

Title: Set Your Affection On Things Above
Living With Our Hearts Fixed On Eternal Things

Major Scripture References:

Colossians 3:1–4; Matthew 6:19–21; Philippians 3:20–21; 1 John 2:15–17

1. Background:

Paul wrote to the church at Colosse while imprisoned, addressing Christians who were being confronted with teachings that threatened to draw their attention away from the sufficiency of Christ. In the first two chapters, Paul emphasised the supremacy of Christ and warned against human philosophy, traditions, and religious regulations. Having established what Christians possess in Christ, Paul turns to the practical consequences of their relationship with Him (**Colossians 1:12–18; Colossians 2:6–10, 20–23**).

2. Situation:

The Colossian Christians lived in a world filled with earthly attractions, competing philosophies, sinful desires, and human standards of religion. They needed to understand that becoming Christians involved more than changing certain outward practices. Because they had been raised with Christ, the whole direction of their lives was to change. Their priorities were now to be determined by things above rather than things upon the earth (**Colossians 3:1–2**).

3. Main Characters:

Paul — An apostle of Jesus Christ who wrote to strengthen the Colossian Christians and direct their attention towards Christ (**Colossians 1:1–2**).

The Colossian Christians — Believers who had been buried and raised with Christ and were now called to live consistently with that new relationship (**Colossians 2:12; Colossians 3:1**).

Christ — The One with whom Christians have been raised, in whom their life is hidden, and with whom they will ultimately appear in glory (**Colossians 3:1–4**).

Sermon:

1. We Must Seek The Things Which Are Above (Colossians 3:1; Matthew 6:19–21):

The Christian life has a new direction. Paul does not merely tell Christians to avoid certain earthly things; he tells them positively what they are to pursue. Because we have been raised with Christ, our ambitions, desires, and priorities must increasingly reflect the world to which we now belong.

a. Our New Life Requires A New Pursuit:

Paul connects seeking things above directly with having been raised with Christ. Conversion changes not merely where we worship or what we believe, but what we are pursuing with our lives (**Colossians 3:1; Romans 6:4**).

b. Christ Must Occupy The Central Place In Our Pursuit:

The things above are not vague spiritual ideals; Christ Himself is there, seated at the right hand of God. Seeking things above therefore means organising our lives around Him, His will, and His kingdom (**Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 12:1–2**).

c. Our Treasures Reveal What We Are Really Seeking:

Jesus taught that where our treasure is, our heart will be also. What receives our time, thought, effort, sacrifice, and affection often reveals more about our priorities than what we merely say is important (**Matthew 6:19–21; cp. Luke 12:34**).



2. We Must Set Our Affection On Things Above (Colossians 3:2; Romans 12:2):

Paul moves from what we seek to what occupies our minds. “Set your affection” involves deliberately directing the mind towards heavenly things. Christians cannot allow the values and concerns of this temporary world to dominate their thinking.

a. Spiritual Thinking Must Be Deliberate:

Our minds do not automatically remain centred upon spiritual things. The pressures, pleasures, possessions, and anxieties of everyday life continually compete for our attention, so our thinking must consciously be brought under the influence of God’s word (Colossians 3:2; Philippians 4:8).

b. Earthly Things Must Not Control Our Hearts:

Paul is not teaching that Christians should ignore earthly responsibilities. Rather, earthly things must never become our supreme concern or determine the direction of our lives (Colossians 3:2; Matthew 6:31–33).

c. The Temporary Must Be Viewed In The Light Of The Eternal:

The world and its desires pass away, but the one who does the will of God abides for ever. When eternity governs our thinking, possessions, difficulties, ambitions, and disappointments assume their proper proportions (1 John 2:15–17; 2 Corinthians 4:17–18).

3. We Must Live In View Of Appearing With Christ (Colossians 3:3–4; Philippians 3:20–21):

Paul gives Christians a powerful reason for looking above: our present life is bound up with Christ, and our future is bound up with Him as well. What the world sees now is not the whole account. When Christ appears, those who belong to Him will appear with Him in glory.

a. Our Old Life Has Died:

Christians have died to the old manner of life and must therefore refuse to allow that former life to govern them again. We cannot claim a new life in Christ while deliberately continuing to live according to the priorities of the old one (Colossians 3:3; Romans 6:6–11).

b. Our True Life Is Found In Christ:

Paul says, “your life is hid with Christ in God.” Our deepest identity and security are therefore not found in possessions, position, reputation, success, or circumstances, but in our relationship with Christ (Colossians 3:3; Galatians 2:20).

c. Our Future Is With Christ:

Christ will appear, and His people will appear with Him in glory. That future certainty gives us a reason to live differently now: our citizenship is in heaven, and we look for the Saviour who will transform us (Colossians 3:4; Philippians 3:20–21).

Conclusion:

1. Christians have been raised with Christ and therefore must seek the things which are above rather than allowing earthly concerns to become the controlling purpose of life (Colossians 3:1).
2. Setting our affection above requires deliberate control of our thinking, priorities, and desires so that eternal realities shape the way we live each day (Colossians 3:2).
3. Our present life is hidden with Christ, and our future is to appear with Him in glory. That coming reality should influence every decision we make now (Colossians 3:3–4).

Applications:

1. Examine what presently occupies most of your thoughts, ambitions, time, and energy. These things may reveal whether your affection is genuinely set above or primarily upon earthly things (Colossians 3:2; Matthew 6:21).
2. Deliberately cultivate a heavenly mind through Scripture, prayer, worship, and meditation upon spiritual things. A mind fixed upon things above is nourished by things from above (Colossians 3:2, 16; Philippians 4:8).
3. Make earthly decisions in the light of eternity. Career, possessions, recreation, relationships, and personal ambitions must remain subordinate to seeking first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:1–2).

Questions:

1. What are Christians commanded to seek (**Colossians 3:1**)?
2. Upon what are Christians commanded to set their affection (**Colossians 3:2**)?
3. Where is the Christian's life presently hidden (**Colossians 3:3**)?
4. What will happen when Christ appears (**Colossians 3:4**)?
5. What does the location of our treasure reveal about us (**Matthew 6:21**)?
6. Why should Christians view earthly things differently from those whose lives are centred upon this world (**1 John 2:17**)?

Thought Question:

If everything earthly that presently occupies so much of our attention were taken away, how much would remain of what we are actually living for?

Lesson Principle:

“Those who have been raised with Christ must learn to live with their hearts and minds fixed where Christ is.”

Questions & Answers:

1. What are Christians commanded to seek (**Colossians 3:1**)?

Answer: The things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God (**Colossians 3:1**).

2. Upon what are Christians commanded to set their affection (**Colossians 3:2**)?

Answer: Upon things above rather than things on the earth (**Colossians 3:2**).

3. Where is the Christian's life presently hidden (**Colossians 3:3**)?

Answer: It is hidden with Christ in God (**Colossians 3:3**).

4. What will happen when Christ appears (**Colossians 3:4**)?

Answer: Those who belong to Him will also appear with Him in glory (**Colossians 3:4**).

5. What does the location of our treasure reveal about us (**Matthew 6:21**)?

Answer: It reveals where our heart is (**Matthew 6:21**).

6. Why should Christians view earthly things differently from those whose lives are centred upon this world (**1 John 2:17**)?

Answer: Because the world passes away, while the one who does the will of God abides for ever (**1 John 2:17**).