

Message #13**Colossians 3: 1-4**

When Paul wrote this letter to the Colossians, they struggled with the world, just like we do. There is no question that the world tries to squeeze the believer into its mold.

There is a unique chronology to Pauline letters. The first part of his letters deal with theology and doctrine. The last part of his letters deal with practicality and life. Paul wanted deep theology worked out in everyday life and that certainly becomes the main emphasis of these verses.

IN VIEW OF THE WONDERFUL POSITIONAL RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE WITH JESUS CHRIST, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO HEAVENLY THINGS AND NOT EARTHLY THINGS.

Observation #1 - The conjunction “then” indicates a succession and continuation of thought.

The meaning is in view of your vital positional link with Jesus Christ, and in view of the man-made religions that will promote legalism, mysticism and asceticism, you continually dedicate yourself to heavenly things.

Observation #2 - The conjunction “if” assumes reality, not possibility..

Paul assumes the reality that these are believers who have believed on Christ and therefore, positionally speaking, have been raised up with Christ. The fact that we are already seated in the heavenlies should motivate us to dedicate ourselves to heavenly things.

Observation #3 - The verbs “seek” and “set” are imperatives, or commands.

The believer has been commanded by God to make this heavenly pursuit and mindset the objective of life. This is not an option, it is a command.

Observation #4 - The verbs “seek” and “set” are present tense, or continual and habitual action.

The continual and habitual dedication of our lives is to be to heavenly things, not earthly things.

HEADING #1 – The command to dedicate ourselves to heavenly things. **3:1-2**

Command #1 - The command to continually seek things that are above. **3:1**

(Reality #1) - The reality of our position. **3:1a**

Simply stated, we have been so vitally linked to Jesus Christ, by the Spirit of God, that in the mind of God, we are already raised with Him and seated in the heavenlies.

(Reality #2) - The reality of Christ's position. **3:1b**

Jesus Christ is right now seated in the ultimate and most prestigious position of honor and glory—
“at the right hand of God.”

1) Seeking things above does not mean we do not live life in this world.

Paul, in the next verses, will inform us how we are to live life in view of a heavenly focus. This is not some legalistic or ascetic mandate to move into some monastery and live as a hermit monk; this is a command to seek the heavenly and biblical ideal in everything we do and think.

2) Seeking things above is not an automatic or easy goal for the believer.

If this were an automatic given, Paul would not have had to write this command to the Colossians. Many of these Colossians were classified as “faithful brethren” who had an excellent reputation (1:2, 4). Living in the world and not being conformed to the world is a difficult assignment.

Command #2 - The command to continually think on things above. **3:2**

The Apostle Paul knew the intimate connection between what we seek and how we think. What we seek is intimately connected to how we think.

We are charged in the Scriptures to be transformed by the renewing of our minds on the Word of God. The Bible has the power to transform our minds so that there is a heavenly consistency to the way we think.

By the way, I want you to see where deliverance from a worldly focus comes—it comes from a mind that is fixed on heaven. This means deliverance comes from a mind focused on the Word of God.

HEADING #2 – The reasons for the commands to dedicate ourselves to heavenly things.
3:3-4

The conjunction “for,” which begins **verse 3**, introduces some reasons why we should continually seek heavenly things and not earthly things.

Reason #1 - The deceased reason. **3:3a**

One reason why we should seek things above and not things on earth is because our old Adamic, condemned nature is dead in the mind of God. We positionally died when Christ physically died and we are spiritually alive because Christ physically arose.

Simply stated, we should seek things above because in the mind of God, we are already dead to the things of this earth and are alive unto Him.

Outwardly we are like any other man—we live in an aging, decaying and dying body. Inwardly the believer is not like other men in that we are alive unto God, a new creation that can glorify Him.

Reason #2 - The concealed reason. **3:3b**

Truth is when we come to faith in Jesus Christ we are still in the same body. We have the same physical appearance and the new spiritual life that we have is certainly not completely, physically seen by the lost world. In fact, they have no idea about our life with Christ, for it is hidden.

Through a focus on heavenly things and not earthly things, we demonstrate to this world that we are related to Jesus Christ.

Reason #3 - The revealed reason. **3:4**

We should continually seek things above because someday it is going to be revealed that we are citizens of heaven and not earth.

On that day, the whole world will know we were in this world, but we were not of this world. It is just as the Apostle John wrote—“Beloved now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is” (I John 3:2).

In view of the fact that we will be revealed to be children of God, we need to keep our focus on heavenly things and not earthly things.

In view of the fact that Jesus Christ is our life and in view of the fact that we have been intimately connected to Him and in view of the fact that He is now seated at the right hand of the Father, we must seek things that are above.

If we make things of heaven the primary pursuit and passion of our lives when Christ is revealed in His glory, it will be a glorious day for us.