

Colossians 3:1-4

Context: Paul addresses the church of Colossae regarding the supremacy of Christ in all aspects of the Christian life. He confronts an early form of Gnosticism that was beginning to arise within the church. He directly addresses how the work of Christ is greater than all ascetic/mystic practices or legalistic codes. In the immediate context, Paul reminds his readers of their position in Christ, and how their position can bring life transformation that is rooted in the resurrecting power (Phil. 3:21) exemplified by the Father through Jesus, and the hope found in Christ's imminent return.

Col. 3:1b The imperative to seek

Paul's imperative to the reader to seek the things above is based on the resurrecting power that raised Jesus. Because of this power, one can actively think about the things of above in order that they will be pursued. This power to engage the thought life of the believer is the starting point of a life transformed into the Christ-like life.

Col. 3:2 The imperative to set our minds

Once the believer has sought after the things of God (in prayer, God's Word, and through the church community), he/she is to set the mind to accomplishing these things. This setting of the mind is a ongoing, deliberate act of one's will rooted in the life giving power of Christ.

Col. 3:3-4 The foundation of the two imperatives

These two imperatives and spiritual transformation are only made possible when one recognizes their need to be united with Christ having died to sin and being raised in his life. This newness of life leaves one securely in God and will be full realized at Christ's return. His return anchors our hope in the midst of physical and spiritual struggle during this present world.

Further Study:

This section begins with an affirmative statement regarding the reader's current position. Their position brings them to a place of action. The first action discussed is seeking the things above. Compare with Philippians 3:14 and think on what are the things above. Look through scripture to see what is taking place where Jesus is seated (Rev. 4,5; Rom. 8:34; Jn 17). How can these apply to our lives?

Paul issues a second imperative to "set our minds" on these things as well. What does it mean to set our mind on something? The verb "to set" is an ongoing action of the will. What can one take time each setting their minds on the things of God? Is there anything that you have set our mind to that is not glorifying to God?

In verse 4, Paul refers to Christ being our life. Looking back at Phil. 3:8-11, how was the life of Paul consumed by Christ? Paul's desire to know Christ and make his life to conform with Christ's demonstrates Paul's hope in being united with Christ in glory. Does your life

demonstrate this hope/truth? Think through how this truth can impact your life: in work, financially, in relationships, and in other activities.

Transformation Exercise:

Ask God to reveal one area of life that needs to experience transformation through seeking and/or setting your mind on heavenly things. Share this with a close friend or family member for prayer and accountability.