

# **National Youth Sunday 2023**

**Romans 12:2, NLT: Stand Up, Even If You Stand Out**  
Sermon Building Points by Pastor Tony Price

**“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” --Romans 12:2, New Living Translation**

- Video illustration: Chameleon, Twelve:Thirty Media (<https://twelvethirty.media/product/chameleon/>)
- “Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.” Our challenge, however, is not to copy/imitate the behaviors and customs of the world. Our question should be: Who or what are we copying? Are we pursuing Christlikeness or are we pursuing the ways of the world?
- God’s Word calls us to be and look different. Paul reminds us in our scripture that, through God, we have been transformed/changed into something new with a new way of thinking.
- Standing out is often a byproduct of standing up for what we believe in. The early Brethren understood the realities of what standing out meant for them and their families: persecution, displacement, and other hardships.
- The Bible has several examples of those who were willing to stand up even if it meant standing out.
  - Noah was willing to stand out when God told him to build the arc.
  - Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were willing to stand out even if it meant the fiery furnace.
  - Daniel was willing to stand out even if it meant being thrown to the lions.
  - Esther was willing to stand out even if it meant losing her life.
- In school, we learn about “If/Then” statements. Romans 12:2 has one of these statements. **If** we “let God transform us into new people by changing the way we think, **then** we will learn to know God’s will for us, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”
- Our goal as Christ-followers should be to learn to know about God’s will for our lives. What does God want for us? How does God want to use us for his glory and our neighbor’s good? This will only come

through the transforming power of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit that is at work in us and through us.

- If we read this passage from “The Message” we have some clear directives:
  - “Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.”
  
- As we grow in our Christlikeness and choose to follow Christ and not the world, may we be people who truly:
  - Fix our attention on God.
  - Are changed from the inside out.
  - Readily recognize what he wants from us, and quickly respond to it.
  - Realizing that in all this, God brings the best out of us and develops well-formed maturity in us.
  
- As Christ followers, we are called to stand up for Christ EVEN IF we stand out. We are called to look different than the world; not copy the behavior and customs of the world.