

How Can I Experience Renewal?

Romans 12:2

(black Bible page 947; Children's Bible page 1413)

Don't be like the world. Be countercultural, the apostle Paul says, be renewed. But how?

Our series continues: *Healthy: Life & Church in Romans 12-16*

- We know that physical health requires *renewal*. When you have a meal, your energy is renewed. Same for sleep, and more.
- But how do we renew the person? The *whole* person? That seems more difficult and elusive to us today.
- Let's see what Scripture says about renewal for a healthy person (and church!).

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (The Apostle Paul in Romans 12:2)

[1] “Do not be conformed to this world [literally, *age*]...”

- Be countercultural! Jesus makes people strong and different, able to swim against cultural tides.

[2] “...but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...”

- The key to personal transformation: renewing your mind
- The key activity here is listening to Jesus, listening to Scripture. “He who has ears to hear, let him hear...” And be renewed!

New Life's vision for preaching includes at least two different types of sermons:

- **Expositional:** preaching through a passage of Scripture, often as part of a series going through a book of the Bible
 - God sets the topic at hand and we listen!
 - If you're in a relationship you might say, “What do you want to tell me?”
 - Examples: our various series on 1 Corinthians, Matthew, Jonah, and Malachi.
 - When churches don't preach expositionally, they begin to *conform* to the (1) personal whims, idiosyncrasies, and passions of the pastor; (2) and/or assimilate to the surrounding culture.
- **Topical/Thematic:** Our interest sets the agenda
 - In a relationship: “I'd like to hear what you have to say on something that is important in my life.”
 - Examples: Countercultural for the Common Good, or my recent sermon, “Follow Jesus (not your heart).”
 - When churches don't do this, they begin to struggle with the questions of applying the Bible to life, especially life in a complicated world.

To the Lord's Supper:

- Food renews our strength, gives us life.
- But note what Jesus says about what is *true* food, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4)
- Then He also says, “For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink... so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.” (John 6:55,57) And also, “Take, eat; this is my body.” (Matthew 26:26)