Passing Fads and the Bible

Romans 12:2, “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Other translations of this verses say: “Be not fashioned according to this world . . . Do not live according to the fashion of the times . . . You must not adopt the customs of this world . . . and . . . Do not imitate the ways of this world”.

Our society is a culture where we are constantly being pressured to conform to be like everybody else. Whether it is in fashions, customs, or traditions, these pressures are real, insidious, and strong. Whether we realize it or not, all of us are being victimized. These pressures come from our neighbors, the television, and the newspaper. They come from within our homes, the office where we work, the store, our school, and even church.

Young people, many of them intellectuals, are, from time to time, in a protest against the world, rebelling against the idea of being pushed into a mold. Even though some of them may seem a little zany, don't laugh off this “drive to be different.” It just may be that some of them are discerning the trends of our time better than some us “squares.” They want to be their own individualistic selves. If I understand their philosophy correctly, it has four basic points.

The first is NON-CONFORMITY.

They don't want to conform to the rest of the world. We are all “squares” because we have become like all the rest of our culture. We want to rate with the crowd. We want to wear the same kind of cloths, have the same kind of jobs, carry the same status as everybody else, to keep the same customs and traditions as the rest of the people around us. We want to do the “the proper thing” according to the American way of life.

To keep from be pushes into this mold, they attempt to be utterly different. If ordinary people work form 8 to 5, then they will sleep all day, and go out at night. If others want a good, comfortable standard of living in the suburbs, they say, “That is not for us, give us a pad, and we'll sleep on a mat somewhere where we won't have to pay rent. If ordinary people shave and take a bath every day, we'll remain unshaven and dress in drab, colorless garments.”

Don't be so quick to judge these folk because they have come up with the right conclusion. It's just that they have the wrong answer.

Phillips translation of Romans 12:2 states, “Let not the world around you squeeze you into this own mold.”

We are failing Christ if we are confirming to the world around us. Non-conformity is a part of Christian living. Let me ask you something to think about, “How are you different than the world around you? How is your life distinctive? In what ways are you living for Christ by not conforming to the world around you? Are you merely drifting along, or are you swimming against the stream?”
A second characteristic of many young people today is their DESIRE TO FIND OUT WHO THEY ARE.

Their thinking seems to be something like this, “In this conformist world, where we are all shaped by the same cookie-cutter, how can I ever find out who I am? I want to know who I am, so I will give vent to my inner impulses and, by living according to these impulses, I’ll find the key to who I am. If I feel like writing zany poetry, that makes no sense at all, I’ll do it. If I feel like composing music, which no one else appreciates, I do it. If I feel like playing the snare drums with my toes or painting pictures that looks like splattered eggs, I do it. If I feel like talking like some Neanderthal cave man, then that’s what I will do. Maybe, by expressing all these hidden, inner feelings, I can find out who I am!”

In Genesis 1:27, when Almighty God created man, this verse tells us who we are. It says, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him” This “image of God” was a moral likeness, rather than a physical likeness. Man was created like in God’s personality, character and moral ability. It was sin that caused our first parents to fall from the “likeness of God” in which they were created.

God's goal for us is from us to be like Him!

This image in which God created man, Where is it today? It is marred, faded, and gone! You can hardly recognize man today as the man that God created. To compare man of today with what Scripture teaches us of the man God created, it is a sad picture, indeed! What has happened? Why is man so different than the man God intended him to be? It is sin! SIN changed man from the image of God!

Man can never find out who he is by carrying out his impulses. The only way man can ever find out who he is - is to let Christ live in his heart! The only way man will ever find out who he is - is to know Jesus Christ! Whenever anyone receives Jesus Christ as their Savior, God tells us that they are “re-created” in Christ Jesus. We must agree with the Bible when it teaches that we are nobody without Christ To be able to fulfill our purpose in life, we must accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and, when we do, the Bible teaches that we become “a new creature in Christ Jesus.” After than we must allow the Holy Spirit to enable us to “crucify our old life” – to die to our wants, desires and dreams. We must die to our “inner impulses” - and - let Jesus Christ live within by living the principles He gives to us in His Word.

God thinks that you are somebody. You ARE somebody when you accept Jesus Christ as your Master. God says, “Let no man despise you!” YOU are the most precious possession God has given you! Don't bury yourself in empty routines, meaningless existence, just making a living Make your life worthwhile. Live for Christ!

A third characteristic of this group is, their SEARCH FOR FREEDOM.

They seem to think like this,, “We want to be free from all legalism, from the law of the land, from the practices of social customs, from anything restrains me from doing what I feel like doing. I want to be free! I was born to be free!” In order to have maximum freedom, they gather into communities of their own.
They, by enlarge, reject the Christian faith, because, they say, “of its regulations and limitations on how we should and should not life.” But, I want you to know - that the child of God, if he understands what Scripture teaches, is not bound, he is free!

John 8:36 declares, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, you will be free indeed!” It's a great paradox (Two opposite truths which seem to contradict each other, yet both are true). The greatest freedom for man is when he is under the rule, and reign, of Jesus Christ. The most enslaved person alive is that one who is rebelling against Jesus Christ. It is only when one is in a right relationship to Christ that he has true freedom.

I use to read stories to my kids when they were very little. One of the stories I remember is about “Little Toots” was a switch engine. Little Toots was most like a big locomotives that would come and go in the switch yard. Little Toots lived an very unexciting existence in the switch yard. So, one nice spring day, Little Toots saw some young calves romping in the meadow and she said, “It would be so much fun to get off these tracks and play in the field.” She jumped off the tracks - and headed for some beautiful daisies in the meadow below. As soon as she did, she bogged down in the muddy pasture. She couldn't go anywhere - because she was stuck deep in the mud. Little Toots cried and said, “If I ever get back on the tracks I'll stay there forever!” Finally a wrecking crew came and lifted her back on the tracks.

The freedom of the rails!

We have true freedom only when we stay within the boundaries for which we were made. We have freedom when we live in right relationship with God and we spoil our freedom when we rebel against God!

Why does man sin? Man sins because he thinks that he will get a fuller kind of life.

Why does man steal, cheat, or lie? Why does he commit wrong acts? It is because he think that sin will be a reward. Liberty is only when man lives within the law of Christ. When we realize this, then we can begin to really live.

A fourth characteristic of these folk is a twist of an ancient philosophy, it's “Eat, drink and indulge yourself, because there is no tomorrow!” The well-known expression is, of course, “Eat, drink and be marry . . .” They don't expect to “be merry” because they feel that life is empty, purposeless. They feel that pleasure is a vain thing and that tomorrow is an idle abstraction. Without any conception of tomorrow, no thought of a day of reckoning they live for the present.

The Christian's counterpart is, “Eat, drink, and serve other, because tomorrow is the best of all!” At the first “Communion service,” Jesus girded Him self with a towel and washed the disciples feet. Why did He do that? He was stressing that the Christian life was to be a life of serving others.

Why do we live a life of service to others? We do it because of the glorious tomorrow! The “Golden Age” of the Christian is not the past, or even the present, it is tomorrow!

You say, “Preacher, what does all this mean to me? I have no intention of becoming a part of that crowd which you refer to this morning.” However, we all have the same inner
desires. We all have a wish to break free, to get away from the pushes and pulls of life, the tensions and forces that make us conform. We all, at times, want to throw off restraints and express or self freely. We all wish, at times, that we would not have to reckon with tomorrow. Christ is the Answer!

Accept Him as your Lord and Savior now!