

Setting Our Minds On Things Above

Col. 3:1-4

Colossians 3:1-4 - Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Introduction:

- A. From a reading of Paul's letters, it would seem that even in his day, the idea of living a Christian life was hard for many to grasp. When he wrote to the Colossians, the theme of his letter dealt with the idea of dying to sin and living for Christ.
- B. Paul reminds them that Christ is not here, but rather has returned to heaven, and if we truly do have Christ as our example, we should then be "seeking the things above, where Christ is;" heavenly things. Thus the question that needs to be asked, what is involved in seeking heavenly things and what are the characteristics of spiritually minded people?
- C. A spiritually minded person is:

I. One Who Has A Constant Awareness Of God's Presence

- A. The child of God needs to have thoughts of God throughout the whole day
 - 1. God is to be our first thought in the morning when we awake and our last thought in the evening when we slump into blissful sleep
 - 2. Everywhere we go or look we should see the hand of our Father in it - cf Acts 17:27-28; Psa. 139:7-12, 17

Acts 17:27-28 - that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'

Psalms 139:7-12 - Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me. If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night," Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You.

Psalms 139:17 - How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

- 3. Look carefully at those men of the O.T. of whom it is said "they walked with God":
 - a. Noah walked with God - Gen 6:9

Genesis 6:9 - These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.

- b. Enoch walked with God - Gen 5:24

Genesis 5:24 - Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

- c. David is said to have walked with God - 1 Kng 15:3-5

1 Kings 15:3-5 - He walked in all the sins of his father which he had committed before him; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, like the heart of his father David. 4 But for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, to raise up his son after him and to establish Jerusalem; because David did what was right in the sight of the LORD,

and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite.

4. The question to ask ourselves is whether I walk with God? - 1 Cor 6:19-20

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

- B. How does keeping God in our minds constantly help us in everyday life?

1. First, it keeps us from sinning - Heb. 4:13; Prov. 15:3

Hebrews 4:13 - And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Proverbs 15:3 - The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.

2. By keeping God before our eyes each and every day it encourages us to pray - cf Phil. 4:6-7

Philippians 4:6-7 - Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

3. Keeps us mindful that God determines our life - Jas 4:15

James 4:15 - Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

4. Gives us freedom from fear - Psa.46:1-3; Heb. 13:5-6; 2 Thess. 1:6-7

Psalms 46:1-3 - God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change And though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; Though its waters roar and foam, Though the mountains quake at its swelling pride. Selah.

Hebrews 13:5-6 - Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

2 Thessalonians 1:6-7 - For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,

5. We may die in natural calamities or by the hand of godless men, but nothing can permanently harm our souls if God is always before us - Matt. 10:28; Rom. 8:31, 37-39

Matthew 10:28 - "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Romans 8:31 - What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

Romans 8:37-39 - But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

II. *One Who Has A Love And Deep Respect For God's Word*

- A. The spiritually minded person respects and recognizes the word of God as the complete revelation of God's will - 2 Tim. 3:16-17

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

B. Accepts it as truth - 1 Thess 2:13

1 Thessalonians 2:13 - For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

1. What if God said out aloud here today, "You who believe and are baptized shall be saved", would anyone dare say that it is unnecessary? - Mk. 16:16

Mark 16:16 - "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

2. Spiritually minded people appreciate truth even when it hits home
3. The spiritual meditate on the word of God daily - Psalms 119:97

Psalms 119:97 - Mem. O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

III. *One Who Has His Heart Set On Heaven*

A. The spiritually minded not only thinks on heavenly or spiritually matters now, but thinks often about "going home"

1. The Apostle John looked forward to Christ's return - Rev. 22:20; should also be our attitude

Revelation 22:20 - He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

2. Like Abraham the spiritually minded person says..."This world is not my home, I'm just passing through" - Heb. 11:9-10, 13-16

Hebrews 11:9-10 - By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Hebrews 11:13-16 - All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

3. Material things of this life are immaterial to those who are spiritually minded - Matt. 6:33-34; Job 1:21

Matthew 6:33-34 - "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Job 1:21 - He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."

4. The spiritually minded person has learned to be content with the inadequacies of life realizing that there awaits him the promise of eternal rest with the Father in Heaven - Phil. 4:11; 2 Cor. 4:16-17

Philippians 4:11 - Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances

I am.

2 Corinthians 4:16-17 - Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

IV. Having Our Minds Set On Things Above Helps Us In Times Of Temptations And In The Midst Of Trials

A. Trials that we face are God's way of putting us to the test - cf 1 Pet 1:6-7

1 Peter 1:6-7 - In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

1. We are not to be weary in these trials but rather we are to rejoice - cf 1 Pet 4:12-13

1 Peter 4:12-13 - Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

2. Must realize that some are destroyed by such trials - Matt. 13:21

Matthew 13:21 - yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

3. While others are made stronger - Jas 1:2-4

James 1:2-4 - Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

B. Let us continually give God the thanks that we are worthy to suffer and be tried for His cause - Phil. 4:4

Philippians 4:4 - Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

V. One Who Seeks First The Kingdom Of God

A. They seek peace - Phil 4:6; 1 Pet 3:12

Philippians 4:6 - Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

1 Peter 3:12 - "FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE TOWARD THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER, BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL."

B. Those who do so receive spiritual as well as physical blessing from God - Eph. 1:3; Matt 6:33; Lk 12:22-31

Ephesians 1:3 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

Matthew 6:33 - "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Luke 12:22-31 - And He said to His disciples, "For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your

life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life's span? If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith! And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 "For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. 31 "But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

1. They have a good life while on this earth - Prov. 3:1-10

Proverbs 3:1-10 - My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments; For length of days and years of life And peace they will add to you. Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute In the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones. Honor the LORD from your wealth And from the first of all your produce; So your barns will be filled with plenty And your vats will overflow with new wine.

2. Also in the life to come - Col. 3:4

Colossians 3:4 - When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Conclusion:

- A. Spiritual mindedness comes with time, not overnight. As one grows spiritually strong so does his spiritual mindedness. As Christians we should strive toward such a goal.
- B. The only way that this is accomplished is by, prayer, Bible study, meditation, assembly with other saints, and the constant encouragement of the brethren.
- C. Let us seek to be more spiritually minded, so we can enjoy this life here, as well as the life to come.