

Lesson 11

Living With Christ

SABBATH AFTERNOON

Memory Text: **Colossians 3:14** “But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection”

- Often urged **not** to be so heavenly-minded
 - that we're of no earthly good
- Equally important concept highlighted by Paul in Col 3
 - if we're too earthly-minded = of no heavenly use to /Lord
- This week we'll see ways in which living w/ Christ
 - can make a difference = now / and eternally

It's commonly urged not to be so heavenly-minded; otherwise, we'll be of no earthly good. While true in some sense, there's an equally important concept that Paul highlights in Colossians 3: if we are too earthly-minded, we will be of no heavenly use to the Lord.

Paul draws our attention to many practical, real-life principles that are born of heaven and can be understood only by those who are “risen with Christ” (*Col. 3:1*). Paul's counsels are very down-to-earth principles that will enhance all our relationships, and not just within the church.

Jesus said, “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you . . . that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (*Matt. 5:44, 45, NKJV*).

Sound impossible? It is, humanly speaking. We need to die before we can really live for God. It's why we must be heavenly-minded if we hope to be of any earthly use to our heavenly Father.

This week we'll see ways in which living with Christ can make a difference, now and eternally.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, March 14.*

SUNDAY *March 8* **Heavenly-Mindedness**

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

- Ever stood on mountaintop = gazed across landscape below?
- From that vantage point = valleys/ rivers / cities spread out
 - Everything looks smaller/ clearer/ more connected
- Mountains have always drawn people seeking perspective
 - whether to find peace /clarity / communion w/God
- Even pagans built artificial mountains called **ziggurats**
 - Hoping to reach their gods
 - City of **Ur** / where Abram once lived = was dominated by one such structure = massive staircase to sky
- But human effort / could never build / true bridge to heaven.
- Climbing higher physically
 - doesn't bring us spiritually nearer /God
- Only way upward / only way to be truly **heavenly-minded**
 - Is thru = **miracle of grace**
- Paul begins Colossians 3= w/ condition
 - “If then you were raised with Christ...”
- Reminding believers of / spiritual reality
- Already accomplished in their lives = Thru faith
- We have died w/Christ to sin = been raised w/ Him to new life
- **Colossians 2:12** Baptism symbolizes / experience: “Buried w/Him in baptism... also were raised w/Him thru faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”
- That's = foundation of heavenly-minded living
- Cannot “seek those things which are above”

- unless you have first been / raised to life in Christ
- This transformation/ not a **metaphor** = it's a **miracle**
- To natural mind / makes little sense
 - How can we “die”/“rise” when nothing visible changes?
- But spiritual mind / renewed by Holy Spirit
 - understands something profound / happens within.
- Heart once bound w/earthly desires
 - now beats w/ **heavenly purpose**
- Paul's command = both simple / searching = **Colossians 3:2**
“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”
- Notice = it's a choice
 - Believer's mind doesn't automatically drift heavenward
 - Gravitational pull of world
 - constantly draws / our thoughts downward
 - to worry / ambition / materialism / pleasure
 - Paul calls us to lift our focus = intentionally / daily
- To “**set your mind**”= means = **fix your attention**
 - **Determine your priorities / align your values**
 - **W/ realities of heaven**
 - It's a continual discipline = of perspective
- When our minds / set above
 - Earthly concerns / lose their power / to enslave us
- Doesn't mean / we withdraw from life / neglect responsibilities
- Heavenly-minded people = **not absent-minded**
 - They **are Christ-minded**
 - View everything = work/ relationships / finances / time
 - thru lens of eternity
- Paul adds a breathtaking truth in verse 3:
Colossians 3:3 For you died & your life is hidden w/Christ in God.

- 2B “hidden with Christ” = means your true life is secure in Him
 - No one can steal it / spoil it / destroy it
 - Even when you face loss / sickness / rejection
 - Your spiritual identity = remains safe in Christ
 - Paul reminds us = that hidden reality will soon be revealed
- Colossians 3:4** “When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”
- Ultimate destination of heavenly-minded
 - To appear w/ Christ in glory
 - Heavenly-mindedness = not one-time decision / **daily renewal**
- 2 Corinthians 4:16**, “Though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.”
- **Spiritual focus fades = w/o daily restoration**
 - Prayer / Scripture meditation / surrender are how
 - we **recalibrate our hearts**
 - Every morning = we choose again to
 - “seek those things which are above.”
 - Paul contrasts / heavenly focus = w/ mindset of world
 - Earthly-mindedness fixates on temporary / fleeting things
 - To be earthly-minded = to live as if this life is all there is
 - Can fall away and be lost
 - But to be heavenly-minded = remember that this life
 - only preface to eternity
 - When our thoughts sink too low
 - We become restless / anxious / dissatisfied
 - But when we look above—where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God—we find peace / perspective / purpose

CLOSING THOUGHT:

- Heavenly-mindedness isn't **escaping** life
 - it's **embracing** life / from God's perspective
- When your heart is hidden w/ Christ
 - and your mind fixed above
 - the peace of heaven begins to fill your life
 - here and now