

## Do Not Be Conformed to this World

by Bro Willy Nakar

We have a Tagalog adage, “*Kapag nagigipit, kahit sa patalim kumakapit.*” Its English equivalent could be the worldly saying, “The end justifies the means.”

In the former, one’s distress is reason enough to resort to compromise, some wrongful behavior, or extreme measures. An example would be the case of a person who has no means to feed his family or to engage in a small business enterprise, and who borrows from a “loan shark” under very oppressive, usurious interests. For some of our countrymen, this is a normal thing. Never mind if paying the debt will be difficult. What’s important is to have the money to meet the need.

Actually, there is no longer any usury law. Consequently, a loan shark, a pawnshop and a commercial bank can charge borrowers what formerly were considered usurious. But we do know what is oppressive and unreasonable interest, especially if it is compounded every time the borrower fails to make the regular installment payment.

In the case of the English saying, we have a distinct example in the policy of the present administration to improve our economy through birth control and contraception (population management), as well as the legalization and promotion of gambling (casinos, lotto, on-line bingo, jai-alai, etc). Incidentally, the Church has taken a clear position against both the government’s stand on population management and gambling.

From a Christian viewpoint, we have recourse to the Holy Bible which frowns upon lending money “at usury” (***Psalms 15:5***), as well as the accumulation of wealth “by interest and overcharge” (see ***Leviticus 25:36-37***). When a believer borrows money under these conditions, there is a problem of faith. God wouldn’t want us to get credit — even under pressing circumstances — through measures that go against His Word. A man of faith will invoke the Lord’s counsel to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, “and all these things shall be added unto you” (***Matthew 6:33***). As for the lender, what awaits him or her are curses for disobedience (***Deuteronomy 28:15***).

On the other hand, the good intention to better our economy does not and can never justify the killing of the unborn — whom God has created (***Psalms 139:13, 15; Exodus 20:13***) — in order to reduce the increase in population. Neither can it be reason to foster the development of a culture of gambling, vice and loose morals based on false hopes, covetousness (***Exodus 20:17***) and hedonism.

In both instances, the one glorified is the false god mammon as we hold up money and self — not God — to be the solution to our personal or national problems.

The Lord provides us a way out of this spiritual blindness that keeps our people and country in bondage to poverty and forces of darkness.

*Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*  
**(Romans 12:2, RSV)**

To apply this spiritual principle is to abandon such ungodly government policies — for which our leaders will be held accountable by the Lord (**Wisdom 6:1-8**). In their stead, we can start invoking God’s promises of the blessings for obedience.

If you continue to heed the voice of the Lord, your God, and are careful to observe all his commandments which I enjoin on you today, the Lord, your God, will raise you high above all the nations of the earth. When you hearken to the voice of the Lord, your God, all these blessings will come upon you and overwhelm you. *“May you be blessed in the city, and blessed in the country! Blessed be the fruit of your womb, the produce of your soil and the offspring of your livestock, the issue of your herds and the young of your flocks! May you be blessed in your coming in, and blessed in your out!”* (**Deuteronomy 28:1-6**)

In this connection, may I share that these Old Testament promises given by God to His people Israel, are now fulfilled — for us believers — in Christ Jesus, the Lord (**2 Corinthians 1:20**). As we turn away from our worldly ways and focus on Jesus and His Word (Holy Scriptures), so shall we discover and learn about spiritual principles that govern the life of the individual and of the nation. It is one of the most exciting and rewarding pursuits.

And when we apply them to specific situations, we realize that God’s Word is alive and effective enough to bring us deliverance, healing, wisdom, success and prosperity.

Let us not therefore be misled by leaders who merely rely on their way of thinking and carnal solutions. This brings to mind the situation of Israel during the days of Isaiah. He prophesied, *“Israel’s kings will be like babies ruling childishly. And the worst sort of anarchy will prevail — everyone stepping on someone else, neighbors fighting neighbors, youths revolting against authority, criminals sneering at honorable men”* (**Isaiah 3:4-5, TLB**).

People lose a vital ability when they can no longer see their own sinfulness. The results are broken relationships, authority out of control, blindness to the needy, and worst of all, forgetfulness towards God. Spiritual blindness is a matter of life and death, not merely an inconvenience. Sin is self-destructive.

In today’s world, sinful living often appears glamorous, exciting and clever. But sin is wrong regardless of how society perceives it because in the long run, sin will destroy us and make us miserable. Those who are proud of their sins will receive the punishment from God they deserve. They have rejected God’s path to life (see **Psalms 1**), and the only alternative is the path to destruction.

Eventually, the faithful will receive God’s reward and the wicked will receive His punishment. It is disheartening to see the wicked prospering while we seem defeated as we follow God’s plan. Yet we must hold on and take heart! God will bring about justice in the end, and we will receive His reward if we have been faithful.