

Colossians

UNDERSTANDING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH



Colossians 3:1-10 Inductive Bible Study with Discussion Questions

Outline

- I. Set the right priority (1-4)
- II. You are transformed, act like it! (5-10)

I. Set the right priority (1-4)

Discussion Questions

- What does it mean to be raised with Christ?
- If you have been raised with Christ, share your story of when and how this happened.
- What things, "which are above," is Paul referring to?
- How can we seek those things?
- How should we set our minds on the things that are above?
- What will our lives look like if we are doing this?
- What will our lives look like if we are setting our mind on the things on earth?
- What does it mean that your life is hidden with Christ in God?
- How does verse 4 connect topically with the previous verses?



Cross-References

Luke 12:34 – For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Deuteronomy 6:5 – Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Colossians 1:16-17 – For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Colossians

UNDERSTANDING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH



1 Corinthians 8:6 – yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Deuteronomy 4:29 – But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Jeremiah 29:12 – Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the Lord.

1 Chronicles 16:11 – Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.

Verse by Verse Commentary

1. *If you have been raised with Christ* – (See Colossians 1:12-15.) This was a central point in the last chapter. Our lives are to be transformed. We were previously dead in our sins, but God has made us alive in Christ. The last chapter mentioned this doctrine. The following verses will take a look at the practical effect this doctrine should have on our lives. Following the flow of logic: “If this has happened to you... then you should do...”

2. *Keep seeking the things above* – Paul assumes that this is what the Colossians have already been doing. It is a reasonable assumption to make because every believer would be doing that, otherwise they are not a believer. The main point of this passage is that believers must set the correct priorities. Paul is not saying that we should walk around with our heads in the clouds. He is saying that we need to understand what is truly important and spend our time and energy pursuing it. There are a lot of different things we can seek after in life.

What are some of the most common things the people around us are seeking after?
What are the things above which we should be seeking?

We should be seeking after the things of God. Our focus should be on building His kingdom instead of our own. Our focus should be on bringing Him glory and not ourselves. Our focus should be on serving Him, not ourselves. Give me a daily hour by hour schedule of a random

Colossians

UNDERSTANDING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH



person and I think I have a good shot of identifying their priorities based on how they spend their time. How about you? Do your actions show that you are seeking after the things of God? Or do your actions reveal that you are paying only lip service to this idea?

3. *Where Christ is seated at the right hand of God* – Why should we focus on heavenly things? What is there that is so important? It is important because Christ is there.

If we are truly a Christian, our heart should belong to our namesake: Christ. According to 1 Peter 2:11, we are sojourners on the earth. This is not our home. Many of us after traveling for an extended period of time have probably experienced homesickness. We long for the things of home because that is where our heart is. Believers should also have this same feeling.

We must not get too attached to this world. When Jesus was hanging on the cross, He said, “it is finished.” He came to this world with a mission and the mission had been accomplished. We must also be mission oriented to complete what God has prepared for us to do here before we reach the final destination. Falling in love with the world is like falling in love with airplane food when you are on your way to the cuisine capital of the world.

4. *Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth* – This is the same concept we have been discussing. This concept is repeated because of how important it is. Doing this is a conscious decision, an act of will. We know that Satan uses many things in this world to try to pull people’s attention away from what really matters. Satan took Jesus to the top of a mountain and showed Him the beauty of the world and its kingdoms. He hoped to take Jesus’ mind off of the things above and cause Him to fall in love with this world and as a result fail in His mission. He has tried the same thing for many saints.

He used Delilah, and other ladies, to seduce and distract Samson. He used Bathsheba to try to bring down David’s reign. He used money to entice Judas. He used the fruit to entice Eve. He used the golden bar to entrap Achan, hoping by extension to bring down the nation.

But along with his success stories he also has some failures when saints through great faith, obedience, and determination refused to take their mind off of the things above and focus on the circumstances or temptations of this world. Daniel and his friends resisted multiple attacks. Noah

Colossians

UNDERSTANDING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH



set his mind on the things above and not on the earth when he continued building the ark for a hundred years with no sign of rain.

Who else resisted Satan's attacks and refused to attach themselves to this world while setting their mind on the things above? For one example, see 2 Samuel 11:6-17. Right smack dab in the middle of the story of David's greatest failure is told the story of a forgotten man, Uriah the Hittite. He is a great example of a man who set his mind on the all-important mission and refused to be distracted by anything. David tried his hardest to get Uriah to focus on the things that are on the earth. For Uriah it would not even have been a sin to go back to his home and sleep with his wife. Why wouldn't he do it?

The nation was at war. He had a mission. He would not be distracted by anything whether good or bad. You see Satan tries the same ways to distract us from our heavenly mission. He doesn't always come along and say, "go sleep with your neighbor's spouse." Sometimes he comes along and says, "go spend time with your own spouse. They should be your priority." Wait a minute. That's not a temptation, is it? It can be. If you are supposed to be serving the Lord, but instead place your spouse as the top priority and give all your focus and attention to them, then you are not setting your mind on the things of heaven. Anything that takes Christ out of the position of priority and replaces Him in our hearts, is an idol. Those idols are not in and of themselves a bad thing. It is good for our spouse/family to have a high priority in our hearts, but Christ must always remain first. Is there anything, even something good, that is pulling your time and attention away from what God wants you to be doing?

5. Hidden in Christ – What does this mean? We abide in Him and He in us. We have died to ourselves and now we belong to Christ. We can stand secure in Him. Verse 4 gives us a fuller picture of what this means. Right now, people don't care about us. They may look at us and laugh at us. Our message to them may fall on deaf ears. But we are on the winning team. One day when Christ reveals Himself in glory, we will be with Him, victorious because He is victorious. Our very identity is tied to our relationship with Christ. We are not our own anymore.

Colossians

UNDERSTANDING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH



II. You are transformed, act like it! (5-10)

Discussion Questions

- Based on verse 5, what does Paul mean by, “earthly”?
- How can we put these things to death?
- What connection does this passage have with the first section?
- What warning does Paul give in verse 6?
- What verb does Paul use in verse 7? Why? What assumption does he make?
- Which of the sins in verse 8 are more difficult for you to put away? Why?
- What steps do you need to take to be victorious in this area?
- What reason is given for the command not to lie to one another?
- Is there any exception given for this command?
- What about if telling a lie is convenient or beneficial to you or the other party?
- What is happening to the new self? How can it be renewed?

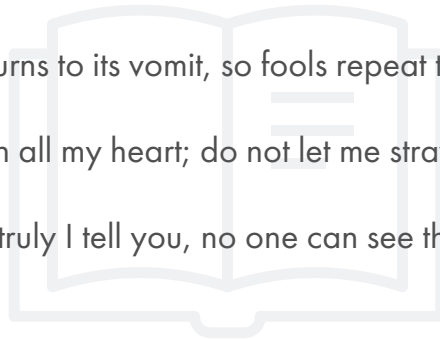


Cross-References

Proverbs 26: 11 – As a dog returns to its vomit, so fools repeat their folly.

Psalms 119:10 – I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.

John 3:3 – Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”



Verse by Verse Commentary

1. *Verse 5* – Our lives have been transformed. We have a new identity in Christ. We have been born again. So, live like it! We must not use our body or mind sinfully to please our own flesh. These types of sins are common for earthly people. But we must repent and set a new direction. These sins are a type of idolatry and when we commit them, we are saying that our own momentary pleasure is more important than the commands of God. We are in essence allowing a disgusting sin to take the place of God in our hearts.

Colossians

UNDERSTANDING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH



2. *Verse 6* – Paul makes it clear that it is these things that stir up God’s wrath. The sons of disobedience practice these sins and will pay the penalty. Think about the phrase, “sons of disobedience.” Would you call a child who is mostly obedient and joyful and polite a son of disobedience? If they occasionally sin, then would you call them that? No. You would probably only call a rebellious child “disobedient” if he frequently disobeys and is wild most of the time. An obedient child may sin from time to time and a rebellious child may be sweet from time to time, but neither exception changes the rule of what they are. A believer is like a soldier who looks straight in front to the goal and tries to navigate through pits and traps. Even though he is focused on the objective he occasionally missteps.

The person who practices these things will be judged by God.

3. *You also once walked* – We all come from the same boat. Every believer was like this prior to being born again. Every one of us needed rebirth. Paul uses the past tense because our old lifestyle must be put in the past. The prodigal son lived a wicked and wild life. But when he came back to his father, he left that lifestyle behind. Have you left your sinful habits behind you?

4. *Put them all aside* – As believers, we must actively reject our previous lifestyle and the sins that come with it. Verse 8 primarily mentions some of the common sins of the tongue. Our tongue is one of the most difficult members of our body to control. The tongue quite often reveals our true thoughts or attitude of the heart. It is so fast we don’t always have time to filter what we say, meaning our tongue may be an accurate reflection of our heart. To be victorious we must be changed from the inside out.

5. *Do not lie to one another* – This command cannot be any clearer. Lying is one of the old self practices which we must put behind us when we trust in Christ. Sometimes, lying is convenient. Sometimes, it appears beneficial. Other times, it feels like everyone around us is doing it. None of these are good reasons for *us* to lie. Interestingly, here is yet another place in the Bible where no exception is given. Don’t you think that if there are times when it is OK to lie, God would have told us so? Instead, lying is mentioned as part of the old self and an evil practice which we must lay aside.

Colossians

UNDERSTANDING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH



6. *Have put on the new self who is being renewed* – “Putting on the new self” is a daily decision. Here we see that this new self needs to be renewed. I am often amazed at how God designed our earthly bodies. He created them to be self-healing. Imagine for a minute that our bodies couldn’t heal or recover from injuries. I have had a broken ribs, broken fingers, a broken ankle, a torn ACL, MCL, PCL, torn my meniscus, herniated discs in my back, and multiple cuts and bruises. I would be like a walking train wreck if God didn’t create my body to heal itself. Well, our spiritual selves need to be renewed as well.

Application: What is one way you can be renewed spiritually this week? Consider adding something which is not part of your normal routine.
