

Colossians 3:1-4

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[0 : 00] Good morning.

My name is Jordan.! Wonderful. I've been coming to this church from the beginning, and I got a chance today just to open Colossians and to share some of the things God's been teaching me through this passage.

So I pray that it will be a blessing, but open us in prayer. I'll read the text, and then we'll get into it. Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, you've been so kind to redeem us, to call us your children, to take away our sins, to give us new life.

Lord, we pray that you would just prepare our hearts to live in the newness of life that you've given us, the life that you have purchased for us. Lord, help us live lives of freedom, not of slavery to the things of this world.

May we not slip into just the constant pull of our hearts to orient ourselves around self-performance or self, I don't know, self-promotion or self-acceptance.

[1 : 27] Lord, and help us to live in the free gift that's been given to us by your Son. Lord, we pray that you'd be with this time in your Word, that you would just guide our hearts. Lord, you wrote this Word.

Lord, you know how it is best interpreted. Your Spirit is in each one of us, knowing the things that we need to understand and glean and apply.

And so we pray that you would be active and quick and moving in our hearts, so that we might be soft before your Word and changed and be able to walk in the victory that Christ has won for us. In your name I pray, amen. All right, so I'll read Colossians 3, verses 1 through 4. If you have it, open it. If you don't, there's Bibles in the back.

It already should be marked. It's a text. So Colossians 3, 1 through 4. If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

[2 : 27] Set your minds on the things that are above and not on the earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

So we're aiming there. I'll give you a little context of where we've been and maybe set up this text a little bit because I think it ties in very well with the text before and after. It makes sense, right? It's a cohesive letter.

It's a cohesive book. So we've been in Colossians, and Colossians is filled with beautiful expressions of who Christ is and of his value. We've seen that.

Along with that, when you deal with who Christ is, you also deal with gospel truths. And so this book is just packed with gospel truth. The gospel is the good news that Jesus has redeemed people for himself, right?

But one theme that I want to try to pick out today, there's lots that we could from this book, but I think it's going to be helpful because I think it's a challenge for us as Christians and a challenge for lots of people in this modern world, is this idea of righteousness.

[3 : 34] It's like, oh man, righteousness, that's a big word, right? So when we think of righteousness, a lot of times what we think of, right, we think of holiness, right? If somebody acts right and does the right things, then that person is righteous.

And that's a correct understanding of it, right? But there's more to it. The biblical understanding is also relational, right? To be righteous is to be in right standing to somebody, is to be accepted by that person, right?

And so we see that in Colossians, and I'll take you through that here in a second, but we see this term as also a relational term, right? And I think this is a really important concept.

Because I think if we're honest with ourselves and in tune with the world around us, we must recognize that this concept of righteousness is oftentimes what fuels our decisions, man's decisions, right?

We have an inward drive to be acceptable. We want to know that we have worth, and we want to seek and prove this in a million different ways. So here's some examples, right?

[4 : 36] So we diet, we exercise, we spend too much money and time on clothing. So that we meet appearance standards, right? We give ourselves to workaholicism so that we can obtain that raise or that promotion, because that next step will show everybody and ourselves that we've arrived, right?

We say if only we can successfully complete this project, I and others will know that I'm a valuable and productive individual, right? Or we tire ourselves silly, right?

This is parenting one, right? We tire ourselves silly reading all the do's and don'ts of parenting. We learn about how this new product or this educational opportunity will be the key to our child's developmental success.

And we do all this because we want to meet some unspoken standard that we, of what a modern mother is supposed to look like, or because the future success of our children will prove that we have been good fathers, right?

And so deep down, I think man is constantly and tirelessly trying to prove that we have value, that we have worth, that we are acceptable before others.

[5 : 46] And ultimately, what really matters is, right, that we're acceptable before the God of the universe. And that's the real question. But the real question, the important question is, how can one be acceptable before a perfect and holy and powerful God?

Surely he is not satisfied by our trim and tidy appearance, our career success, or that you're your community group's mom of the year. So let's review a few places in Colossians and see where Paul expounds on how we might be proved acceptable before God, that we might be in a right relationship with God.

So first, we're going to look at Colossians 1, 21 and 22. Bear with me. I think I'm driving to a good point here. It's taking a little time to develop it, though. Okay. So in Colossians 1, 21 and 22, it says, And you who were once alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.

So in Colossians, we learn that Jesus Christ is the preeminent one, the one for whom the whole fullness of God dwells, by whom and through whom and for whom all things were created.

And he is the one that holds all things together. And this Jesus, this God, this preeminent one, has reconciled. He has made you right. He has put you in right standing before God through his body of the flesh, which is his perfect, acceptable life lived, and through his death, in order that he might present you holy and blameless before the Lord.

[7 : 20] So listen to that, right? So we, in contrast to our constant need as humans to prove ourselves, to prove ourselves acceptable, the gospel is saying that Jesus' life is what makes us righteous, right?

It is what proves us acceptable before God. It is through his life that we take on his righteousness. It is through his death that our sins are paid for. All the things that make us not acceptable are taken care of, and we are made acceptable for his perfect life, right?

And so this is great news. He lived a perfectly acceptable life on your behalf and died as scornful and rejected sinner, not because of his own sin, for he was holy and blameless, but because of your sin, so that he might give his righteousness, give this acceptable standing before God to present you holy and blameless.

So that's our hope that we have as Christians, right? I'll go on in Colossians 2, 13 and 15. And you who are dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven all our trespasses.

By canceling the record of debt that he stood against us with its legal demands, this he set aside, nailing to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.

[8 : 36] So here we see that you were not capable of being accepted by God, right? You were dead in your sin, dead in your trespasses. It's not a place of capability to prove yourself. Um, but, um, um, he made you alive because he forgave you.

He canceled, he set aside all the sin that made you unacceptable and gave you his perfect life. So we have application here for Christians and for non-Christians. So the one for Christians is going to kind of come throughout the rest of the text, right?

But for non-Christians, if you don't know the Lord or if you find yourself weighted down by the sense of you're not enough, right? You're never going to be able to obtain that acceptance, whether it's to yourself or to people around you or just this sense that, that you are righteous or that your goodness outweighs your badness, right?

The Bible gives you hope. It says, it says that you are not worthy because of what you've done. So you can rest. You can rest in what Christ has done.

And it also says, hey, uh, because of Christ's death, he died for all the things that make you unacceptable. Uh, so then you can live in his new life, right?

[9 : 55] And so this is the hope of Christians. Uh, this is a chance for, um, men to rest from our tireless, tireless pursuits of performance, of acceptance, of trying to make ourselves worthy or worth.

So I think, uh, I hope that resonates. Uh, we'll get more into that as we go. Uh, but for Christians, this is part of the problem that we see in, uh, Colossians 2. So we'll go ahead and read that.

Um, all right, so Colossians 2.16.

Uh, so we see that, um, even though our righteousness, our standing are what makes us right before God, what makes us susceptible is in Christ and Christ alone. Uh, we see that the, uh, Christians in Colossae, this is actually one of the big reasons why Paul writes the book, right? He doesn't know the Christians in Colossae, but he still writes this book because he's passionate about God's glory. He's passionate that they have right understanding. And so what's happening is, uh, Paul says in, in 2.16, Dave talked about this last time.

[11 : 00] He says, no, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food or drink or with regard to festivals or new moons of Sabbath or Sabbath. And he says, then in 2.18, he says, no, let no one disqualify you insisting on asceticism and worship of angels going on about visions and detail about visions puffed up without reason by a sensuous mind and not holding fast to the head from the whole body nourish and knit together through its joints and ligaments grows with a growth that is from God.

So Paul's obviously concerned for the church, right? Dave talked about this. He gave you the context of that last week, but, but the church was submitting themselves. They were allowing people to, to heap condemnation on themselves.

Um, and they were, um, submitting to, to regulations that had nothing to do with holding fast to what Christ had done, right? And, and so this, this concerns Paul because it shows that the Christians had forgotten, uh, the grace that they'd been shown.

Um, and they were submitting themselves to other, other, other people's condemnations rather than living in the freedom of Christ's acceptance or God's acceptance through Christ for them, right? Um, and, and in doing so, they were no longer clinging to Christ, right?

So as soon as we as Christians stop holding onto Christ, we're holding onto something else. And so it'd say, Hey Christ, everything you did for me was great, but really what I need to do is do this rule, do this regulation, do this extra biblical thing, follow this rule about the rule.

[12 : 16] Dave talked about this extensively last week, right? And so obviously Paul doesn't want that, right? Because, uh, we want, we want the glory to go to Christ for what he's done. We don't want to trample on all that he's done for us, right?

Um, and then finally, this legalistic approach lacked any power to actually change the people. So we see this in verse 23. It says these, and I'll just put in there, these rules and regulations, all these extra biblical rules about the rules have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity of the body, but they have no value in stopping the indulgences of the flesh.

And so, so Paul is basically saying, Hey, these people that are trying to get you to submit to these rules, you know, part of the problem is it doesn't honor Christ. It's not living in what you've been given. And also it has no power to actually help you change, all right?

And so we learned about that last time, but, but it's a good transition into our text because now Paul jumps into the alternative, right? And so starting in chapter three, we see what Paul's alternative to this life of rules and regulations through human ways, our desire to self-promote, our desire to prove our own worth, right?

Uh, we, we see the alternative to that. So let's go ahead and I'll read, uh, chapter three, one through four again. Um, if then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, see at the right hand of God.

[13:33] Set your minds on the things that are 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 your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. So first off, it's a little bit of a side, but we, it's important.

Uh, we see the very first phrase, we'll break it down a little bit. It's four verses. So we get a little bit extra time to do that this week, which is cool. Um, so in verse, uh, four or verse one, it says, if then you have been raised with Christ, right?

So, so what's preceded by this whole encouragement, right? That you have been redeemed, that you have a new life in Christ, right? Um, and so we don't expect people who aren't in Christ to be able to then set their minds on things above, right?

We don't expect them to have that victory over sin, right? Because if you're not in Christ, you have, you have nothing to say, hey, I'm, I'm worthy of forgiveness. I'm worthy of life, right?

Because, because you don't have that in yourself, right? Because, um, we on our own are dead in our sin, dead in our trespasses, right? Um, so, uh, first off, we see that this must be, you must be in Christ.

[14:42] To then walk in the newness of this new righteousness, of this new life. Um, but this idea of, like, if, uh, some, some translators say since, and I think both are really good, right?

So since is basically saying, hey, you Christians at Colossae, you Christians here, since you've been raised with Christ, now you can go do these things, right? You can set your mind on things above. Uh, you can, you, you know, you can do all these things.

But the, the idea of if is also, like, it's calling us to, like, engage in that and to ask that question, like, if, all right? So if that means I am accepting this proposition or I'm, I'm not.

So it's, it's calling you to, to introspect, right? It's calling you to say, hey, like, am I in Christ? Um, and I think, I don't want to belabor this point too long, but I hope to get into it more, but, like, we'll see in this text that we, we, we, we affirm Christ with our hearts and with our minds, right?

And it's, it's, it's possible for people within the church to affirm Christ with their mind but not with their heart. Meaning that, uh, why they say Christ died for my sin, uh, they're still looking at everything else in the world to make them acceptable, right?

[15:49] Uh, they're looking to their work, they're looking to a significant other, a relationship desire, um, you know, you know, all these things. And so, so I want to stop here and, and say if, right?

It's causing us to think, to think about our own hearts, to think about our own lives. Are we people that are capable of thinking on things above? Or have we recognized there's no spiritual power to make any change in our life because we're stuck in a worldly mindset that, that isn't really trusting Christ, is simply trusting in all of our attempts to prove our own worth, right?

Um, but moving on from there, assuming that you are in Christ, then you, then have the ability to do two things. And, and Paul has two encouragements here, uh, both with kind of a different connotation.

So we'll get there. So starting in verse two, um, no, in, continuing in verse one, it says, seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. And the other side is set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things on earth.

Uh, so we kind of see things, they seem like almost the same thing. Uh, but, um, the ESV translates seek, uh, some of the other, um, translations translate it, uh, set your heart on.

[16:57] And so what we really see here is, is, is two things, this, this mind and this soul, this heart. And so, so how do we understand that? Why do we know that? Uh, I think the best indication is why. So we see, uh, seek the things that are above and then tells us why immediately after.

This is still verse one. Um, you seek the things that are above where Christ is and where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Um, so where Christ is, is, uh, that's where we're called to set our minds, right?

And, and that's kind of a relational aspect, right? It's, it's where we're called to set our hearts. Uh, so, so where, so what do we, what do we know about Christ? We'll go back through Colossians a little bit here. Um, as Dave talked about the first, or early on Christ, he's basically our hero, right?

We had, we had compared him to worldly heroes that disappoint. Well, Christ is actually a hero that doesn't disappoint. Um, he's the one who's redeemed the world, but he's also one that allows you close, right? None of our earthly heroes really fall into that category.

And I'll, and I'll, I'll go tell you some other ways. Um, he's the preeminent one. We see this in, uh, chapter one, verse 15 and following. Uh, he's the image of the invisible God, the fullness of God.

[18:05] He is the one by and for and through whom all things were created. He's the one who holds all things together. He is the head of the church. He is the firstborn of the dead. He is the one who has reconciled you.

Um, in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Uh, he is the one who has freed us from the extra biblical regulations of this world. Um, and he is the one who holds together and nourishes his church, right?

And so Colossians is big with this big language on who Christ is. Um, and, and then what we're told to do here in chapter three is to set our hearts on that, right? This is a person. This is somebody who has called us in relationship to him, right?

He has reconciled us to him and to God through his life and through his death. And so he's calling us to set our hearts on him, you know, set our hearts on things above where he's seated, right? So he's obviously the object, uh, we're called to, to have him as the object of our affections.

Um, and, uh, so, so we, we, we then asked the question why, right? So set our minds on things above why?

[19:11] Well, cause Christ is there. And so why would we set our minds on things above cause Christ is there, right? So let's say you have loved ones, people that you love, right? Uh, you'd like to think about the people you love. Uh, you want to be there with them.

And when you can't be, you think about them, um, people you admire, you think about the things that people admire, that you admire, think about, uh, you try to learn from them. So for example, right?

I, I, I work at electric boat. My job is to go out to sea and test submarines, right? When I'm out to sea, I miss my family, right? So I take a picture. Uh, I take just thoughts.

And what I like to do is I like to think through their day. I like to say, Hey, my family's doing this right now, you know? And so I try to be there present with them through my mind because I love them, right? And that's what we do with people that we love.

We, we put our minds and our hearts and we think about them and dwell with them. And this is the language that, that Paul is saying here. Christ is in heaven above. Set your heart on him. You know, he is this magnificent one.

[20:09] You love him, set your heart on him, you know? Um, and the other side, you admire him, right? So investing, I don't know if we've got people that are investors. I, I, I read articles and I think I know stuff, but right?

So one person that people always quote is Warren Buffett, right? He's kind of a modern investment guru, right? Um, he's quoted all the time. People read pretty much everything he writes.

And then they read all the books that he recommends. And everybody does this because they admire, they admire Warren Buffett and they want to think about the things that Warren Buffett's thinking because I think his, maybe by putting their mind in Warren Buffett's mind, you know, they might be able to reap some of the success of Warren Buffett, right?

And, and so this is, we, we, we put our hearts and our minds on Christ because we admire him and because we love him, because we want to assimilate his life into ours and because he's worthy of it. Like we just, we just love him because he's redeemed us and he is this great individual who has redeemed the world and has done so many things as Colossians reminds us over and over again.

[21:10] And so we, we want to set our hearts. And so this is a good point for us as Christians, right? Because we realize that oftentimes the battle for our Christian life is fought in the level of our affections, right?

And we, as people like to compartmentalize, we like to say, oh no, I affirm this thought. Well, scripture says, no, you need to affirm the truth and you need to live it out. It needs to translate through your affections, right?

And so this is calling us to set our affections on Christ, who is the one who deserves all of our affections. And so it's a good reminder for us to be doing that.

We'll continue on to the next exhortation, which is in verse two. It says, set your minds on the things that are above and not on the things that are earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. And so as I've already alluded to, this is kind of the aspect where we're called to set our minds on things above. And this is setting our minds on the things of Christ.

[22 : 10] Oh, we'll back up a sec, right? The first part, kind of the relational thing, the call for our affections, right? We set our mind on Christ because he's in heaven, but he's also ruling in heaven, right?

He's, you know, he says it's seated at the right hand of God. Back in, earlier in the book, we see that, you know, he, through the cross, he, and it says, this he set aside, nailing to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in the cross. And so that's the last time we hear about Jesus. The next time we hear about Jesus in this book is he's at the right hand of God, right?

And so what does that mean? That means he's victorious over this world, over any of the powers, the rulers, the authorities in this world. So for you, that means anybody who can accuse you.

That means Christ has disarmed any accusation that can come against you. You think, right, so if you're a criminal, right, and you have, maybe you're not very educated and you're a criminal, but you have a very good defense attorney, right?

[23 : 21] That defense attorney speaks on your behalf in court. And so if he's eloquent, you're eloquent. If he knows the law, then you know the law, right? And so your success is wrapped up in his value as a defense attorney.

So when Christ died for us, our defense attorney is the magnificent one, Christ, right? Who is, has every value in him, right?

And so there is no claim that can come against you that can accuse you. Satan cannot come to God and say, hey, this person, this Christian deserves condemnation because Christ is there seated at the right hand of God saying, no, my life imputed for him.

You know, my righteousness on his behalf. And no power, no ruler, no authority in this world can touch that, right? And so we know that in Christ, we have complete freedom from any accusation.

So again, if you're not a Christian here, what a great gift that is, right? You don't have to worry. You can rest. You no longer have to promote yourself.

[24 : 32] You no longer have to fix yourself. You can rest in the beautiful Christ who has lived life on your behalf and died death for you. So to move on to the mind.

So that's another affection, right? Christ is ruling. He's defeated all of our enemies. So we love him and we set our hearts on him. So we move on to setting our minds.

One thing we learn, we're called to set our minds. And here it helps us.

Paul does it a little bit different here. He says, set your minds on things above and not on things of the earth. So kind of the negative helps us to better understand what this command to set your mind on things above is. And so one thing I think is misunderstood sometimes is it's not simply temporal things, right?

So things of the earth aren't just listed as temporal, right? Because later in the book, Paul encourages us to be good husbands, to be good mothers, to be good bosses, to be good servants, to be good children, right?

[25 : 40] Those are constructs within this temporal world, right? Those are relationship structures that we're called to invest in and apply in. So what does he mean by the things of this earth, right?

If he doesn't mean temporal things, simply the details of life, what does he mean? So we see in verse 5, we see Paul goes on to say, put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you.

And then he goes on and lists a list. Sexual immorality, impurity, passions, evil desires, and covetousness, which is idolatry. So we'll cover that next week. Mike gets to tackle that. So that's one aspect of it.

But what other aspects are there of this earthly life, right? And I alluded to it early on with this illustration of righteousness, because I think that's something we all struggle with.

We claim, and the Colossians struggle with it, right? So we're kind of coming out of that context in chapter 2, right? We claim the benefits of Christ, yet we still try to prove ourselves through the structure of this world, through our work, through the things that we do.

[26 : 41] We try to submit ourselves to rules and regulations that, you know, aren't meant to have value and worth. So one thing we also do in setting our minds on the things of this earth is we seek, so right, so we have Christ who's ruling in his kingdom at the right hand of God, running his kingdom according to his principles.

And then we're called to set our mind on those principles. But what do we often do as Christians, right? We don't operate within the principles of the kingdom.

We try to operate within the principles and currencies of this world, right? So, for example, evangelism, right? We know as Christians that we ought to be proclaiming. That's one of our vision things, right?

Proclaim. What happens, though, as a modern church? Oftentimes when we proclaim, what do we think we need to do? We think we need to have all the answers before we go talk to somebody. We want to have a position of status so people will listen to us.

We want to feel like we have to have a nice, tidy life in order to proclaim Christ, right? These are all things that kind of come in.

[27 : 55] But what does Scripture say, right? Scripture says in 1 Corinthians, this is Paul. He says, So that is, that as it is written, let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.

And then Paul even goes on and says, And when I came to you, brothers, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling in my speech and my message who were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of man but in the power of God.

So in our proclamation of God's kingdom, of God's gospel, are we oftentimes interested in the weak things of this world? Are we interested in displaying our weakness?

Or do we try to put a front onto the world and say, hey, come to Christianity. It provides you this. You know, come look at my nice, tidy life. This could be yours in Christ, right? No.

[29 : 30] You know, we are called to a different set of values. And that does bring joy. It does bring happiness. But the world isn't impressed with our tidy lives and our nice cars, our nice jobs, our nice family, our smiling kids, right?

Because those are all the things that the world seeks after, right? That the world will see Jesus when they start to see Christians living according to the weak things. To come, not seeking to promote the worldly wisdom, wise words, and those things, but seeking to promote Christ and Christ crucified.

And so I think this is one way that we let the world, that we set our minds on earthly things when we think we're setting our minds on kingdom things. So I think it's a lot more subtle in some cases.

And so I wanted to bring both those things in there. I think we, you know, just tend to try to promote ourselves through our work. We say, I don't know.

We do, so here's an analogy, right? We try to do good things for God and think it's going to make us valuable before him, right? So let's say you're a parent. You have a 15-year-old son.

[30 : 38] At that point, your son's, like, getting a little bit more independent. He thinks he knows everything. It's kind of in that stage of life, right? I was there, right? So your son comes to you and says, hey, Dad, can I have some money?

And you're like, okay. So you give him 15 bucks, right? Your son takes that \$15, and he buys you a gift. And he comes back and says, hey, Dad, I got you a gift. And you're like, huh.

Well, that's really special. Thanks. Thanks. Like, you're actually impressed. He took the resources that you gave him and used them to bless you. And you're touched. And your son seeing that you're touched then goes on to say, hey, and because I've done this nice thing for you, maybe you could, like, push my curfew back because I proved myself, you know?

Or maybe you could have Mom stay off me from my room. Or, you know, maybe you let me, you know, take the car out, you know, stuff like that, right?

And so you see very quickly that his motives weren't to bless you, right, with his gift, but they were to prove to you his worth, to say, hey, Dad, by my gift, I have then earned value in your eyes.

[31 : 48] So now you will let me go do these things. But don't we do that with God all the time, right? We struggle day in and day out with our kids trying to be consistent, right?

We try to be consistent. We know that it's important for consistency in kids to raise them in the knowledge and love of the Lord, right? And so we fight day in and day out, and it's tiring, and it wears us down, right?

And we do that partly because we're commanded to do it, but also partly because well-behaved kids make us look good, right? And we can say to God, hey, God, like, I'm really investing in my parenting here.

Like, that proves that I'm worth something in your eyes, right? And so I think in these ways, it's so natural for us to try to take the commands of God and then to use them to promote ourselves to God or to each other.

And so I think this is one of the ways that we as Christians pretend that we're setting our minds on things above when really we're going about them in earthly ways, when we use the resources and currencies of this earth to accomplish kingdom tasks, or when we do it in a way that tries to prove our own worth or promote ourselves.

[33 : 08] And there's a lot of application here. I'm already taking a lot longer than I was planning on it, but one thing Paul does here, right? He takes the positive and the negative.

He says, set your minds on things above and not on things on this earth. And I just think that's a good principle and practice for us as Christians to get into, right? So we have all these exhortations in scripture that we're supposed to put on this or have this attitude or have this mindset, right?

It's also good for us then to ask ourselves the reverse. So then what is hindering me from loving in this situation or what is hindering me from forgiving or what is hindering me from serving, right?

And so Paul sets it up here. He says, set your mind on things above, not on things on this earth. So I'll leave you all with that question. Not leave you with it, but like consider what are the things of this earth that are keeping you from setting your mind on things above?

May it be service. May it be family. May it be work. May it be any of these things. May it be a sense of feeling wronged, right? This feeling that you've been wronged. This is an example in our small group.

[34 : 08] Like you were wronged on the soccer field, and you can't let go of that for the rest of the game, right? And that keeps you from setting your mind on things above, right? And so it can be as simple as those, or it could be longstanding relational stress, right?

That can keep you from being able to set your mind on things above. It could be sin in your life. It could be, you know, I don't know, anxiety that...

More on that later. I don't know. Sorry. I'm just trying to... That one I'm just trying to fish up is probably not the best method. All right. So Paul then goes on. So he says, set your mind on things above.

What did he say? Then he says, why, right? He gives us a reason why. And he says, you have died. Your life is hidden with Christ. And when Christ, who is your life, appears, you will appear with him in glory. So why do we do these things, one?

Because we're dead, right? We've died to that old way of life. We no longer need to operate in the current seas of the world. We no longer need to operate in a way that's going to promote ourselves through our works, through our legalism, through whatever, right?

[35 : 12] We can actually set those things aside and put on Christ and set our minds on things above, right? So that's one. It's just practical. It's the truth, right? It's the truth. You are dead to your flesh.

So now you can live in newness of life, right? And so it's just that you're dead, right? You're dead to that way of life and alive to a new one. All your life is hidden with Christ. Now, this is a little bit of a confusing one.

I'm kind of trying not to explain it too long. But all throughout Scripture, the New Testament, we see this kind of already not yet, right? So we, as New Testament Christians, are living in the gifts of the cross, but yet we're waiting the final revelation, right?

And so to the world, our lives look a lot like theirs, right? Because they don't understand the internal change that has happened in a Christian's life, right? Maybe they see evidences of it or whatever.

So this is this idea. Like, your life is hidden with Christ, right? It's what you have, this life of great value in a relationship with the king of the universe is not necessarily seen in the everyday minds of the world.

[36 : 11] But someday, which we get to the next step, when Christ, who is your life, appears, you will appear with him in glory, right? Someday that life is going to be revealed to all, and the world is

going to see that they've been living by the right values this whole time.

I thought it was a little weird or fishy, right? But actually, it is Christ who is exalted, right? And they've been living in this life with him. And so this idea of life, your life is hidden with Christ, is this rich life that can be had because we're on this side of the cross.

But the full fulfillment of that is still coming when Christ returns, and the whole world sees his glory and bows and worship, right? And so, one, that promises that there's glory to come, right?

That allows us to tide the temporary challenges of life, the struggles. Maybe the world gives you a hard time because you're a Christian. Maybe they scorn you for your beliefs.

They say, oh, you're unintelligent. You're ridiculous. You know, all those kind of things. That's little things because we have a relationship with the God of the universe, right?

[37 : 16] And we are promised that when he returns in glory, we will also be with him in glory. And so that gives us endurance. That gives us hope. That gives us joy. Early in Colossians, it talks about Christ in you, the hope of glory, right?

It is this hope that we have operating in us now that will be fully returned, right? The other idea is this, like, life hidden with Christ is it's under his protection, right? Nobody can condemn you because your Savior has affirmed you, right, through his life and death.

So I want to get to some practical applications. So there's a lot of good reasons why. But just practical, a couple things. So in both cases, it says set your mind. So this is a present tense thing.

This is something that we can do now. It's of the term, like, setting. Continue to set your mind on things above. Continue to set your heart on Christ. Set your affections on him, right?

It's something that's accomplishable. It doesn't say, like, it's set, right? It's something we can do. It's an action, right? We are redeemed. We're living in the newness of life, so therefore we can accomplish this, right?

[38 : 16] Sometimes it feels hard, right? It's good to be reminded of that. Sometimes it's like, shoot, my mind is all over the place. Like, I can't let that foul go. The guy fouled me in soccer, and I missed the ball, right? And it feels like you can't let it go.

But know that you have been redeemed with Christ, and you can. You have the ability, because of his victory, to set your mind on things above. And so don't believe those lies. Choose to set your mind on the things that are above, right?

We see that it's a privilege. So some practical applications. How can we set our minds and our hearts and things above? Prayer. You can't try to prove yourself sufficiency and pray at the same time, right?

Because you're coming before the God, and you're saying, hey, God, I need your help. I need to do this, right? So prayer is a great way to get ourselves in the mindset and to put off our desire to accomplish things on our own, to put off our desires to use the currencies of the world to accomplish kingdom things, because we're coming before the king and saying, we can't do this without your help, right?

And so prayer. Foster that mindset of things above. Reading scripture, right? How do you get your mind? How do you get the mind on things above? Well, read God's word, right? God tells us. He gives us his word.

[39 : 23] That's how we understand and know. So then I'll give a couple examples. One from Jim Elliott. I don't know if you guys know Jim Elliott.

This is a real practical thing, something you can apply in your life. He realized that throughout the day, his mindset was getting filled with the things of the world. And so what he would do at lunch, every lunch, he would read a psalm.

And that would prevent the encroaching mindset of the world from taking over throughout the day, right? I know that at work, right? I had this great time with God in the morning. And then by 10 o'clock with the cares and concerns of work, I'm like, you know, in go mode, self-sufficient mode, right?

And one thing that Jim Elliott did to fight against that and a possibility for you is then to step back and say, I'm going to read God's word at lunch. I'm going to make time for this to kind of break that encroachment of the world on our minds and our hearts.

So I also solicited some friends, some people within this church, and asked them how they do this. So these are just some encouragements from your brothers and sisters within this congregation.

[40 : 28] So this is, I'll read the whole thing because I thought it was good. This is our brother. He said, I've learned that over the years that this setting of my mind on Christ, on heavenly things, on kingdom things, doesn't just happen.

I can't just stumble into God's pursuits. There isn't an intentionality, a determinedness, a discipline that must exist. Without a doubt, me setting my mind on things above is spirit-enabled, just like putting sin to death.

Sin to death is an action that we do by, that we do, but it's also by the spirit. But I have to take personal steps.

This is what I really like. When I set my mind on anything worldly, be it a home improvement or anything earthly, anything temporal, right, be it a home improvement project, getting in shape, career advancement, whatever I research, whatever it is, I research, I plan it out, I consult other people about it, I think about it, dream about it, et cetera, et cetera.

This isn't a perfect analogy, but I think that this is what it's like for us to set our minds on things above. I read the word of God, I pray, I meet with other believers to talk about heavenly things, to pray about it together.

[41 : 32] I establish habits throughout the day, I write things down that I'm thankful for, I pray before meals, I do all kinds of practical things to draw my mind to God, post scripture passages around, listen to sermons and worship songs in the car or when I run.

The danger, however, is that we can do all these things and not be any more spiritually minded than we were before. And that's where reliance on the Holy Spirit and faith and God's promises and provisions is essential. So I think even what he picks up on and what I think Paul alludes to here is, hey, we can do all these Christian things, but do them empty of Christ when we do it either for our own self-benefit or promotion, or we do it according to the paths and methods of the world rather than paths and methods of the king.

Hopefully I wasn't too much of a mouthful. So let's say a couple other things. So build, proclaim, serve. We're getting a little long here, but, right, so we've already talked we can proclaim in ways that bring honor to God through humility and lowliness rather than trying to set up a picture, a perfect picture, before other people of what the good life looks like, right?

Building, right, we can build into people in our small groups, right? Carl encouraged us to be investing in one another, right? But we can, people like affirmation, right? The scripture talks about people down the line or people in this age telling you whatever your itching ears want to hear, right? I'm sure we see that in our works and all that kind of stuff. People like to promote other people, right, and it feels good, right? But as Christians, we are to build other people up on one hand by affirming them, but also by speaking the truth in love, right, which is a little bit harder.

[43 : 10] Sometimes it causes us awkwardness or it's a hard conversation or those kind of things. But that is a kingdom currency, truth and love, that we ought to apply in our building each other up.

So we can't just have fluffy affirming everybody, right, because we need to be walking through life with each other and confronting each other over sin and pointing each other towards Christ.

And that's not always easy, right? And so don't just settle for building up the way the world does it, which is affirmation-oriented only, but be willing to engage in the hard things.

Serving. This is a comment in our small group, and I meant to have a lot more time for this, but we're getting a little long. We can serve our church, right? We can serve our church in ways that honors God, out of the overflow, right, out of love, or we can do it out of a necessity.

We feel that we need to meet this requirement in order for the church to function, in order for that person to think we're invested, in order to just meet our own standard of what we think we ought to serve the church.

[44 : 16] So what we don't want is we don't want a church that serves out of the emptiness of their hearts, that serves to accomplish their own self-worth.

We want a church that serves because our Christ has served us, and because we're full and serving out of our overflow. And so, yeah, we're a small church. We're a church plant. There's lots to do.

But if your service isn't out of affection for your king, take a step back and really pray. Are you serving according to the worldly resources or according to the king's resources, right?

And so we see Paul in Corinthians. He says, I worked hard with the mighty energy that God worked in me, right? That is the kind of service we want in this church. And if you're not at that place, don't

just keep grinding yourself into a weaker and weaker spiritual place because you're not serving out of affection for the king or with your mind set on kingdom resources.

So just feel that grace. We want you to serve. We know it's good. We know that when we serve one another, we're strengthened. We grow in love and fellowship. But Jesus is the goal for all of this.

[45 : 24] His glory, his honor out of love for him. You know, let's never, never skip that step. And if you feel like you're in danger of that, talk to somebody, pray about it, maybe step back.

So final thing, and this is just a sentence. I talked to another buddy from our church, and I really liked what he said.

He gave some insight into this passage, and I think it's a good way to close. He says, choose the life that Christ has won. It is a privilege, not a project. Setting your mind on things above is a life-giving activity.

You know, it's been accomplished for us in victory, so choose it, right? Right? It's not a project. It's not a chore. It's a gift, right? And so choose this new life that Christ has won. I'll pray.

I do only follow the Lord. Thank you for this time. Thank you for all that Christ has done for us.

Thank you that he is magnificent and glorious. Lord, just give us truth in our own hearts to know when we are doing things according to kingdom resources for the glory of Christ, and when we're doing things for our own glory or out of just the mindset of the world, the mindset that says, if I do, then I will accomplish.

[46 : 31] The Christian currency is Christ has done, and therefore we have everything we need.

And so, Lord, we pray that we could just live in fullness, setting our minds on things above, setting our hearts on things above, setting our hearts on our Savior, and that all we do might be out of affection for him and thankfulness.

In your name we pray, amen.