you hear them and see them everywhere.

Before we came to Christ we were all controlled by the mindset of the age. Turn to Ephesians 2, Ephesians 2:1. As Paul describes our spiritual death and regeneration from that death, he says in verse 1, "you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked." Now, he's going to go on to say that before Christ we were all slaves, we were all slaves, notice how he puts it in a verse 2, "you formerly walked according to." That could be translated, "as you walked in lockstep with these forces that were too powerful for you to control." These forces enslaved us, they controlled our thinking, they directed our decisions, they dominated our lifestyles. Notice what they were: in the beginning of verse 2, the world; in the second half of verse 2, the devil; and then verse 3, the flesh. Now notice what he says at the beginning of verse 2, "you formally walked according to," or in lockstep with, your whole lifestyle was in lockstep with, notice how he puts it, "the course of this world." The word course is the same Greek word as that in our text *aion*, age. Paul means, you walked in lockstep with the spirit of the age, with the worldview of your particular time in history.

Where does that worldview that dominates a given time in history, where does it come from? Are human beings its source? Absolutely not. The New Testament tells us that Satan controls the *aion*, he controls the spirit of the age in which we live, 2 Corinthians 4:4, "he is the god of this

*aion*,” of this worldview that dominates in which we live every day. That means Satan controls and directs the prevailing thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations at any time current in the world. Let this sink into your mind, the Devil and his demons actually have established, and are controlling, the mindset, the worldview of the generation in which we live. It is not neutral. It is controlled by God's enemy.

In Romans 12:2, Paul says, don't allow your thinking to be conformed to or shaped by, the spirit of the age: the prevailing thoughts, philosophies, and opinions of your time. I like the way J.B. Phillips captures it in his paraphrase; he says, “Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its mold.” Lying behind Paul's command is the clear implication that our age, like every other age, is dominated by certain prevailing ideas.

So what is the mindset of our age? What is the spirit of our age? What is the *zeitgeist* of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? What are some of the prevailing ideas and philosophies of our time? I want to take you through just a few of them, this is just a sampling of the major ones. Kind of put on your classroom hat here and stay with me because you don't really understand what Paul is saying unless you understand the spirit of our age. He's saying, don't be conformed to the spirit of our age and we sit here as Christians and go, oh, I'm not, until we understand what the spirit of the age is.

So, let's look at some of the prevailing ideas and philosophies of our time. First of all, there is naturalism. Without question, this is the primary worldview of our day. You see it everywhere. Naturalism can be reduced, as James Sire has, to several propositions. Here is what naturalism teaches, let me just give them to you. You will see this permeates our culture. Naturalism teaches that, number one, that matter is all that exists and it has existed eternally. Number two, the *kosmos* is a closed system. In other words, there is nothing supernatural; there is nothing miraculous.

Number three, human beings are simply complex machines, personality is simply an interrelation of chemical and physical properties that we don't yet fully understand, but there isn't an eternal soul. Number four, death is the end; it is the extinction of personality and of individuality.

Number five, morality is determined solely by the individual and his circumstances. And number six, history is a linear stream of events caused by cause and effect, but without any overarching purpose and plan, because there is no purpose or plan. That is the prevailing worldview of our day

Now, it doesn't stay in the academic realm. Instead, this worldview filters out in a number of very practical ramifications. Let me give you just a few of the practical ramifications of this prevailing worldview. Number one, anti-supernaturalism. This says, all belief in the supernatural is ludicrous and irrational. In a book written near the end of his life, Carl Sagan wrote this, "Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness," listen to this, "there is no hint that help will come from somewhere else to save us from ourselves." There is no God. There is nothing supernatural. So don't expect God to intervene. What, on the other hand, does the Bible say? Psalm 14:1, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'"

A second practical ramification of naturalism is obvious, Darwinian evolution. Darwinian evolution tells us the sole reasonable explanation of the origin of the universe and everything in it is Darwinian evolution. Sagan began each episode of his television series Cosmos with these words, "The cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be." Evolution explains the origin of all things. What does the Bible say? Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Isaiah 44:24, "I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by Myself and spreading out the earth all alone."

A third practical ramification of naturalism is moral relativism, the idea that there simply are no moral absolutes. Again, the Scripture is clear, Romans 2:15, the Gentiles "show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternatively accusing or else defending them." Not only are there moral absolutes, they are written in every heart, the substance of them. And Romans 1:32 says this of pagans, who've never seen the bible, "they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, but they not only do the same, they give hearty approval to those who practice them." They know. They know. They know there are moral absolutes.

A fourth practical ramification of naturalism is existentialism, life is random and meaningless. Again, Scripture could not be clearer. God says this in Psalm 33:11, “The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation.” Not only is everything not random, God has a meticulous plan and He is working it out generation after generation. Isaiah 46:10-11, “My purpose will be established,” God says, “and I will accomplish all my good pleasure.” “Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.” God says, I have got a plan and I am going to perform it.

A fifth practical ramification of naturalism is what I'll call species equality, the idea that man is simply another animal on par with every other animal, all the species are equal. Practically, this is what is being said. You said, are there people who believe that? Absolutely there are people who believe that. Listen to Ingrid Newkirk, the founder of PETA, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. Ingrid Newkirk wrote this, “There is no rational basis for saying that a human being has special rights, a rat is a pig is a dog is a boy.”

Now what that practically manifests itself in is this, man is no more valuable than any other animal. That's what they would say. You know, I saw a video of Ray Comfort, an evangelist, asking college students in California, oh those Californians, asking questions to expose the ethical implications of evolution. And one of the questions was this, if you saw your dog and your next door neighbor both drowning in a pool, which would you save first? Several students struggled, in this video, to answer, which, frankly, in and of itself is disturbing.

But a number of the students went on to say that they would rescue their dog before their neighbor. Why? Because they bought into the mindset of the age, man is just another animal, that dog has every bit as much value as a person. Is that what the Bible says? Of course not. Genesis 1:27, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him.” Matthew 12:12, our Lord says this, “How much more valuable is a man than a sheep!” Don't you dare for a moment think that human beings and animals are on the same par. God made man in His own image and man is far more valuable than animals. By the way, Jesus says that about other animals, he says about birds, etc.

Another implication of this species equality is that no sexual behavior is sinful, no sexual behavior is sinful. I mean if animals do it, why can't people? Again, Scripture is clear, Ephesians 5:6, Paul says, "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of sexual sins," he has just listed them in the previous verse, "because of these sexual sins the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience." Not only are there sins when it comes to man's sexual behavior, but that is why God's wrath is coming.

Another sort of fruit of this idea of species equality is it is morally wrong to use animals for food or clothing. Now I want you to take a test here how much you have been influenced by the spirit of the age, do you think it is morally wrong to use animals for food or clothing? Some would say it is wrong to eat meat. Again, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals argue that killing an animal for food is murder and that eating an animal is tantamount to cannibalism. Is that what the Bible says? Genesis 9:3, God says "every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant."

Others would say it is wrong to use the skins of animals for clothing. Again, listen to God, Genesis 3:21, "The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them." God was the first one to take the life of an animal to clothe man. Of course we need to care for animals, we need to be careful in our treatment of them, righteous people do that according to Proverbs. But they are here, according to God, for the benefit of man who is made in God's image. Don't buy into the mindset of the culture.

A sixth practical ramification of naturalism is environmentalism. If there is no God and man is the highest animal on this planet, then not only is he a steward of the planet like the Bible tells us we are, but he becomes its destroyer or its savior. You've taken too much on yourself at this point. Listen to Genesis 8:21-22, "The Lord said to Himself," I love that, God talks to Himself,

The Lord said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; [*listen to this,*] and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. While the earth remains, seed



time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”

Again, we need to be good stewards of everything God has given us, including the planet, but don't you for a moment think that puny mankind can destroy something that God has said is going to be preserved. Second Peter 3:7, “by His Word,” by God's Word, “the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept by God for the day of judgment.”

A seventh practical ramification of naturalism is scientific certainty. It goes like this, all the postulates of modern science are empirically proven, universally accepted, and certifiable reality. Empirically proven, they mean by using only the strictest standards of the scientific method and human reason, they have arrived at their conclusions. Universally accepted, they mean all experts who are faithful to the scientific method have arrived at these conclusions. And certifiable reality, their conclusions are true and their theories are certain to have occurred just as they propounded. No rational person would ever conclude otherwise.

The truth is, science and the use of the scientific method has a very mixed track record. If I had time I would get into that, I did in an earlier series, but let me just put it this way, only God's word is certain truth and every idea or fact apart from the Bible that claims to be true is potentially suspect. Psalm 119:160, “The sum of Your word is truth,” the totality of God's Word is true, “and every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.” Our Lord put it this way in John 17:17, “Your word, Father, is truth.” Beware of naturalism, don't let it shape your thinking.

A second philosophy that permeates our culture, that is part of the *zeitgeist* of our age, is humanism. Democritus, in the 400's B.C., is the earliest philosopher that taught a hedonistic philosophy. Democritus argued that the supreme goal of life was what he called contentment or cheerfulness. One hundred years later Epicurus came along and Epicureanism began to teach that pleasure is the greatest good and man's highest goal.

Now don't misunderstand, contrary to popular belief, Epicurus did not teach that happiness was

found in wild, outrageous living. Originally he taught that the highest pleasure is found in personal tranquility and freedom from fear, a simple life pursuing personal peace. Fast forward to the 1700's and you find that this idea is still very much alive and well. The French philosopher Voltaire writes, "Pleasure is," listen to this, "Pleasure is the object, the duty, and the goal of all rational creatures." After the advent of Darwinism the main proponent for man's happiness as the goal of life became humanism. Humanists wrote their first manifesto in 1933 and a second Humanist Manifesto in 1973. Listen to a quote from the second, written in '73, "Happiness and the creative realization of human needs and desires, both individually and in shared enjoyment, are continuous themes in humanism. We strive for the good life here and now. The goal is to pursue life's enrichment." By which they mean their own life's enrichment.

Reduced to its simplest and most individualistic expression, humanism simply teaches this, the end of all being is the happiness of man. Once again, this philosophy didn't stay in the classroom; it didn't stay in the halls of academia. There were practical ramifications of this. Let me just give you three to think about. First of all there is personal fulfillment. You hear this everywhere. Since my happiness is all that matters, the most important goal in life is my own personal fulfillment. This is what our world lives for. Listen to our Lord in Matthew 22:37-38. Jesus said, ""YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND," this is the great and foremost commandment." Not personal fulfillment but loving God.

Another ramification of humanism I'll call democratic morality. Democratic morality, since man and his happiness is the measure, a consensus of the majority determines morality. We decide together what is going to make us happy and if we vote for it, then there you go, that is moral. That is what has happened recently in the last 10 years with, regarding, the legislation regarding homosexual marriage.

Listen, the Bible begins with the principle that people are fallen and perverted and incapable of determining or doing what is good. Romans 3:10-12,

as it is written,

“THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;  
THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,  
THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;  
*[and here He encompasses us all,]*  
ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME  
USELESS;”

Listen, if we are all morally useless then how in the world do we decide what is moral?

Humanism has also produced an anti-authority attitude. Sometimes it is expressed, often it is just implied, but it goes like this, no one has the right to curb or question my pursuit of self-fulfillment. Listen, God says, He has put authorities in this world to do exactly that. Your parents are given to you to direct your life toward the right ends and to curb your self-fulfillment. Government exists for the same point. In Romans 13:1, “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.” Beware of being shaped by the philosophy of humanism. It is part of the ether of our times.

A third philosophy is Marxism and socialism. This is becoming increasingly potent in our culture. Webster defines Marxism as this, “The system of economic and political thought developed by Karl Marx along with Frederick Engels especially,” here it is, “the doctrine that the state throughout history has been a device for the exploitation of the masses by a dominant class, that class struggle has been the main agency of historical change, and that the capitalist system containing from the first the seeds of its own decay, will inevitably be superseded by a socialist order and a classless society.” What is that looking like today? What are the practical ramifications of the acceptance of that mindset? Well, there is immorality, and notice that word, the immorality of personal or corporate wealth. There are people in our culture saying it is immoral to have wealth, wealth is inherently sinful and it can only be obtained or attained by the oppression of others.

Now don't misunderstand, clearly there are those who get their wealth by the manipulation and oppression of others, James 5 is very clear about that, and many other texts as well; it happens and God will judge those who do so. But the mere presence of wealth does not imply that. In fact, the Scripture is clear, in Deuteronomy 8 God is the one who gives the power to get wealth, and in 1 Timothy 6:17, Paul says to Timothy, "Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God," listen to this, "who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy." God is the ultimate source of wealth and distributes wealth for his creatures to enjoy.

Secondly, another ramification of Marxism that is becoming increasingly popular, it is a part of the *zeitgeist* of our age, is the moral imperative of government intervention in this abuse. Government should own and or redistribute the resources to all and do so more fairly. Is that a biblical mindset? No, the biblical mindset is one of private ownership and personal labor.

So you have Zechariah 3:10 describing what will happen during the millennium, during the thousand years in which our Lord righteously reigns on this planet. It says, ""In that day," declares the Lord of hosts, "every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree."" We will have private ownership and frankly, while I can't prove it to you from Scripture, I don't see any reason to doubt that there will be private ownership in the eternal state. And you come to the New Testament, and what does Peter say to Ananias in Acts 5? He says, before you sold that land, was it not your own? And even after you sold it, were not the proceeds yours to do with as you chose?

There is a fourth and final philosophy that dominates our time and it is postmodernism. Postmodernism is a label for the prevailing intellectual mood and perspective in Western society today. It is a perspective that began in the early 1970's. I won't take you through all that can be said about postmodernism, let me just reduce it to two simple beliefs. Postmodernism believes, number one, that truth does not exist, and if it does in some way, you can't be certain that that is the truth. In other words, postmodernism denies that there is any objective proposition or truth claim that is universally, eternally true. It is only true in a particular circumstance or in a particular time or to a particular person.

Secondly, postmodernism, not only does it say there is no truth, truth doesn't exist, but it says there is no universal explanation, they use the word meta-narrative, of meaning that explains the world and explains reality, because there is no purpose, there is no meaning. At its heart, postmodernism is a rejection of truth and certainty. Again, postmodernism filters down in some very practical ramifications. First of all, there is pragmatism. Since there is no absolute truth, each individual in each circumstance, or the culture as a whole, gets to decide what is practically true or what works. In other words, we are back to pragmatism; if it works for you, believe it. Scripture is clear that truth doesn't work like that. Psalm 119:89, "Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven." There is one truth, eternal superseding truth.

A second expression of postmodernism is the denial of the law of non-contradiction. We live in a culture when two contradictory ideas can both be true. I don't know about you but it bugs me on television when, you know, they are interviewing people and you know, they are telling, they are saying exactly the opposite things, and together they are having a group hug and affirming that they are all right. What is true for you, they say, may not be true for me. Listen, the Scripture is clear that there is such a thing in the laws of logic as the law of non-contradiction, 1 John 2:21 says, "no lie is of the truth." Truth and lies are mutually exclusive.

A third expression of postmodernism is gender identity. Gender identity says people are whatever gender they claim to be, regardless of contrary evidence. Now, I am compassionate toward those who struggle with this. This is a real struggle in the human soul, just as all the other struggles that we experience in a fallen world. But understand, this is part of postmodernism, that you can have physical characteristics that mark you as a certain sex and you can believe that you are a different sex, and both can be true. That is postmodernism; it is illogical. Genesis 1:27 says, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

A fourth practical ramification of postmodernism is religious inclusivism. There are many ways to God and they're all true. Jesus rains on that parade pretty seriously in John 14:6 when He says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; and no man comes to the Father except by Me."

Now folks, those are some of the prevailing ideas of our times and they're all contrary to the Word of God, and they ultimately trace back to Satan himself, the god of this age. We are called to reject the thinking of our age totally. Look again in our text, Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this age," to its mindset, to its way of thinking, to the *zeitgeist* of your times.

Now what are the implications of this command in the first half of verse 2? Let me give you four of them real quickly and we will be done. Here are the implications. Number one, there are no truly independent thinkers. You know, we all like to think of ourselves like that. Get over it. There are none. You are not. I am not. Did you notice in this text, your thinking will be shaped by influences, will always be shaped, by influences outside of you. It will either be God and His Word or it will be Satan and the ideas that he has established and is directing in the time period in which you live. Those are the two choices. There are no truly independent thinkers.

Number two, the prevailing mindset of our times constantly assaults us and tries to push us into its mold. Do you understand? This is going on constantly, every day, relentlessly. I am not the only one preaching to you. In fact, you are being preached at every waking moment with the *zeitgeist*, the mindset of the age. You are being sold it in every conceivable way. It comes from the educational system, the entire educational system. It starts with educational children's books. I saw a couple of books this week attempting to teach children about gender identity. It is kindergarten through the doctoral level. It comes in peer reviewed journals, in published papers, in research. It comes at us through the media, newspapers, magazines, the Internet. It comes through entertainment, through video games, through movies, through television programs, through YouTube videos.

It comes at us through social media. Let me tell you something, Russia is not the only one trying to use social media to influence your thinking, Satan is. He has built a system to do that to you. Facebook, Twitter, texts from friends, every day conversations with your friends and acquaintances, you are being subtly sold the philosophy of the age. It comes as well from our own thoughts and our conclusions about the issues of our times. How many times do we hear ourselves saying something like this, well I think. Who cares? Who cares what I think? Who

cares what you think? The question is, what does God think?

Number three, God holds us responsible to identify the flawed thinking of our times and refuse to be shaped by it. As we saw on Romans 12:1, in view of God's mercies to us in Christ, verse 2, our minds belong to Him and to honor Him we must continually, constantly resist and reject the thinking of the age in which we live. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its mold.

And number four, our thinking about everything must be directed and determined solely by the revelation of God in His word. Christian, do you believe that? Do you believe that you don't have a right to think about the issues of our time the way you think, that Christ bought you, He owns you, body and mind, and you have here in His Word the mind of Christ, and you are to think about everything that goes on in this world like He thinks? Lord willing, next week, in the rest of verse 2 we will see the positive side, which is exactly that, He has told us how to think in His word. Let's pray together.

Father, thank You for the clarity that You provide through Your word. Thank You for this marvelous section, so powerfully speaks into our day to day practical lives. Lord, thank You for showing us that we are not immune from the influence of the world around us. That in fact, we are being preached at every moment and ultimately that sermon comes from Satan himself, trying to convince us to take positions contrary to You and to Your eternal word. Father, help us to reject the thinking of our age. Lord, as we have gone through this study today many of us have seen ways that we have been influenced by impacted by, our thinking has been shaped by, the mindset of the age rather than by Your word. O God, forgive us and help us to think after You, to think according to Your word.

And Father, I pray that You would also work in the hearts of those here this morning who are completely enslaved to the thinking of the age. Lord, perhaps thinking that they can earn their way into heaven, that by their own merit, by their own efforts, just as the world tells them, that they can be good enough for You. O God, help them to see that they have been terribly sold a lie, that they have bought into the mindset of the age that will destroy them. Father, may they instead turn to Jesus Christ, who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the

Father but by Me.’” Lord, may they abandon their self-righteousness and may they throw themselves in faith on Christ alone, on His perfect life, on His substitutionary death that satisfied Your justice and purchased forgiveness, and on His resurrection that sealed it all, and may they come to know You through Him today. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.