Dear Open Door Family,

If you could be like anybody in the world who would it be? If you could do anything you wanted, what would you do? We all have dreams and desires. We all long for things that we would love to see happen in our lives. But we must always ask ourselves how much of what we dream, or long for is shaped by our culture? How much of what we work for is really molded by the impact that this world has on us. We live in the world but we are not supposed to live like the world. We are here because God put us here but we are supposed to be strangers and aliens in this world. Let's see what we can learn from Romans 12 once more.

Romans 12:1-2 *(JBP) With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good...*
Rom. 12:2 *(MSG) Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking...*
Rom. 12:2 *(NLT) Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world ...*

The challenge from verse two is that I am supposed to REJECT the world's pressure on me. Our culture wants to squeeze us into its shape, the people around us really do want us to be like them and not go against the flow. But the wording in verse 2 is very strong. Refuse to be squeezed - do NOT copy customs and behaviors of the world - Do not try to FIT IN. We are supposed to be SEPARATED from the ways and ideals of the world. There really should be a difference in the way a committed follower of Jesus Christ lives. If I truly am born again and purchased by the death of Jesus on the cross, then there ought to be a difference. The problem is that too many times we really do want to fit in. We do not set out to conform to the world but if we are not careful to stand firmly and strongly on God's Word, it is easy to slide into conformity. Our Lord Jesus wants to change us from the inside out. He longs for us to become more and more like Him. That happens only when we SEPARATE ourselves from the world's system and values and pursue a growing Relationship with Jesus Christ through His Word. There are many ways to grow in our walk with our Lord. It will take Bible study, Devotional reading, Meditation, Times of Prayer and Worship as well as other things. May we seek to live out the truths of verse 2 in our lives.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, please help me to turn away from the allure of this world. Help me to turn off the TV or the Radio to turn away from those things, whatever they may be, which only take my eyes off of You. May I see You more and more at work in My life. Please, Lord God, show me areas that are not fully Surrendered to you, show me where I have conformed to the World. Give me Your grace and strength to pursue You with all my Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength.

Pastor Mark Kieft
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