**SET OUR HEARTS ON THINGS ABOVE**

Colossians 3:1-17

Key verse 3:1

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”

**Introduction**



 So far in chapters 1 and 2, apostle Paul have talked about Jesus Christ in whom were hidden all wisdom and knowledge and encouraged us to continue to live our lives in Him. Now, in chapters 3 & 4 Paul talks more about the practical life of believers, concentrating on the new person we have become and the new life we have been called to live. As God's children, we must put to death the old self and put on the new, and then God will continue to work in us to mold us into Jesus' image. Through this study, may God strengthen and inspire us to live a new life by setting our hearts on things above.

1. Read verses 1-4. Why should we set our hearts on things above, not on earthly things? (1-2) What is our present condition and future hope? (3-4)

1-1, Read verses 1-4.

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. **3** For you died,and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ, who is your[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29522a)] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

1-2, Why should we set our hearts on things above, not on earthly things? (1-2)

 ***Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.***

* Chapter 2:20a reads, “Since you died with Christ…” But they had not only died with Christ! Paul here tells them that they had also been raised with Christ.
* Since they had been made a new person. They had been given a new and changed heart and they had also been given a new and a changed life.
* Our ministry is to focus on serving young people. So it may not easy for them to accept verse 1b and 2 about ‘setting your hearts on things above’.
* But nothing is difficult in the Lord and the Holy Spirit. We simply trust the Holy Spirit to teach and to convict their hearts.
* “Raised with Christ” simply means that we have been united with Christ in his death and in his resurrection.
* Our old self has died and in Christ we have risen to become a new person, not superficially, but through and through.
* Our lives are hidden with Christ in God. Our hope is in him, for he will surely return to reign in glory, and we will rise to be with him forever.
* To “set” implies that we don’t just think about it, but seek it with our whole body and mind.
* In fact, the heart and mind encompass the whole man or woman. The entire being must be diverted from the earthly things and set on the heavenly things.
* The mind, the intellect, the thought world, the imagination. And the heart, the emotion, the feelings, the passion and much more...
* All these things must be set on the heavenly things because that being had died with Christ and had been raised with Christ. And because that being had been changed in his or her inner man to become a child of God.
* And when we have been changed and given a new life, then that new life can no longer live as it did in its old self, but must now live in its new self .
* When it comes to spiritual things and the kingdom of God, we must never be passive, but take hold of the things of God with our whole hearts. (Matthew 11:12)

1-3, What is our present condition and future hope? (3-4)

***3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.***

* The new life we now have is hidden with Christ. It is sheltered and protected for a while. To be certain, we will appear in heavenly glory with Jesus.
* So one thing is clear that we can live in Christ with perfect security and peace. So many students have no hope and assurance in this world for it is not certain.
* To them nothing seems certain, except death and taxes. They despair and live in fear under curse. They need to enter into new life in Jesus and be found in Christ.
* When Christ who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

2. Read verses 5-11. What is our earthly nature and why must we put it to death? (5-9) How can we put on the new self? (10) What happens to believers? (11)

2-1, Read verses 5-11.

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. **6** Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29524b)] **7** You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. **8** But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. **9** Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices **10** and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. **11** Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

2-2, What is our earthly nature and why must we put it to death? (5-9)

***5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.***

* Apostle Paul encouraged us to put to death our earthly nature. In other words, it is not automatic to live a new life. It is our responsibility to put to death our sinful nature.
* Some of the elements of the sinful nature are found in verse 5b, "….sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.” (Gal 5:17-21)
* In Matthew 5:28, Jesus points out that even looking at someone lustfully is adultery. Impurity implies that something is not holy.
* Evil desires are desires that are not for the glory of God, for whatever we do, whether we eat or drink, we must do it all for the glory of God. (1 Cor 10:31)
* When we are greedy, it means that we have let something capture our hearts. It makes us want to serve created things.
* Greed is like a fire, always desiring more and more. Anything that captures our hearts is idolatry. There are many reasons that a Christian must not live like this.
* Verse 6 clearly says, “Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.” Paul cut to the chase. It displeases God. It damages us and damages others.
* These things rob the Holy Spirit of its rightful dwelling place, our hearts and minds.
* The wrath of God is surely coming. We must take them under control with the gospel of Jesus. This is the heart of the matter.
* Again “Put to death” are extreme words. It means literally to kill something so that it may not rise again.

Hebrews 12:4 reads,

 “In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.”

***7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices***

* We can see the fruit of repentance in the actual lives of the Colossian Christians. “You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.” Paul seems to remind people of what they were before.
* In light of the grace of God we need to rid ourselves of many things. **Anger** is like murder in Jesus’ eyes. **Rage** is extreme anger. I have to repent of letting rage come into my heart from time to time.
* **Malice** is intending something bad to happen to someone. **Slander**, is dragging someone’s good name through the dirt, publically. People can be sued for slandering.
* **Filthy language** is perverse talk, coarse jokes, swearing, taking the Lord’s name in vain.
* **Lies** can be subtle. Not telling the whole truth and being vague on purpose is like lying. It misleads people. But God can not be mocked. All lies will be exposed.
* Sometimes we think that such things are not all that bad. We get angry, we lie, we take God’s name in vain, and think nothing about it. We are sort of desensitized about it as the world does.
* But it is part of our old selves and must be taken off and replaced with the HOLY image of Jesus.

2-3, How can we put on the new self? (10)

 ***and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.***

* It can be done by being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Our new self is not complete at the moment it is given to us.
* It is a newborn baby that needs to be nourished and grown. And the promise is that the new life will most certainly grow and mature in the knowledge of God and in the image of its creator Christ.
* What a glorious truth is given to us here. We must live the new life, and we must live it because it has been prepared for us to live.

2-4, What happens to believers? (11)

***11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.***

* When we put on our new selves, then something beautiful happens in our fellowship.
* In the world there are so many barriers and prejudices. There are all kinds of divisions. But in Jesus every human barrier comes down.
* The closer we get to Jesus the closer we get to each other. Young and old, men and women, all ethnic groups, all social barriers, racial barriers, and all prejudices are removed.
* In Jesus we have unity. In the cross we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. A healthy church should have all different kinds of people worshipping together as one. Praise Jesus who made it with his once and for all sacrifice on the cross!

3. Read verses 12-17. What should we do as God’s chosen people? (12, 13) What virtue is emphasized, and why? (14) What should rule in our hearts, and why? (15a) How does Paul encourage us to be thankful? (15b-17)

3-1, Read verses 12-17.

Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **13** Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **14** And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. **15** Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.And be thankful. **16** Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. **17** And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

3-2, What should we do as God’s chosen people? (12, 13)

 ***Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.***

* God’s chosen people are holy before the eyes of God. They are made holy through their faith in the blood of Jesus. They are also dearly loved by God and by many, (but not all) people.
* As a chosen people part of the new self is to be clothed with virtues such as “…compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”
* These virtues are probably not highly valued among ancient Greek society, especially humility or forgiveness.
* But as a new person of Christ and a new community of church, they can still put into practice agape love as the Lord forgive us first.

3-3, What virtue is emphasized, and why? (14)

***14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.***

* Jesus really wants his disciples, of all ages to have unity with God and with one another.
* In John 17:11 Jesus prays for them. “...Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one.”
* It is by bearing and forgiving one another that we can achieve perfect unity. Forgiveness is the key to working things out. We demand that others forgive us. The key is to always remember how Christ forgave us.
* 1 John 4:19, “We love because he first loved us.” And 1 John 3:16, “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.”
* We can maintain unity with Jesus and one another and put on the greatest of every virtue, love, which binds us all together in perfect unity.

3-4, What should rule in our hearts, and why? (15a)

***15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.***

* Another blessing of practicing Christian virtues is peace. Instead of anger and criticism, peace should rule the hearts of anyone in the body of Christ.
* We pray that the peace of Christ may rule in our hearts because members of one holy body we were called to peace!
* Jesus gives us peace. God is glorified when there is peace among his people. People are attracted to Jesus when his people live in peace with one another and with God.
* Young people really want peace. Too often they can not find it at home. They surely can’t find it on their smartphones, music, and at the movie theater.
* They can’t find it in their relationships. They will find it only in Jesus and we need to show it by living in peace among ourselves.

3-5, How does Paul encourage us to be thankful? (15b-17)

 ***And be thankful. 16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.***

* We can also promote peace by maintaining an “attitude of gratitude” in our hearts to God. (15b, 17b) An unthankful heart is the root of all sin.
* Satan cannot manipulate a heart that is thankful to God. Being thankful to God means being thankful for all that he has done in your life, all that he is doing and all that he will do. Thankfulness glorifies God.
* “Let the message of Christ dwell in you” implies that God is trying to do something through his word.
* Let the word of God dwell in your heart richly through deep and personal and quiet Bible study. Then we will see the peace of God descend upon our hearts like a refreshing morning mist.
* The peace of God can grow among us in other ways too. “…as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.” Christ gave us wisdom.
* We are also given wisdom to teach and encourage others. We can also influence others in the way of peace by singing spiritual songs and hymns.
* “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus,…” This is linked to 1 Cor 10:31, which reads, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”
* God does not want his people living for their own glory and honor, trying to make a name for themselves.
* The peace of God can come upon us, and among us, when we stop living for our own glory and live exclusively for the glory of God.
* When we live for the glory of God, all together then we can have unity of love and peace and attract a non believing world to Christ through beautiful community.

**Conclusion**

 In this passage we learned that after receiving our new life in Christ, we must set our hearts on things above. This means to seek heavenly things, especially Jesus sitting on his throne. This is not just an idea or a once in lifetime event, it is a lifestyle. We must put off our sinful nature and put on the new image of our Creator, Jesus Christ. We must put our old “self” to death and develop godly virtues in our lives. Then we can be one with Jesus and grow in oneness with one another as God wants us to be. We can maintain the love of God and the peace of God among us and attracting many young people to a new life in Christ.

**One word: Set our hearts on things above**