

COLOSSIANS 3 vs 1

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¹ **If you then are risen with Christ, seek** / the word is: **zeteo**, to desirously search for: it's the same word when Jesus says, **Seek** first the kingdom of God; or when Jesus says, **Seek**... and you will find; or in Matthew, the angel that says... I know that you **seek** Jesus... who wasn't there. He had already risen.

Paul says...

If you then are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ sits at

the right hand of God / actively seek His ideas, images, and information, and patterns of thinking.

² **Set your mind on things above, not on the earth** / the word is: **phroneo**; Paul uses this action word 11 times in his letter to the Philippians... when he writes: Have the same mind that was also in Christ Jesus. Paul just wrote... **we were enemies of God in our deep thoughts and meditations** -- Colossians 1.

That's why we need a **METANOIA moment**; to change our thinking on things above; to rethink. In the early 1800s, Adam Clarke... explained this phrase by saying: **Love heavenly things, study them... be entirely engrossed by them.**

Set your mind on things above / we all know parents who complain? My kid doesn't mind me. Well?! I wonder if God our Father has ever said that?

Mind things above, where Christ sits / next to God our Father in heaven. Yeah, should mind Them: first thing; last thing; each day; throughout the day. Get our mind on things above; think the way they think;

not on the earth / instead of believing all the advertisements and restless, addictive images and sensual and violent ways of the world; advertisers are paid millions in hopes they will convince you and me... that we need what they are peddling.

Dr. Thielicke, the great German pastor during the World War II era... who publicly just by his presence... resisted the Nazis. He said, Mind God; think God's way; it's not a matter to be taken lightly that God should always be of a different mind than men even different from very serious-minded and wise men. All of us need to take God seriously. **Mind Him first who is at the right hand of God.**

³ **For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God** / taking our cross, we die daily. In other words, Consider our-selves dead to the world; your zoe; your eternal life... Paul says, our hope is laid up in heaven. It's safe with Them up there.

⁴ **When Christ, your life will appear, then you will appear with Him in glory** / and He will someday... sooner than you can imagine; when we see Him, we will be like Him -- Psalm 17,



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⁵ **Therefore mortify your members which are upon the earth** / and we might wonder: what does this mean? Simple, it means what Jesus taught us in His Sermon on the Mount... when He clearly said: **If your right eye offends you, pluck it out** -- Matthew 5:29-30. He said if we are His disciple, we will take up our cross -- what reminds us: this world is NOT our home. Jesus taught lessons of the heart which is why we need a metanoia moment; because **without a changed mind, there will be no changed heart.**

Consider dead those parts which belong to the earth, starting with: our eyes and ears to our feet and toes. Paul has us ask: what do you watch? what do you listen to? where do you stand? what keeps you in balance?

FORNICATION

Huh?! Paul starts with the juiciest way of the world; any and all feeding the insatiable, never gratified feelings and gratuitous sensuality. Paul is a good preacher. He knows he will have everyone's attention.

FORNICATION... that's an F-word we all can say, even self-righteous; salivating in secret! the word is: **porneia**; a billion-dollar industry in L.A. alone with priests, pastors and parishioners pushing to the front of the line.

Paul is writing this letter to the Church at Colossae; a congregation that was far from being perfect. ALL... Paul's words are addressed to a congregation being saved by God's grace. He got everyone's attention;

uncleanness / the word is: **akatharsia**... and Paul doesn't mention one example of what is unclean. With this word, Paul reminds us heaven is not full of earth's trailer trash. The students know what he meant.

Next Paul says,

~~**inordinate affection**~~ / in Greek: **pathos**, guard your **passions, evil strong desires** / this word is: **epithumia**; the word means **strong desire** or craving. Jesus had strong desire... same word; **strong desire to eat the Passover with His disciples**. But His desire was not evil. Paul is talking about: **kakos epithumia**.

and covetousness / the insatiable want for this and that... and the other; feeding our worst idol, our self.

Let us eat, drink and be merry; for tomorrow, we die! About this mindset, Dr. Dallas Willard, philosophy professor at USC, said: If someone was writing a letter of recommendation for you, you probably would not want this maxim ascribed to you because it would reveal your personality and view of life.

In these verses, Dr. Willard says: Paul is answering the age-old questions that every person -- man or woman, young or old... in every culture seeks to answer:

1. What is reality?
2. Who is well off?
3. Who is truly a good person?
4. How do I become a good person?

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Dr. Willard says that knowledge is secure access to reality. Society is like any living organism; its existence depends upon the correct integration of its parts into a whole. **Integration** cannot be present if a society is organized around ignorance and illusion; and if the moral quality of its citizens falls below a certain level.

This is still true of modern nations perishing for lack of knowledge. Here, Paul confronts a failure of knowledge, and the general disintegration of life which comes from acting on falsehoods at that most fundamental level. Knowledge of Christ or lack of it is positioned at that level where it competes for the human soul.

Simply put, **worldview**... consist of the most general and basic assumptions about what is real, and what is good; including assumptions about who we are, and what we should do. Worldview is unavoidable; everyone has a worldview.

Whenever we act, we act with reference to a world, a totality of facts, goods and possibilities. There is nothing more practical than our worldview, for it determines the orientation of everything... we think and do. You cannot opt out of having a worldview.

Much of it lies outside our consciousness in the moment of action embedded in our body; and in its social environment, including in our history, language and culture; it radiates throughout our life as background assumptions... in thoughts too deep for words.

Jesus answered each of these worldview questions: **What is real? What is reality?** The answer Jesus gives to this question is: **God and His kingdom**. In the language of technical philosophy, Jesus was a personalist. Trinitarian personality is for Him the last word on the universe.

This ultimate person is the only one who can say without qualification: I AM. He is dependent on nothing but Himself. The Kingdom is: where what God wants done, is done.

The reason they concluded that Jesus had come from the Father is because His words and His deeds had a power that was not seen in human life. Jesus said, God actively seeks those who worship Him in spirit and truth – John 4:23. That answers the second question: **Who is well off? Who is blessed?**

Long before the coming of Christ... according to Plato, Socrates remarked: the good do their neighbors good, and the bad do them evil. But the Greeks, for all their brilliance, could never solve the next problem in line which was: **How does one become a really good person?**

Jesus answers: You place your confidence in Him and become His student, His life-long apprentice in kingdom living...progressively entering into the abundance of life He brings. Our confidence leads us to constantly go to school with Him, taking our whole life with us; and in so doing, love comes to pervade our life to such an extent that we are unmistakably His students.

He said, By this, everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another – John 13. As Teacher, He can impose this challenge Himself because He knows no one else can produce the human transformation He has in mind. As Jesus' disciple, I am learning from Him how to lead my life, as He would lead my life... if He was me.

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These are the questions that everyone who would be a teacher of humanity must answer. Modernity, after centuries of struggle, has found NO credible answers to the basic questions of life.

The universities... our primary institutions of research, simply have NO intellectually responsible responses to those questions. That is a fact, anyone can verify. Our institutions of higher education, our colleges and universities stand as the authoritative institutions of knowledge in our society today; **following the withdrawal of the church from that position.**

They are the places we go to learn what is taught as knowledge in our world. They not only stand as the repository of legitimate knowledge, **but they presume to determine what will count as knowledge**, and what methods are acceptable as sources of knowledge today. That is why their greatest boast today is research. The test of "good" research is **not** truth or knowledge achieved, that is held in contempt.

The result is that the accepted institutions of knowledge have NOTHING to say, certainly NO knowledge to offer with reference to the primary questions of life, which is why, in our colleges and universities, there is NO **Department of Reality**, or of **the Good Life**; or of **the Good person**. To say this, recognizes it is so.

There is NO intellectually responsible teaching on these matters, or upon the nature and limits of knowledge and research itself. As a matter of fact, worldview questions are dealt with behind the back, both by individuals, and by policies and practices. Answers to those questions are mostly communicated covertly.

Excerpts from: [Knowing Christ Today: why we can trust spiritual knowledge, Dr. Dallas Willard](#), chapter 2, Harper publishing; © 2009–Dallas Willard

One last comment on the age-old questions that everyone seeks to answer: it was Aristotle, considered as the father of the science of logic... who suggested: an educated student should be able to form a fair, impromptu judgment as to the goodness or badness of a method used by a professor in his exposition!

Now days, Aristotle's advice is resented and berated by the educated-elite, including those with great capacity -- frequently, fascists and inquisitors... who over-populate and tirelessly pontificate in our public and private institutions. We live in an age of angry, intolerant leaders demanding they be tolerated.

Here... helping to redirect the minds of those living in Colossae should they possess some faulty thinking about what life in the Spirit is about, Paul says,

faithlessness, uncleanness, passions, evil strong desires and covetousness which is idolatry / falsely attributing power to some material thing -- which serves the individual. Our greatest idol is: our self

6 the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience / the rebellious, obstinate children; thankfully, not on those appointed unto salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord:

7 In which you also walked some time, when you lived in them.

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