

“What Is Our Proper Response To The Gospel?”
Romans 12:1-2
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Introduction:

1) All of us have a worldview, a particular way of looking at life and living life. It is unavoidable. You may be able to change it, but you cannot escape it. It will determine how you think, what you love and how you live. It may even determine how you die.

2) James Olthius:

One’s worldview is perhaps best reflected by one’s answers to the ‘ultimate questions of life’: Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going? What’s it all about? Is there a god? How can I live and die happily? What are good and evil?

--James H. Olthius, "On Worldviews," *Christian Scholar’s Review* 15, no. 2 (1985): 153-164.

One additional question I would add: “Is there anything I would be willing to die for?”

3) In people where we have seen the gospel come to life, what do we see? What do they say? How did they live and die?

Now I have given up on everything else—I have found it to be the only way to really know Christ and to experience the mighty power that brought him back to life again, and to find out what it really means to suffer and to die with him.

--Christian teenager Cassie Bernall (1981-1999)
martyred April 20, 1999
Columbine High School
(www.cassierenebernall.org)

I am just so thankful for everything He’s done for me, as well as for others. Even when things are bad, He’s stood next to me and things are a little less prone to becoming blown out of proportion by my emotions. . . . You know, I wonder what God is going to do with my life. Like my purpose. Some people become missionaries and things, but what about me? What does God have in store for me? Where do my talents and gifts lie? For now, I’ll just take it day by day. I’m confident that I’ll know someday. Maybe I’ll look back at my life and think “Oh, so that was it!” Isn’t it amazing, this plan we’re a part of? . . .

--Cassie Bernall
letter to a friend, June 28, 1998
printed in *She Said Yes: The Unlikely Martyrdom of Cassie Bernall*

When God doesn't want me to do something, I definitely know it. When he wants me to do something, even if it means going outside my comfort zone, I know that too. I feel pushed in the direction I need to go . . . I try to stand up for my faith at school . . . It can be discouraging, but it can also be rewarding . . . I will die for my God. I will die for my faith. It's the least I can do for Christ dying for me.

--written by Cassie Bernall in 1998

printed in *She Said Yes: The Unlikely Martyrdom of Cassie Bernall*

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.

--Jim Elliot (1927-1956)

Missionary to the Auca Indians of Ecuador, Christian martyr for Jesus Christ
Life portrayed in the movie "The End of the Spear".

There was a time when one could almost be afraid to call himself a disciple of Christ because it meant so much. Now one can do it with complete ease because it means nothing at all.

--Soren Kierkegaard, (1813-55)

Danish philosopher/theologian

quoted in *Bible Review*, April 2000.

When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.

The Cost of Discipleship

--Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945).

German pastor/theologian

Hanged by the Nazi's for attempting to assassinate Adolf Hitler

For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

--Apostle Paul (Phil. 1:21)

- 4) *Question: where are these types of believers today? Where are the men and women so in love with Jesus, so passionate for the glory of God, so concerned for the lost that the gospel has come to life in them because God has become their life?

Most Americans have one foot in the biblical camp, and one foot outside it. They say they are committed, but to what? They are spiritually active, but to what end? The spiritual profile of American Christianity is not unlike a lukewarm church that the Bible warns about.

--David Kinnaman, Barna Research Firm, 5-21-07

I. God calls you to a life of consecration.

12:1

1) It is a spiritual commitment.

“Few things will provide a better motivation for our service to King Jesus than the “mercies of God.” His goodness and grace showered on undeserving sinners, rightly understood, will compel a radical devotion that will be stopped by no one or no thing.”

2) It is a volitional commitment.

“No one can do for you in honoring Jesus what only you can do. No one can be saved for you and no one can serve for you. Jesus wants you and He wants you now!”

3) It is a total commitment.

“A great salvation demands a great commitment. A great Savior is worthy of a great servant. Will you be such a servant or will you settle for so much less than God’s best for you?”

“Don’t play the fool and be satisfied with a comfortable, convenient and cultural Christianity that will never make a difference and is not worth spit!”

“Partial obedience is total disobedience!”

4) It is a sacrificial commitment.

“In Christ we are dead to some things that we might come alive to other things... the things that matter to Him!”

“A sacrifice always involves a cost. We will make the sacrifice when we believe the cost is worth it.”

5) It is a worshipful commitment

“Your heart, your mind, your soul come together in a wonderful symphony and give a resounding “Yes!” This is what my God deserves and this is what I will give Him.”

II. God calls you to a life that requires transformation. 12:2

1) C. S. Lewis:

God is no fonder of intellectual slackers than any other slackers. If you are thinking of becoming a Christian, I warn you, you are embarking on something which is going to take the whole of you, brains and all. But fortunately, it works the other way round. Anyone who is honestly trying to be a Christian will soon find his intelligence being sharpened: one of the reasons why it needs no special education to be a Christian is that Christianity is an education itself. (Mere Christianity)

2) The Bible also has a great deal to say about the mind, our patterns of thought.

*As a person thinks in his heart, so is he.

Proverbs 23:7

*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

*Always be prepared to give an answer [apologia] to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

1 Peter 3:15

*And He [Jesus] said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

Matthew 22:37

3) The problem:

83% of Americans identify themselves as Christians, yet only 49% describe themselves as absolutely committed to Christianity. (The Barna Update, 5-21-07)

80% of teenagers who say they have been “born again” believe sex outside of marriage is morally wrong. However, 2/3 of them violate their own belief system in their sexual behavior. (World, 8-11-07, p.9).

“The primary reason that people do not act like Jesus is because they do not think like Jesus... Behavior stems from what we think—our attitudes, beliefs, values, and opinions.”

--“Barna: Biblical Worldview Held by Only 4 Percent of Adults,” *Baptist Press* (December 2, 2003).

Conformed means to squeeze or mold or shape by outside, external pressure. Tragically you begin to think and live more like the evil world systems under the control of the evil one than you do Christ.

Transformed means to radically alter by an inward process. This spiritual metamorphosis takes place by a continuous making new of your mind.

“The greatest spiritual battles are fought in the mind. Here is your titanic conflict that will determine the course of your life.”

III. God calls us to a life that leads to satisfaction.

12:2

“There is a formula for knowing God’s will. Live a life of consecration that leads to transformation and you will discover the satisfaction of God’s will: a will that is good, acceptable and perfect.”

Conclusion:

“Do you want to make an eternal difference with your life? Do you want your life to really matter? Are you willing to trust Jesus and do whatever it takes?”

“God’s will is not safe, but it is best. It is good, acceptable and perfect. What more could you ask of a God whose infinite love sent His Son, whose infinite love is now lavishly poured out in your life?”