

In and Out
#2: The Practice of Praxis
May 5-7, 2007

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is true worship. ²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ³For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. ⁹Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.
Romans 12:1-9 TNIV

Introduction: Perhaps the most pressing issue facing believers who live in our culture is how to live "in the world, but not of it." This may be especially true for a church like Columbia in a place like Washington. Last week, we established that Columbians tend to be "praxis" believers in a "praxis" church. Let's explore Romans 12 together to determine just what this means and set a methodology to explore the intersection of Christ and culture.

- I. Sacrifice, Not Self-Preservation (v.1)
 - A. It is God's amazing mercy that compels us to live lives that are pleasing to Him; not fear, guilt, shame, or the desire for safety.
 - B. The foundational principle of the believer's life in the world is self-sacrifice, not self-preservation.
 - C. Holiness is the only life-quality that is pleasing to God and the only "true worship" He desires.

- II. Transformed, Not Conformed (v. 2)
 - A. We are not to conform (note active tense) to the world (Greek *kosmos*), but to be transformed (note passive tense) by the renewing of our minds.
 - B. The renovation of our minds allows us to discern what is "good, pleasing, and perfect" to God; this is praxis.
 - C. The literal meaning of "praxis" is: (1) the practical application or exercise of a branch of learning, and (2) habitual or established practice.
 - D. This formation of Biblical, Christlike thought ("the mind of Christ") and subsequent application involves an action-reflection continuum.



- III. Community, Not Individuality (vv.3-8)
 - A. Praxis only happens in community as we learn Biblical truth together and seek practical application in community.
 - B. We must become accountable to one another in an atmosphere of "authentic community."
 - C. Praxis requires genuine humility.

Conclusion: The end result of Biblical transformation is that we learn to "hate what is evil and cling to what is good" (v.9). In order to become Biblical believers in Jesus Christ, we must become life-learners together.