

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF LIFE

Romans 12:2

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The average life span in the United States is 76 years. That's 915 months. If you are a woman, it is 79; if you are a man, it is 73. That's means I've lived over half my life. I only have 29 years left. Now, the good news is that I went to this website called death-clock.org, and it said that I will live to be 104 years old. In fact, it said I will die on January 4, 2085. Whether we live to be 75 or 100 years old, life is short. And we all want to get the most of our life. We all want to live the best life we can live. We don't want to waste our lives. We don't want to get to the end of our lives and be full of regret. So the question I want to ask this morning is, how do you get the most out of life? How can you make sure that you live your best life, and don't waste your life?
2. Think about this from the perspective of a parent. As a parent, you want your kids to have a good life. You want them to get the most out of life. You want them to have a happy life. Well, what advice would you give them? If your kids asked you, "Dad, how do I get the most of my life? How can I live the happiest, best life?" what would you say?
3. Today we are going to look at one verse that answers that question: How to get the most out of life. How to live your best life. How to live life to the fullest. How to make the most of the time that you have on this earth.

II. TEXT

1. **Romans 12:2** "Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God."

III. EXPLANATION

1. This verse contains a negative command, a positive command, and a promise.
 - i. A negative command: Do not be conformed to this age.
 - ii. A positive command: But be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

- iii. A promise: God's will is good, pleasing, and perfect.
- 2. Let's begin by unpacking the promise.

IV. THE PROMISE

1. What is the promise? God's will is good, pleasing, and perfect.
2. What does it mean by God's will? The bible speaks of God's will in three ways:
 - i. God's sovereign will.
 1. Also called God's decreed will, or providential will.
 2. These are those things that God has decided in advance will happen and which He ensures will come to pass.
 3. Examples: The incarnation; the cross; the resurrection, the return of Christ; the creation of the new heavens and earth, etc.
 - ii. God's permissive will.
 1. These are things that God doesn't like but allows.
 2. For example, God doesn't like sin and evil and suffering (Heb 1:9), but He allows them as necessary by-products of free will. God doesn't want anyone to go to hell (2 Pt 3:9), but He allows it as a necessary by-product of free will.
 - iii. God's moral will.
 1. Any explicit command in scripture.
 2. R.C. Sproul describes it as "the revealed commandments of God's published law."
 3. This would include things like the Ten Commandments, the commands of Christ, and the many commands that we find in the rest of the New Testament. We find many of these moral commands here in Romans 12.
 4. **Romans 12:9-17** "9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good. 10 Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Take the lead in honoring one another. 11 Do not lack diligence in zeal; be fervent in the Spirit; serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer. 13 Share with the saints in their needs; pursue hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who

rejoice; weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud; instead, associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own estimation. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Give careful thought to do what is honorable in everyone's eyes."

5. Notice that this is a list of commands. This is an example of God's will.
 6. God's will in this refers to any explicit command in Scripture.
3. So, in our passage today, which aspect of God's will is it talking about?
 - i. It's talking about God's moral will. How do we know? This entire chapter is about God's will. It starts off in verse 1 by telling us to totally dedicate our bodies to holy living. In verse two it tells to not be conformed to the world but to be transformed. And just about every verse in the rest of the chapter is a moral command. So in this verse it's talking God's moral will, or God's explicit, revealed commands for us in Scripture.
 4. What does it mean that God's moral will is good, pleasing, and perfect?
 - i. God's moral will is good.
 1. What is a good deed? It is an act that benefits someone; it helps someone; it improves someone's life. When you live according to God's will, it benefits you, and it benefits those who know you. It helps you. It improves your life.
 2. This is what Scripture means when it says that God's commands are not a burden (1 Jn 5:3). God's commands make life better. In the short term it might make things harder; it might mean denying yourself some instant gratification; sometimes obedience is not the quickest or the easiest way to get from a to b, but in the long run, the God's commands make life better.
 3. God's moral is sort of like a vitamin. It may not taste good, it may not be fun to swallow, but it makes us healthier and happier. Sometimes obeying God is not fun, it might be hard, but in the long run it makes us healthier and happier.
 4. Ever since the kids were little she has told them, "The best life is the obedient life."

5. Listen Psalm 19 as it describes the benefits of God's moral will.
 6. **Psalm 19:7-8** "The instruction of the Lord is perfect, renewing one's life; the testimony of the Lord is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise. The precepts of the Lord are right, making the heart glad; the command of the Lord is radiant, making the eyes light up."
 7. Why does a mother tell her kids to brush their teeth, do their homework, eat their vegetables, look both ways before crossing the street, etc.? It's not to harm them, or ruin their fun, or make them miserable, but to benefit them.
 8. God's will is good. It will benefit you. It will help you. It will improve your life. It will guide you to the best life.
 9. Not only that, but when you live according to God's will, it will benefit those who know you. It will help those who know you. It will improve the lives of those who know you. In other words, you will be the best husband, the best father, the best friend, the best employee, the best neighbor, the best citizen when you live according to God's will and keep His commands.
- ii. God's moral will is pleasing.
1. In other words, it pleases God.
 2. Not only does it benefit you, but it pleases God. It glorifies God.
 3. Now, if you are not a Christian and you don't love God, then that doesn't matter. But if you are a Christian, then you love God. This really matters to you.
 4. If my friend said to me, "Andy, my wife really likes it when you wear green." I don't care. That doesn't affect my behavior, and it's kind of weird thing to say. But if my wife told me, "Honey, I really like it when you wear green," then I'd wear green until she got tired of it. If you're not a Christian, then you don't care what pleases God. But if you're a Christian, then that's what you want more than

anything in this world. To please Him. What pleases Him?
Obeying His will.

iii. God's moral will is perfect.

1. Some things are really good, but they can be better. Every once in a while a watch a really good movie; everything about it was awesome, except for the ending. The writer botched the ending. The girl died, or we're not sure if they are going to get together in the end. The bad guy won. Some things are really good, but they can be better. When something is perfect that means it cannot get any better. It cannot be improved upon. That's what God's will is like. It is perfect. It can't get better. It can't be improved upon.
2. In other words, God's way of living is the best way to live. His way of living is better than any alternative you can think up. His way of living is better than anything the world can offer you. His way of living is the best way to live. His principles, His guidelines, His rules, His values – they are the best. How do I know? Because His will is perfect, and you can't improve upon perfect.
5. So, when it says that God's will is good, pleasing, and perfect, it is saying that the best way to live is to live according to God's. That's the promise in the verse. The more you follow God's will, the more you get out of life. He who follows God's will the most, get's the most out of life. He who follows God's will the best lives the best life.
6. So, how do we live according to God's will? This verse gives us two keys to live according to God's will.

V. THE KEYS

1. Do not be conformed to this age.

- i. **Romans 12:2** "Do not be conformed to this age"
- ii. What is this age? Some Bible versions say "world" (ESV, NIV). It's talking about the sinful, unbiblical culture that we live in. Romans 12:2 is saying to not be conformed to the sinful, unbiblical culture that we live in.
- iii. **1 John 2:15-16 (NIV)** 15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in

them. 16 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.

- iv. According to this verse, the culture is driven by three desires. The people of this world, the people who are not following Jesus are pursuing three things: The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The lust of the flesh is the desire for pleasure, the lust of the eyes is the desire for possessions, and the pride of life is the passion for position and praise. Our culture is driven by the desire for pleasure, the desire for possessions, and the desire for position and praise. Sex, salary, and status. Girls, gold, and glory. That's age we live in. That's the culture we live in. It's the opposite of God's will. It's the opposite of what God says is good and important. It's the opposite of what God says will be the best life.
- v. And Romans 12:2 is saying if you want the most out of life, the best life, do not be conformed to this age.
- vi. Notice that it doesn't say "Don't conform," but "Don't be conformed." This age, this world is pressuring you to join it. Whether it is through advertisements, movies, videos, music, world is constantly trying to pressure you to run after sex, salary, and status. Our culture is constantly sending you messages that this is what you need to get the most out of life. This is what you need to be happy. If you don't run after these things you are missing out; you are wasting your life.
- vii. The word "conform" is made up of two words. "Form" means structure or system. "Con" means with. To conform means to be with the system. The world is constantly pressuring you to get with the system, to get with the program, to fall in line with the predominant values and styles of the day.
- viii. But Romans 12:2 says do not be conformed to this age.
- ix. Look at how other Bible versions put it:
 - 1. Phillips "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold"
 - 2. NIV "do not be conformed to the pattern of this world"

3. NLT “don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world”
 4. Amp “Do not be conformed to this world (this age),
[fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial
customs]
 5. GW “Don’t become like the people of this world”
 6. NCV “Do not be shaped by this world”
- x. In his sermon on this passage, Dr. R.C. Sproul noted that around the age of 13 we come to realize that there is a bigger world than just our family. There is a society; we have peers; and they are constantly measuring and judging us. Suddenly our deepest and greatest desire is to be accepted by our peers; to be liked; to be praised. But the price for approval and acceptance is high: conformity. We need to wear the right things; and listen to the right things; and watch the right things; and say the right things; and have the right opinion about things. And this desire for approval, to be liked, to be praised, never goes away. It decreases, but it never goes away. We don’t want to be criticized, rejected, teased, ridiculed, mocked, marginalized, cast out, disrespected. And so there is a natural tendency to conform for the sake of acceptance. But Romans 12:2 says to resist this natural urge. If you want the most out of life, don’t be conformed to the world.
- xi. The Germans have a word for “world,” or “age.” It is zeitgeist. “Zeit” means age, or time; “geist” means spirit, or ghost. Zeitgeist means spirit of the age. Whatever’s in style. Whatever is cool. Whatever is politically correct. Whatever is acceptable by culture at large. In the 1800s there was a famous German Philosopher named Friedrich Nietzsche. He was famous for saying, “God is dead.” He was a harsh critic of the zeitgeist. He said that most Germans were like sheep who blindly and cowardly followed the crowd. Most people adopt the herd mentality, just following the herd. To Nietzsche, the superman (Übermensch) was the nonconformist; the person who refused to blindly follow the crowd; the person who lived by his own code of values; the person who would dare to leave the herd and think for himself.

- xii. This is a command to be a nonconformist when it comes to the world around us. They are running after pleasure, profit, promotion and praise. Don't conform. If you want to get the most out of life, don't conform to this age.

2. Be transformed.

- i. **Romans 12:2** "Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind"
- ii. What does it mean to be transformed? It means to be changed.
- iii. Changed into what? Into Christlikeness. Into being like Christ.
- iv. Notice that it says to be transformed. It doesn't say to transform yourself. It says to *be* transformed. The moment you become a Christian, God goes to work inside of you to make you more like Jesus in your character, conduct, and convictions. God transforms us; we don't transform ourselves.
- v. At the same time, this is commanding us to be transformed. So, there's something we have to do in the transformation process. God is working to transform us, but we have to let God transform us.
- vi. It's like learning how to swim. I taught my kids how to swim. They didn't teach themselves. They couldn't teach themselves. They would have drowned. They needed me to teach them. But they had to let me teach them. They had to cooperate. They had to do their part. God wants to transform us, but we have to let Him. We have to cooperate.
- vii. How do we let God transform us? Notice the next phrase – "by the renewing of your mind." We must renew our minds. We need to learn to think like God. We need to learn to see things the way God sees them. We need to learn what God says about life, and pleasure, and sex, and money, and relationships, and possessions, and work, etc.
- viii. How do we learn to think like God? How do we renew our minds? We learn to think like God through the study of Scripture. Reading and studying the Bible. Listening to the sermon on Sunday. Going deeper with the sermon in Home Group. Reading your Bible on a

daily basis, etc. The Bible is where we find the mind of God revealed to us.

- ix. As we study Scripture, then we will be able to discern the will of God. We will be able to determine how God wants us to live. We will know God's and obey God's commands and become more like Christ.
- x. What do we know about Christ? He perfectly conformed to God's will. So the more we become like Christ, the more we will live by God's will.
- xi. In other words, here's how to get the most out of life:
 - 1. Live according to God's will, because it is good, pleasing, and perfect.
 - 2. How? Two keys.
 - a. Do not be conformed to this age. Don't follow the world.
 - b. Instead, be transformed – become like Jesus.
 - 3. How?
 - a. Renew your mind – study God's word so that you can know and do God's will.
 - 4. And God's will is good, pleasing, and perfect. It's the best life.

VI. CONCLUSION

- 1. When I was a kid my parents caught me smoking cigarettes. My dad took me aside and said, "Andy, I want you to stay away from cigarettes. I'm not going to spank you this time, but if I ever catch you smoking again, I'm going to give you the biggest spanking of your life." Why did my dad give me that command? Was it to hurt me? Was it to ruin my fun and make me miserable and unhappy? Was it because he didn't want me to make him look like a bad father? No. He told me stay away from cigarettes because he loved me, and he didn't want me to suffer. He wanted me to have the best life, and he knew cigarettes would limit my happiness. When God gives you a command, it's because He loves you. He knows what is best. He wants you to get the most out of life. Trust Him.

2. The devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour (1 Pt 5:8). How? He is constantly sending you this message: If you follow God's will, you will miss out. God's commands will ruin your fun and make you unhappy. Don't let God tell you what you can and cannot do. You need to live by your own rules; be your own boss; be the captain of your own ship; do your own thing; that's where you find happiness. That's a lie. God's will is good, pleasing, and perfect. It's the best life. It's the best plan. It's the best way.
3. If you are a Christian and you have been living in sin, would you repent today? Would you confess your sins to God and rededicate yourself to a life of obedience?
4. Maybe you are not sure you that you are a Christian. God loves you and created you for a wonderful relationship with Him, but we've all sinned and broken that relationship. The punishment for sin is hell after we die. But God loves us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to take our punishment when He died on the cross. Now, if we repent of our sins and believe in Jesus, God will forgive us and give us the gift of eternal life. If you would like to receive eternal life, pray and ask God to save you today.