

INTRODUCTION.

THIS AM, ~ BEGIN TO LOOK AT ~ NEXT SECTION OF COLOSSIANS. ⇨⇨ A VERY BRIEF, ~ 3:1-4.

IN OUR INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS, ~ RECALL ~ THAT WE NOTED THAT ~ PAUL had ~ two ~ overarching purposes for writing.

▶▶Paul's first purpose for writing to the church in Colossae ~ was ~ to refute the false doctrines ~ that the heretics were teaching.

▷▷And we are now done with that.

▶▶Paul's second purpose for writing ~ was to instruct believers ~ on how ~ to live a godly life.

▷▷This section begins in 3:1 ~ and continues through 4:6.

▷▷But as we observed, ~ we can also look at this section ~ a little differently.

↪↪Paul may have also been setting up a contrast ~ between the false way of living ~ taught by the heretics ~ ↴↴

→→and what the Christian life ~ is really supposed to look like.

▷▷We noted that ~ correct/sound biblical teaching ~ will led to ~ godly ~ living.

▷▷Likewise, ~ we noted that, ~ while there may be some exceptions to this, ~ often false teaching ~ leads to ~ ungodly ~ living. ↴↴ 1/16

SO, ~ PAUL'S SECOND PURPOSE FOR WRITING ~ WAS MOST LIKELY TWOFOLD.

▶▶1st, ~ to instruct believers about godly living.

▶▶And 2nd, ~ to combat the false way of living ~ that the false teachers taught.

▷▷And he does this by showing ~ what the Christian life ~ is really supposed to look like.

COL. 3:1-4 ~ BEGINS THIS SECTION COVERING PAUL'S SECOND PURPOSE FOR WRITING.

▶▶And deals with ~ the believer's proper focus of attention.

▶▶Paul shows us ~ that our proper focus of attention ~ has two aspects to it.

▷▷1st, ~ we are to look upward.

↪↪seek the things that are above . . . Set your minds on things that are above, ~ not on things that are on earth.

▷▷And 2nd, ~ we are to look forward ~ to our glorious eternal future.

↪↪When Christ who is your life appears, ~ then you also will appear with him in glory.

▷▷This ~ is the believer's proper focus of attention: ~~ upward and forward.

▶▶Paul gives five reasons ~ believers must have the proper focus of attention.

▷▷1. Raised with Christ. ⇔⇔ 2. Jesus is in heaven. ⇔⇔ 3. We have died. ⇔⇔ 4. Lives our hidden. ⇔⇔ And 5. Jesus is our life. ↴↴ 2/16

NOW, ~ PAUL MIXES THIS ALL TOGETHER.

▶▶ He doesn't list the aspects of our proper focus of attention ~ and then the reasons.

▷▷ E.g., ~ he starts with the first reason to have a proper focus, ~ then begins to explain the upward aspect, ~ and then inserts another reason.

▶▶ And we're not going to separate it out either.

▶▶ I want to follow the flow of the paragraph.

▷▷ And I'll try to make sure you know where we're at, ~ so you won't be confused.

IN VERSE 1a, ~ PAUL GIVES US THE FIRST REASON BELIEVERS MUST HAVE THE PROPER focus of attention.

VERSE 1a, ~ "IF THEN YOU HAVE BEEN RAISED WITH CHRIST."

▶▶ Two technical notes here.

▶▶ 1st, ~ the "If" clause can be confusing.

▷▷ Literal.

▷▷ The clause actually denotes reality.

↪↪ Paul was not doubting here.

▷▷ It could be translated "Since." ↯↯ 3/16

▶▶ 2nd, ~ the verb for "have been raised" ~ is what they call a divine passive.

▷▷ God is the implied subject.

▷▷ It means God raised you.

▶▶ So, ~ Paul is saying, ~ "Since then ~ God raised you with Christ."

▶▶ A reminder that ~ we did not and could not ~ save ourselves.

▷▷ We were dead.

↪↪ And God raised us up.

PAUL DOES NOT HAVE OUR PHYSICAL RESURRECTION IN VIEW.

▶▶ We, ~ the people of God ~ await our future physical resurrection ~ at Christ's second coming.

▶▶ Paul talks about this in 1 Thess.

▷▷ And the dead in Christ will rise first. ~ Then we who are alive, ~ who are left, ~ will be caught up together with them in the clouds ~ to meet the Lord in the air.

HERE IN COL. 3:1a, ~ HE'S TALKING ABOUT, ~ and we've just recently talked about this, ~ our spiritual resurrection.

▶▶ At conversion, ~ a spiritual resurrection in Christ that God performs.

▶▶ We were spiritually dead. ↪↪ 4/16

▶▶ And at conversion, ~ God made us spiritually alive.

▶▶ So believers are part of a new creation, ~ a new life ~ that begins with the new birth.

▷▷ 1 Pet 1:3. ⇨⇨ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! ~~ According to his great mercy, ~~ he has caused us ~ to be born again ~ to a living hope ~ through ~ the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

THIS IS OUR REALITY, ~ MY FELLOW BELIEVERS.

▶▶ This is not pie-in-the-sky stuff. ⇨⇨ This is now.

▶▶ And Paul is saying here in Col. 3:1a, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "This ~ is the reality, ~ God has raised believers up to new spiritual life. ~~ And for that reason, ~ we are to have the proper focus of attention."

▶▶ We no longer belong to this world. ⇨⇨ cf. Jn. 15:19

▷▷ Therefore, ~ we are to have a totally different focus of attention ~ than the world ~ and that we had prior to salvation.

AND, ~ AS NOTED, ~ OUR PROPER FOCUS OF ATTENTION ~ HAS TWO ASPECTS TO IT.

▶▶ Upward ~ and forward.

IN VERSE 1b, ~~ PAUL BEGINS TO EXPLAIN THE UPWARD ASPECT OF THE PROPER FOCUS of attention believers are to have.

VERSE 1b, ~~ "SEEK THE THINGS THAT ARE ABOVE." ¶¶ 5/16

▶▶ Now, ~ it's important to understand.

▷▷ Paul is not saying that ~ we are to strive for a heavenly status.

↪↪ Believers have already been given that through Jesus.

▷▷ Neither is Paul advocating some kind of monasticism.

▷▷ And of course, ~ this does not mean ~ 77

↪↪ withdrawal from all the activities of this world ~ to engage only in contemplation of eternity and heaven.

↪↪ The verses that follow, ~ beginning in [verse 5](#), ~ make it quite clear ~ 77

→→ that Paul expected Christians to maintain normal relationships in this world.

SO, ~ WHAT IS PAUL SAYING?

▶▶ Basically this ~ I suggest.

▶▶ Paul is saying ~ that our lives are to be dominated ~ by "[the things that are above](#)," ~ referring to our new home in heaven.

▷▷ I.e., ~ our lives ~ are to be dominated ~ by the things of God and our heavenly home.

▶▶ The NT makes it crystal clear.

▷▷ Believers are now citizens of heaven ~ and foreigners and temporary residents in this world. 77 6/16

▶▶Furthermore, ~ we are not simply awaiting Christ's return, ~ ¶¶

▷▷when we will receive our inheritance and enter our heavenly home.

▷▷We already have entered heaven spiritually ~ and are already a part of that new reality.

▷▷Our physical environment is still earthly, ~~ but our lives ~ are to be dominated ~ by the things of God and our heavenly home.

(1b) ~~ And WE SHOULD NOTE HERE ~ THAT THE FORM OF THE VERB FOR "SEEK" ~ shows this to be a continual thing.

▶▶IOW, ~ as new creations in Christ, ~ ¶¶

▷▷our lives ~ are to be ~ *continually* ~ dominated ~ by the things of God and our heavenly home.

OK, ~ BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN ~ ¶¶

▶▶to have our lives ~ be continually dominated by the things of God and our heavenly home?

▷▷I have six things listed, ~~ but I'm sure it means a whole lot more than just these 6.

FIRST OFF, ~ IT MEANS ~ adopting a whole new set of priorities for our lives.

▶▶In 2 Cor. 5:15, ~ Paul writes, ~ ¶¶

▷▷and he died for all, ~ that those who live ~ [i.e., ~ those who receive new life in Christ] ~ might no longer live for themselves ~ but for him ~ who for their sake ~ died and was raised. ¶¶ 7/16

▶▶ Jesus was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice, ~ to die for all.

▷▷ Therefore, ~ those who believe in Jesus ~ ¶¶

↳↳ should be willing ~ to abandon their old, ~ selfish ways ~ in order ~ to make it a priority ~ to always live for him.

▶▶ We should no longer live ~ to please ourselves.

▶▶ We should die to ourselves ~ and live for Jesus, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ who is alive today ~ and interceding with the Father on our behalf.

A WHOLE NEW SET OF PRIORITIES FOR OUR LIVES.

▶▶ In [Matt. 6:19-21](#), ~ Jesus said, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, ~~ where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ~~ but lay up for yourselves ~ treasures in heaven, ~~ where neither moth nor rust destroys ~ and where thieves do not break in and steal. ~ ¶¶

↳↳ For where your treasure is, ~ there your heart will be also.

▶▶ Here our priority is to be ~ to seek and to do ~ that which has eternal value ~ and not temporary value.

▷▷ E.g., ~ In [1 Tim. 4:8](#), ~ Paul says, ~ for while bodily training is of some value ~ [i.e., ~ it has limited benefit], ~ ¶¶

↳↳ godliness is of value in every way, ~~ as it holds promise for the present life ~ and ~ also for the life to come. ¶¶ 8/16

▷▷Physical exercise ~ is valuable for our earthly residence, ~ ¶¶

↳↳but a daily routine of spiritual exercise, ~ such as godly living, ~ ¶¶

→→is something ~ we can take with us into eternity.

NEXT, ~ TO HAVE OUR LIVES ~ BE CONTINUALLY DOMINATED BY THE THINGS OF GOD
and our heavenly home ~ means, ~ ¶¶

▶▶concentrating our efforts to develop ~ the characteristics that have their source ~ in the
spiritual life from above.

▶▶We must no longer ~ be lured by the attractions of this world.

▶▶Certainly ~ we must not follow the desires of our sinful nature.

▶▶The person raised with Christ ~ must be living the life of Christ.

▷▷In 1 Jn. 3:2-3, ~ John writes, ~ ¶¶

↳↳Beloved, ~ we are God's children now, ~ and what we will be ~ has not yet appeared;
~~ but we know ~ that when he ~ [Jesus] ~ appears ~ we shall be like him, ~~ because ~
we shall see him as he is. ~~ ¶¶

→→And everyone who thus hopes in him ~ [i.e., ~ this eager expectation of being
like Jesus] ~ ¶¶

↳↳[what does he do? ~~ Remain in sin? ~~ Go on sinning? ~~ Say, ~ "Oh, ~ I'm a
child of God, ~ I can behave any way I want?"] ~ ¶¶

↪↪[No. ~~ He] ~~ purifies himself as he ~ [Jesus] ~ is pure. ¶¶ 9/16

▷▷ Jesus is our example to follow ~ and His purity is to be our goal.

↪↪ We are to daily work toward elevating our purity to the same level as Jesus' purity.

ADDITIONALLY, ~ TO HAVE OUR LIVES ~ be continually dominated by the things of God and our heavenly home, ~ means ~ ¶¶

▶▶ adopting the attitude of the believers we read about in Hebrews.

▶▶ The author said to his original audience, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, ~ since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

▶▶ Of Abraham he says, ~ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, ~ whose architect and builder is God.

▶▶ And of a number of believers he says, ~ they desire a better country, ~ that is, ~ a heavenly one.

▷▷ And God put his seal of approval on this attitude.

↪↪ Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, ~ for he has prepared for them a city.

▶▶ I guess the ques. ~ each of us must ask ourselves this a.m. ~ is, ~ "What is my attitude?"

NOW, ~ WE MUST UNDERSTAND SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT HERE.

▶▶ These believers ~ did not check out of life ⇔⇔ And again, ~ Paul is not calling us to check out of life. ¶¶ 10/16

NEXT, ~ TO HAVE OUR LIVES ~ BE CONTINUALLY DOMINATED BY THE THINGS OF GOD
and our heavenly home, ~ means ~ ¶¶

▶▶taking God's will and the values of our homeland, ~ ¶¶

▷▷which are all spelled out in God's word, ~ and apply them ~ to our current lives, ~ as
we live out our temporary lives in this evil world.

FURTHERMORE, ~ TO HAVE OUR LIVES ~ be continually dominated by the things of God and
our heavenly home, ~ means ~ ¶¶

▶▶having a consistent prayer life.

▶▶In Eph. 6:18a, ~ Paul calls believers to ~ be "praying at all times."

▷▷The phrase "praying at all times" does not mean "always saying prayers."

↳↳The phrase can also be translated "at every opportunity."

▷▷IOW, ~ prayer in the believer's life is not just an option for occasional emergencies.

▷▷"praying at every opportunity" means that prayer is to become a routine part of our
daily lives.

▷▷Prayer for the believer ~ is never ~ to become ~ a sporadic thing.

AND FINALLY, ~ TO HAVE OUR LIVES ~ be continually dominated by the things of God and
our heavenly home, ~ means ~ ¶¶

▶▶fostering healthy relationships. ¶¶ 11/16

▶▶ Prov. 13:20 says, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "Whoever walks with the wise ~ becomes wise, ~~ but ~ the companion of fools ~ will suffer harm."

▶▶ The fool in Scripture ~ is a person who ~ says there is no God ~ or does not live for God.

▷▷ Ps. 14:1a, ~ The fool says in his heart, ~ "There is no God."

▶▶ Therefore, the wise are people who fear and honor God.

▷▷ Prov. 9:10, ~ The fear of the Lord ~ is the beginning of wisdom, ~~ and the knowledge of the Holy One ~ is insight.

▶▶ We must develop friendships with ~ wise, ~ godly believers ~ who help us in our spiritual growth.

MOVING ON, ~ IN VERSE 1c, ~ PAUL GIVES US THE SECOND REASON BELIEVERS MUST have the proper focus of attention.

VERSE 1c, ~~ "WHERE CHRIST IS, ~ SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD."

▶▶ I.e., ~ we are to orient ourselves to the heavenly realm ~ because our Lord is there.

▶▶ And we are to focus our lives on him.

▶▶ In the opening verses of chapter 12, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the author of Hebrews tells us to ~ run with endurance ~ the race that lies before us, ~ keeping our eyes on Jesus. ¶¶ 12/16

▷▷ The Greek participle ~ translated as "keeping your eyes" ~ means ~ ¶¶

↳↳ to keep thinking about, ~ without having one's attention distracted ~ 'to think about, ~ to fix one's attention on.'

▶▶ Our lives are to be ~ Christ-centered, ~ not ~ self-centered.

THE DESCRIPTION OF CHRIST AS "SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD" ~ is another implied answer ~ ¶¶

▶▶ to those who seek to diminish Christ's role as mediator, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ inasmuch as the right hand of God ~ is a metaphor ~ for the place of supreme privilege and divine authority.

↳↳ Jesus is Lord.

NOW LET'S CONSIDER VERSE 2,

HERE PAUL CONTINUES TO EXPLAIN ~ THE UPWARD ASPECT ~ of the proper focus of attention believers are to have.

▶▶ Verse 2. ⇔⇔ "Set your minds ~ on things that are above, ~ not ~ on things that are on earth."

▶▶ Paul here ~ is talking about our thought life.

▶▶ Once again, ~ the verb form indicates ~ continuous action.

▷▷ Constantly ~ set your minds ~ on things that are above, ~ not ~ on things that are on earth." ¶¶ 13/16

▶▶ The Greek verb for "set your minds on," ~ means ~ to keep on giving serious consideration to something.

▷▷ 'to ponder, ~ to let one's mind dwell on, ~ to keep thinking about, ~ to fix one's attention on.'

OF COURSE, ~ THE THOUGHTS OF HEAVEN ~ THAT ARE TO FILL OUR MINDS ~ MUST originate from Scripture.

▶▶ IOW, ~ our thoughts must be scripturally-directed.

▷▷ Otherwise, ~ we could go off into quite some fanciful speculations.

▶▶ So, ~ the bottom line here ~ is that we must first ~ fix our minds ~ on God's word.

▶▶ When God's word governs our minds and thoughts ~ not only will our thoughts be fixed on the things of heaven, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ godly behavior will also result.

↪↪ I have hidden your word in my heart ~ that I might not sin against you.

▶▶ Also, ~ a Scripture-oriented mindset ~ will provide us with a new set of values, ~ the values of our homeland.

▷▷ We will no longer worry ~ about things which the world thinks important.

▷▷ Ambitions which dominate the world ~ will hold no appeal for us.

▷▷ We will go on using the things of the world, ~ but we will use them in a new way, ~ for the glory of God. ¶¶ 14/16

▷▷ We will, ~ for instance, ~ set ~ giving above getting, ~ serving above ruling, ~ forgiving above avenging.

▷▷ The standard of values for believers ~ will be the Kingdom of Heaven's, ~ not the world's.

▶▶ Furthermore, ~ a Scripture-oriented mindset ~ ¶¶

▷▷ will cause us to view and evaluate everything ~ through the grid of Scripture.

↳↳ E.g., ~ the news

PAUL GOES ON HERE IN VERSE 2 ~ AND NOTES, ~ THAT WE ARE NOT TO FIX OUR thoughts on the things of earth.

▶▶ "Earthly things" ~ are not all evil. ⇔⇔ But some of them are.

▶▶ Even things harmless in themselves ~ become harmful ~ if permitted to take the place ~ that should be reserved for the things above.

▶▶ Heb. 12:1, ~ Therefore, ~ since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, ~ let us also lay aside every weight, ~ and sin which clings so closely, ~ and let us run with endurance ~ the race that is set before us.

▷▷ "every weight" ~ refers to hindrances ~ which may not be sinful in themselves ~ ¶¶

↳↳ but ~ which would prevent or hinder ~ our spiritual growth. ⇔⇔ Lay aside

▶▶ In the present passage, ~ Col. 3:2, ~ earthly things ~ may be understood to include ~ ¶¶

▷▷ wealth, ~ worldly honor, ~ power, ~ pleasures, ~ and the like. ¶¶ 15/16

▶▶ To make such things ~ the goal of life ~ and the subject of preoccupation ~ ¶¶

▷▷ is unworthy ~ of those who have been raised with Christ ~ and look forward to sharing in his eternal glory.

CONCLUSION.

AGAIN, ~ PAUL IS NOT ENCOURAGING US TO CHECK OUT OF LIFE ~ ¶¶

▶▶ to engage only in contemplation of eternity and heaven.

▶▶ Summarize.

▷▷ Paul is calling us ~ ¶¶

↳↳ to live, ~ to shape our thinking, ~ attitudes, ~ reactions, ~ etc. ~ ¶¶

→→ and ~ to view all of life and this world and the things in it ~ according ~ to a biblical worldview.

LET'S PRAY 16/16