WOW: Word Of the Week

Nonconformity

February 18, 2026

In case you just happened onto this WOW, we are in a short series focused on "radical discipleship." I introduced the series by defining radical: getting to the root of a matter. Radical discipleship is characterized by maturity and conformity.
This is WOW #3: nonconformity. Including this word in my "radical list," I reflect John Stott. This was his word. I like it. It is multi-faceted, extensive. A logical companion to conformity. Radical discipleship understands the when, why, how of conformity. Radical discipleship understand the when, why, how of nonconformity.

Nonconformity. I think of Romans 12. Not conformed but transformed. Another possible WOW for this series would be "transformation." Romans 12:1-2, nonconformity: when we are no longer conformed to the world around us, nonconformists.

How is it possible? Nonconformity is the result of internal change, transformation. Nonconformity may seem external, but transformation is rooted in internal change. We come back to the early verses of Romans 12. Time does not permit—God's mercy altering our lives, sacrificial living, our logical liturgy (ministry, service – multiple misconceptions and rabbit trails have been built on the translation, worship). Liturgy is the ministry, service of priests, what is done during "worship." Not everything a priest did or does is liturgy. Liturgy was specific action, ministry, service. In Romans 12, the reference is to presenting ourselves as living sacrifices, specific. Yes, permeating life, but do not miss the point that worship is always intentional. One does not worship, one is not a living sacrifice, unintentionally. I expand this study in my little YouTube series on Romans. (Just look for Bob Young Ministry and Missions on YouTube.)

Another passage contributes to our understanding of nonconformity. We may not see nonconformity at first glance in 2 Cor. 3:17-18. Transformed, beholding, seeing, reflecting. The verb is not easy to translate. Transformed. Do not miss Paul's explanaiton of the how, why, what. Glory. Increasing glory. Whose glory? Not ours. His glory. Nonconformity is possible through transformation.

Finally, in Romans 12 I began to unpack sacrifice, logical service, liturgy, ministry. Our sacrifice is continual service or ministry. The way Paul connects sacrifice and service reminds me of Jesus' statement to his disciples after the third prediction of his death. Mark 10:45, not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom, sacrifice.

Radical discipleship: becoming like Jesus! Present every person mature/complete in Christ. Conformed to his image. Non-conformists in this world. Who would think that a life dedicated to sacrificial service to others would be the way to meaningful living? Radical!