

A Matter of Affection and Perspective

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By Courtney Whiting

As Christians, we often feel torn between living for Christ and getting caught up in the things of this world. It almost seems like we are double-minded or schizophrenic at times. We want to do right, but it seems like we just keep messing up. Jesus expresses this so eloquently when he tells his disciples, "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." He understood the struggle it would be for us to overcome the temptations of the world and to remain true to Him.

So what is the solution? Colossians 3 is one of my favorite chapters in the Bible. It seems so difficult to attain, but at the same time, there is so much hope within the first several verses.

Colossians 3:1-3 - Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. Therefore, when Christ, who is your life, appears, you will also appear with Him in glory.

Paul begins the chapter by telling the Colossians that have been raised with Christ, meaning that their position is already established. In essence, the work of Christ has already been accomplished in their lives. He then gives them their responsibility. They should in response set their hearts on the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. This is a command of affection. He reminds them of the victorious position of Christ. These affections will then drive their thoughts. This leads to the second command. In verse 2, he tell them to set their minds on things above, not on earthly things. This command shows that they should be intentional about their thoughts. It is not something that would come immediately or naturally. The tendency would be to think about the present earthly concerns because they are the seeming direct priority at the time. However, Paul gives the reason why they should have this upward perspective. He tells them that their old selves have died and now they are hidden with Christ in God. Therefore, they are not who they once were. Since they are hidden with Christ, their hearts and minds should now be conforming to His. The world should no longer be seeing them, but rather Him. They are not alone on the journey. They are with Christ. It is an intimate partnership. The following verse shows the extent of the intimacy as well as the reward for perseverance. It states that when Christ, who is your life, appears, you will also appear with him in glory. Therefore, Christ's future glory at His return will be ours as well. This gives us hope. This is what we should be looking towards: our future glory with Christ.

When we compare compromising our integrity over a promotion at the present job verses our future glory with Christ, the former seems minuscule. When we throw all of our affections on the "person of the moment" instead of trusting Christ for our future, it seems futile if we look at it

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with the end result of our future glory in mind. God has so much more to give us than we realize most of the time. Often times, we simply want to settle for whatever tickles our fancy at the moment. This leads us to stray from the one we love the most. Yet, when we decide to place our affections and our thoughts, not on the things going on presently in the world, but on what God has in store for us through Christ, the battle does not seem so formidable. However, it is a continuous decision we must make. We have wandering hearts and minds. The world is flashy and flirty, daring us to stray. However, take hope that Christ has already done the work in you. He is partnering with you and He is with you for every step of the journey.

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