

Studies in the Epistle to the Colossians  
Chapter Thirteen  
**Set Your Affection on Things Above**

“<sup>1</sup> If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. <sup>3</sup> For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Colossians 3:1-4).

**As we move deeper into Colossians, we need to see the order of teaching of the truth by the Spirit of God.** Paul now begins to lay out some practical applications of truth. The false doctrines of Legalism, Mysticism and Asceticism would deceive people into preoccupations with nonsensical, fruitless pursuits after pseudo-spirituality. However, a determination to pursue after Truth (knowledge of God through His inspired Words) and the will of God for one’s life is not an empty pursuit.

“<sup>16</sup> All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: <sup>17</sup> That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (II Timothy 3:16-17).

**Doctrine** establishes God’s **normal** expectations for believers. Therefore it establishes practice. **Reproof** exposes a **deviation** from accepted practice. **Correction** is counter-teaching to **correct a deviation** in doctrine. The epistle to the Colossians is involved in all three, but especially the latter.

Colossians (like the book of Galatians) is intended to correct serious deviations from truth that were trapping and leading people away from accepted norms established by doctrine. God’s Truth offers no apology for its firmness, or no sympathy for the deceivers. The result of this deception and deviation from the Truth is what Colossians 2:19-22 refers to.

“<sup>19</sup> And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. <sup>20</sup> Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, <sup>21</sup> (Touch not; taste not; handle not; <sup>22</sup> Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men” (Colossians 2:19-22)?

In dealing with all the intellectual questions of the day, like; How is the primitive order of the universe to be restored?, or What is the origin of evil?; they forgot to ask the most important question, What must I do to be saved? They had lost the reality of Who Christ is and what He came to do.

**Doctrine is the basis of practice (Colossians chapters 3 and 4).**

Having established the doctrine (completeness in Christ), God begins to establish the practical expectation of that doctrine. Through preaching or personal study of the Word, God brings the believer to accept a Biblical Truth (faith). From that point on, He begins to test the believer to see if he has accepted that Truth in his life (if faith is real). When practice corresponds with the Truth, it becomes a conviction. You cannot say you believe a Truth until it changes your thinking, emotions and actions.

“<sup>23</sup> For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: <sup>24</sup> For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. <sup>25</sup> But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1:23-25).

## The admonition of belief or faith (Colossians 3: 1-2)

“If ye,” the question is, if you believe the following, then here is what will take place in your life. The point is this; if you have been spiritually resurrected out from among the spiritually dead to a state of spiritual life, then you will be constantly seeking spiritual things. Now friends, that is quite a statement of expectation, but it is God’s expectation. You see, when He says we are to “seek those things which are above,” it qualifies itself; “Where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.” The idea is more than seeking spiritual things above the worldly things, but seeking the exact same things that Christ is seeking. Would you like to know what that is?

“<sup>1</sup> And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. <sup>2</sup> And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. <sup>3</sup> And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. <sup>4</sup> And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. <sup>5</sup> And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. <sup>6</sup> And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. <sup>7</sup> And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. <sup>8</sup> And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. <sup>9</sup> And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:1-10).

You see, Christ is sitting at the “right hand of the Father;” the place of glorification, which signifies His work is “finished.” He is seated on the mercy seat (the place of propitiation) where we are positionally seated with Christ. For the believer this is a reminder that the Head is in Heaven (Christ). The body is on earth (the Church; “born again” believers). The work of the “head” is finished (propitiation of God and reconciliation of man). The work of the “body” is the ministry of reconciliation; not to accomplish it, but to preach an accomplished reality.

“Then Jesus said to them again, Peace unto you, as My Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (John 20:21).

**Bringing the body under subjection to its “head” (Colossians 3:2);** “set your affection,” means to bring one’s mind into union with the mind of Christ. This is a rare reality among believers.

“<sup>19</sup> But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. <sup>20</sup> For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. <sup>21</sup> For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s” (Philippians 2:19-21).

The Christ “life” in us keeps the ministry of Christ through us a priority by bringing glorification and praise to Christ through our actions. Any kind of inconsistency in our lives brings reproach on the Name of Christ and upon the ministry. Paul’s statement regarding Timothy has been consistently true throughout church history. Trustworthy people with the right priorities are a rare commodity. A person who truly thinks with the mind of Christ puts other people first by an unwillingness to compromise Truth.

“Not on the things on earth” (Colossians 3:2); the things of this earth are not sinful in themselves; alcohol, tobacco, money, etc. The Word does not say that “money is the root of all evil.” What does it say? “The love of money is the root of all evil” (I Tim. 6:10). Therefore, the sin problem here is when we become preoccupied with these things. The things of this world are used of Satan to entice us away from serving God. The answer is not to just correct our attitude towards things, but our attitude towards God. Asceticism may take our affection away from the things of the world, but it does not transfer that affection to God.

**The reminder (Colossians 3:3), “Ye are dead;”** the reminder is, as far as our being “risen with Christ” is concerned, we were separated from all the lusts and enticements of this evil world and we should be walking in the reality of that resurrected spiritual life. In fact, that reality should be so vivid that the world should not be able to see our old life styles, but only the life of Christ in us and through us. Our old life styles and affections should be “hidden with Christ.” As Christ is hidden from the view of the lost world in the Godhead, so should our affections for the things of this world, be hidden “with Christ.”

**Christ our life (Colossians 3:4);** many Christians only share there lives with Christ. Christ expects much more than sharing our lives with Him. The meaning of this verse is the heart of practical Christianity. If you were to find some philosophy or formula for an absolutely perfect life in the eyes of God, anyone who believes in that reality would grab for it. It is right here. Stop trying to live your life and let Christ live His life through you. He has given you a new life. He intends for you to give that life away through ministry. That is the only way your life will not be wasted.

If you are not experiencing the fulfillment of a resurrected life “in Christ,” let Christ have your life completely. Everything else in this life will prove to be unfulfilling. You can believe the Word of God and protect yourself from wasting more minutes of your precious life by simply determining to live every moment to the glory of God.

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1. What three things from II Timothy 3:16-17 is Bible doctrine given for?
  - A. \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Which of the above three things is the primary purpose of the book of Colossians? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. What does accepting any one of the three deceptions listed in chapter two (Legalism, Mysticism, or Asceticism) say about a person's understanding of the work of Christ for his salvation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What is God's practical expectation of either teaching or learning spiritual truths (doctrine)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. "If ye then be risen with Christ," what is God's expectation of you in that reality? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - A. Why the hypothetical "if"? What is God questioning here? \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. What should be the evidence of this reality? \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. "If" you profess to be born again, is this the reality of your life? \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Read Luke 19:1-10. What does this portion of Scripture reveal to us about the meaning of "seek those things which are above" in Colossians 3:1? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
7. What is the theological significance of the fact that Jesus is seated at the "right hand of the Father" in Heaven? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
8. What does God expect from believers by the words "set your affection on things above, not on the things of the earth"? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
9. What is the reminder about from Colossians 3:3 ("ye are dead")? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
10. Can you honestly say Christ is your life? Is doing His will your central purpose for living? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
If not, what is? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_