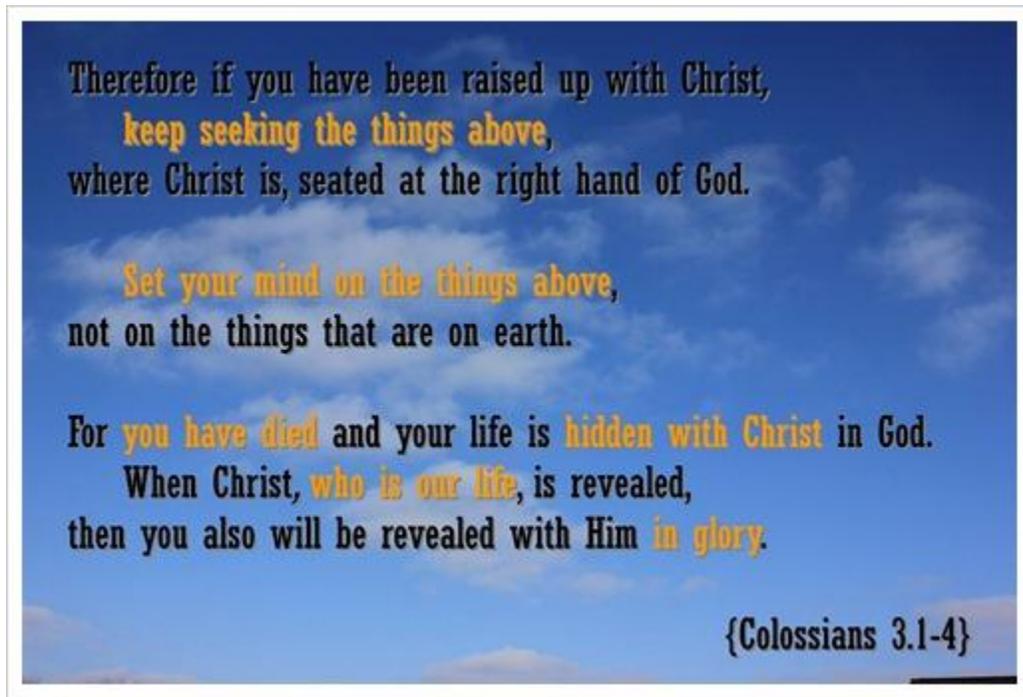


**Daily Life with Christ-56. New Year Special 2018 (Part 4): The divine command for the Heavenly perspective: diligently, actively, single-mindedly, set your hearts and minds on Heaven, where Christ is, Col. 3:1.**



In the last essay I noted five different philosophical/scriptural lifetime perspectives. In this work, I would like to review them and expand a bit more on the divine command to every Christian to have a Heavenly perspective (Col. 3:1).

The first perspective is the temporal perspective. This is the life that is caught up in this temporal realm—e.g., one’s self-esteem tied to the standards of this world (e.g., attractiveness, wealth, status). Instead of loving God with all of one’s heart/soul/mind, the person loves the world, the things of the world, and himself with all his heart/soul/mind. The common characteristic in this temporal perspective is that there is little to no longing to leave this Earth to be with the Lord. That’s understandable since all value and treasures for these people are on Earth. It is all about the here and now. Scripture warns the unbeliever and the believer about the consequences of such a temporal perspective: “what profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Mark 8:36; “enemies of the cross . . . who set their minds on earthly things,” Philip. 3:18-19; ‘who lay of up treasures on earth instead of heaven . . . who worship Mammon rather than God’” (Matt. 6:19-20,24).

The second perspective includes belief in God, but it does not live in the joyful anticipation of a future glorious life with Him in the New Heavens and the New Earth. This person lives with a frantic search for happiness, trying to find ultimate happiness in family, wealth, entertainment, drink, food, human accomplishments. This person experiences sadness when he thinks about how he will eventually lose his prized (yet vacuous) earthly treasures. We see this attitude in King Solomon in Ecclesiastes.

The third perspective “employs” God to gain more earthly treasures as well as to gain sense of peace from his anxiety-ridden life. In this view, the highest good continues to be earthly things—looks, friends, approbation, wealth, power/control—God is merely a means to gain more of the world. Not only is God viewed as the best means to get what they perceive as their greatest goods, things of this world; God is also viewed instrumentally as a means of peace, which they desperately need because of their attachment to increasing acquisition of more things of this world, rather than more acquisition of God in their lives. Because of inordinate love of self and world over God, this person will not give self to God. Lack of love for God precludes the ability to give joyfully to the Lord. Like with anyone, when we love someone we are more than willing to give up control and let go of material things for the beloved. Loving God with all our hearts, souls, and minds means giving ourselves to Him totally and completely, Rom. 12:1-2. We simply cannot love the things of this world more than Him and be willing to let go of them when He calls us to do so.

The fourth view is what I called the Christo-platonic view. In this view, the future life is viewed very ambiguously and limited to the face-to-face heavenly contemplation of God for all of eternity. This view is both right and wrong. It is right in that the greatest joy we will ever experience is when we are face to face with God and see His great love and beauty. However, it is mistaken in its lack of incorporation of all Scripture, which teaches that we will live on the New Earth in houses, cities, and with family and friends (if they are saved/believers).

The fifth view is the biblical view, what I call the whole truth, total truth view—it is the whole truth, because it is scriptural, theological, and philosophical. Let’s note one of the many scriptural exhortations to have a Heaven-centered life.

In Colossian 3:1, God explicitly commands the Christian to set his mind and heart on Heaven: “set your hearts on the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.” To make sure the Christian gets the point, in the next verse God says “set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.” There can be no doubt that God’s will for every Christian is to set his heart and mind on Heaven. The Greek word for seek (ζητεῖτε) denotes a person’s philosophical mindset of active and profound seeking. The present imperative shows that this is a command and thus to be a way of life. The present tense tells us that it is to be a daily ongoing process—“keep on seeking.” This seeking of Heaven is not limited to merely nice thoughts of Heaven during Bible study, or when one nears the end of his life. It is to be a way of life, always. We do not fulfill the command by occasionally thinking about Heaven and the New Earth when we hear a sermon or lose a loved one. Since we will be spending most of our existence in the next lifetime living in New Heavens and New Earth, why not spend this lifetime seeking them? Scripture teaches us eagerly to anticipate our next life. After all, this just is what it means to live the Christian life.

Based on the scriptural/theological/philosophical usage of the verb translated “seek” in Scripture (see Luke 19:10; Matthew 13:45; 18:12; Luke 15:8), we could translate it: ‘diligently, actively,

single-mindedly pursue the things above”—‘pursue Heaven and the New Earth,’ of course to long for Christ is to long for Heaven (the present/intermediate Heaven is where He is right now).

The fact that “seek” is a command implies that there is some resistance to doing this. A person does not need to be commanded to do something that he will naturally do. The reason we do not naturally think about Heaven has a lot to do with our culture. C.S. Lewis noted that “Most of us find it very difficult to want “Heaven” at all—except in so far as “Heaven” means meeting again our friends who have died. One reason for this difficulty is that we have not been trained: our whole education tends to fix our minds on this world.”

In fact, the maxim of the world is that it is not good to be so heavenly minded because then one would be of no earthly good. However, this is manifestly false. A lie from Satan himself. As C. S. Lewis observed, “If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman Empire, the great men who built up the Middle Ages, the English Evangelicals who abolished the Slave Trade, all left their mark on Earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth ‘thrown in’: aim at earth and you will get neither.”

In closing, I would just add that Colossians 3:1 tells us to seek the things above where WE HAVE BEEN RAISED WITH CHRIST . . . WHERE CHRIST IS, SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD! To seek Christ is to seek Heaven! Moreover, we have here the idea of connection with Christ. If we are not connected with Him in our spiritual and philosophical outlook, we cannot expect to live a supernatural life. It is our vital connection with Him wherein His life is flows through us and thus that enables us to be spiritually fruitful (John 15:1-5).

We are so blessed that there is so much more to this life than the material, impermanent, temporal realm, see 2 Cor 4:18. Thanks be to God, as Rich Mullins calls Him: “to the Giver of all good things” (see [https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PL\\_GEGJYfgrhdbRRAQDPBf1TsNMiwXfYNI&v=5Jj0ZTzgmGM&app=desktop](https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PL_GEGJYfgrhdbRRAQDPBf1TsNMiwXfYNI&v=5Jj0ZTzgmGM&app=desktop)). There simply is nothing like God’s matchless marvelous grace to save us and reveal these great transcendent truths to us.

If we are going to make a New Year’s resolution, let us make it about truly living in, with, and for Christ. Life that is really Life is only so because of Him—at least the supernatural, abundant-type of Life.

Quo Vadis?

Pastor Don