

CHRIST IS SUPREME

A Study of Colossians

WEEK 7: Set Your Mind on Things Above

Col 3:1-17

Reach Bible Fellowship

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Christ is Supreme: Set Your Mind on Things Above

WEEK	TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
Week 1	Overview	Overview of the book of Colossians
Week 2	Col 1:1 – 14	Introduction and God's Redemption
Week 3	Col 1:15 – 20	The Preeminence of Jesus Christ
Week 4	Col 1:21 – 29	The Mystery of the Ages
Week 5	Col 2:1 – 10	Gnosticism is Alive and Well
Week 6	Col 2:11 – 23	The Futility of Legalism
Week 7	Col 3:1 – 17	Set Your Mind on Things Above
Week 8	Col 3:18 – 25	The Christian Home
Week 9	Col 4:1 – 18	Exhortation to Prayer and Final Greetings

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Notable quotes on Col 3:1-17

"If a man has Christ, then what does he want else? If a man has Christ, he has everything. If I want perfection, and I have Christ, I have absolute perfection in him. If I want righteousness, I shall find in him my beauty and my glorious dress."

- **Charles Spurgeon**

"The man who has God for his treasure has all things in One. Many ordinary treasures may be denied him, or if he is allowed to have them, the enjoyment of them will be so tempered that they will never be necessary to his happiness. Or if he must see them go, one after one, he will scarcely feel a sense of loss, for having the Source of all things he has in One all satisfaction, all pleasure, all delight."

- **A.W. Tozer**

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace."

- **Hymn: Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus**

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- As is typical in Paul's epistles, he spends the first few chapters discussing theology and then switches to the practical application of the theology in our lives
- We can declare and defend the truth … but our walk must match our talk
  - *Tit 1:16 They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.*
- Faith in Christ means we are united with Christ … He cannot live in us by His Spirit and permit us to continue in sin
  - *2 Cor 6:14-16 For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? … 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.*
  - *Jam 3:11-12 Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.*

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Paul connects doctrine with duty in this section by giving us three areas on which to focus

I. Seek the Heavenly Things Above

Col 3:1-2 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

- **As we studied in Romans 5-8, Christ not only died for us to forgive our sins (Justification), we also died with Him that we may have a new heart and spirit (Sanctification)!**
  - *2 Cor 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*
  - *2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*
  - *1 Cor 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*

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Col 3:3-4 ***For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.***

- **God Himself identified us with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ!**
  - ***Rom 6:6-8 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him***
- **God judiciously and legally placed us *in Jesus Christ*! It wasn't up to us or our doing!**
  - ***1 Cor 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption***
- **When Jesus returns, Scripture says we will be like Him!**
  - ***1 Joh 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.***
- **Scripture says He has raised us up and seated with Him!!! (Past tense! Accomplished!)**
  - ***Eph 2:5-6 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus***

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II. Slay Our Earthly Passions and Lusts

Col 3:5-7 ***Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.***

- **Verses 1-4 were positive affirmations … verses 5-9 are *negative***
  - **Negative warnings and commands proceed from the positive truths about Christian doctrine**
  - **We must now *put to death (greek: katargeo)* our carnal lusts and passions**
    - ***Rom 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.***
    - ***Heb 12:1-2 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us …***
  - **God has given us both the Will and Power to do so**
    - ***Phi 2:12-13 … work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.***

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- **A vivid description of the things of the flesh we are to *put to death***
  - **Fornication:** Sexual immorality (*any* sexual act outside of marriage)
  - **Uncleanness:** Lustful impurity connected with *loose living*
  - **Passion:** Depraved and vile desires
  - **Evil desire:** Cravings for what is forbidden
  - **Covetousness:** Greediness … desiring something that is not ours to have
- **We can summarize Satan's motivation for rebelling against God as *lusting after something that was not his to have*, i.e., coveting more so than pride**
  - ***Isa 14:12-14 …"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart:***
    - ***I will ascend into heaven,***
    - ***I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;***
    - ***I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north;***
    - ***I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,***
    - ***I will be like the Most High.***

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Col 3:8-9 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds …

- **Paul goes on to enumerate other sins which we are to *put to death***
  - **Anger:** **Anger, wrath, indignation**
  - **Wrath:** **Passion, angry, heat, anger boiling up (temper tantrums)**
  - **Malice:** **Malignity, ill-will, desire to injure or harm**
  - **Blasphemy:** **Speech injurious to God's majesty, bringing dishonor to God**
  - **Filthy Language:** **Foul speaking, low and obscene speech**

- **How easy it is for us to fall into these thoughts and attitudes!**
- **What is our reaction when someone cuts us off in traffic?**
- **Do we *blaspheme* the name of Jesus by some of the things we say and do?**
- **Do we let loose some words that would make a sailor blush at times?**
- **What about off-color jokes and stories? Would we relate those same stories if Jesus was standing next to us?**

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Col 3:10-11 ***and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.***

- ***"Put on the new man"***
  - **Paul is describing an act of the will ... this idea is repeated many times in NT**
    - ***Eph 4:24 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.***
    - ***Rom 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.***
  - **Where do we gen-up the "will" to lay sin aside? Do we "white-knuckle" it? Pull ourselves up by our bootstraps?**
    - ***Phil 2:12-13 "... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure."***
- ***"who is renewed in knowledge"***
  - **The Greek word for *renewed* describes it as a *continuous renewal* ... we are to continually be renewed in our minds regarding the things of Christ (Rom 12:1-2)**

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III. Strengthen Your Christian Brothers and Sisters

Col 3:12-13 ***Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.***

- **"Put off" and "put on" verbs in the Greek are presented as a *once and for all* activity**
  - ***Heb 12:1-2 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us …***
- **We are also to forgive one another … keeping in mind that as Christ forgave us, we are commanded to forgive each other**
  - ***Mar 11:26 "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."***

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Col 3:14-15 ***But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.***

- **Paul again emphasizes the need to *put on* righteousness**
  - ***Rom 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.***
  - ***Phi 3:12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.***
- **Love is the chief attribute to *put on!* We can exhibit all manner of gifts, but if they aren't coupled with Love, they are nothing**
  - ***1 Cor 13:1-3 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.***

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Col 3:16 ***<u>Let the word of Christ dwell in you</u> richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.***

- **We must make a conscious choice to *let the word of Christ dwell in us***
  - ***Rom 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.***
  - ***2 Cor 6:16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.***
- **Too many churches today fail to teach the full gospel … some do not expound on the ramifications of sin.**
- **There is a link between the knowledge of scripture and its application and our worship.**
  - **Some of the prevalent praise and worship songs of today demonstrate this lack of knowledge**

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Col 3:17 ***And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.***

- **The Name of the Lord Jesus must be glorified through our words and actions**
- **When we proclaim ourselves to be Christians, it is to be a badge of honor**
  - **When we assume that identification, it also comes with an obligation to live lives worthy of the honor**
  - **Our words and deeds can also bring dishonor upon His Name**
  - **You can tell people which church you attend, whether Lutheran, Episcopalian, Catholic, etc., and typically you will not get much of a response**
  - **But as soon as you tell them you are a Christian, there is a reaction … often times negative**
  - ***1 The 5:16-18 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.***
  - ***Phi 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.***

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Questions to ponder …

- **What will we be like in our Heavenly bodies? Paul says the question is 'foolish'!**
  - ***1 Cor 15:35-44 But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" 36 Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. 37 And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. 38 But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body … 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.***
- ***"made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus"***
  - **The text is in the past tense … does that mean that we *are now* seated with Christ Jesus in the heavenly places?**
- **In what ways could *coveting* be considered the most pernicious sin? Paul said that coveting was his kryptonite in Rom 7:7-11**