

NOW THAT YOU'RE A CHRISTIAN

Colossians 3:1-4

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. It is one thing to become a Christian, but it is another thing to know how to live as a Christian. To become a Christian you must put your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. The moment you make that decision God saves you and gives you new life, abundant life. But God doesn't immediately call you away to heaven. He leaves you here on earth for awhile. So now that you're a Christian, how are you supposed to live? Being a Christian is not just a matter of believing, it is a matter of living; of acting; of behaving. So, now that you're a Christian, how should you live?

II. TEXT

1. **Colossians 3:1-4** "1 So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

III. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

1. You have been raised with Christ.

- i. **Colossians 3:1** "So if you have been raised with Christ"
- ii. When God saves you, a resurrection takes place. Just as God raised Christ from the dead, He also raised you from the dead and gave you new life.
- iii. 2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!"
- iv. This is called regeneration (born again; the new birth; the new life; the new man). When God saves us, He gives us a new heart with the desire and power to please Him.
- v. Philippians 2:13 (NLT) "For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him."
- vi. This resurrection includes two changes:
 1. A new desire. Your desire is now for God. You love God and want to please Him above all else. You want to know Him. You want to serve Him. You want to glorify Him.
 - a. Before salvation, your desire was for sin and self.
 2. A new power. You now have the power, through the indwelling Holy Spirit, to overcome sin and live for God. To become more and more like Christ.
- vii. 2 Realities of the resurrection:
 1. The inward change is instant. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation (2 Cor 5:17).
 2. The outward change is gradual.
 - a. When LeBron James was conceived, God gave him the ability to become the best basketball player in the world. But that

did not happen overnight. It took years of growth – physical and mental.

- b. When you are born again, God gives you the ability to glorify Him. But you do not become instantly perfect. Instead, you become more and more like Jesus over time as cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the process of spiritual growth.
- viii. Why do Christians still sin? (if we have the desire and the power)
1. We still have imperfect bodies. While God gives us a new heart, He does not give us a new body. Our bodies love pleasure; comfort; ease; luxury; applause. And our bodies hate pain; discomfort; hardship; suffering; adversity. When sin promises pleasure, we are tempted to sin. We sin promises to rescue us from pain, we are tempted to sin.
 2. We still have sinful addictions. When we get saved, we often have sinful addictions – drugs, alcohol, porn, gambling. Even though we no longer desire these things, we are physically dependent upon them. We have trained ourselves to not be able to function (or be happy) without these things. It takes time, effort, and outside support to overcome these things.
 3. We still have sinful habits. We have trained ourselves to react in certain ways; to worry; to complain; to lose our temper; to get revenge. It takes time and training to become more like Jesus.

2. You died.

- i. **Colossians 3:3** “For you died”
- ii. When God saved you, a death took place. Your old self died.
 1. You died to the world. Your relationships with the world changed. You no longer exist to gain the world; to please the world; to impress the world; to keep up with the world; to seek happiness in the world.
 2. You died to sin. You have a new relationship with sin. You no longer desire sin. You no longer love sin. You hate sin. Sin is your enemy.
 3. You died to self. You have a new relationship with yourself. You are no longer god. You no longer worship yourself, or seek worshipers for yourself. You no longer live for yourself; for your own pleasure; your own goals; your own agenda; your own glory.
 4. You died to former allegiances. You no longer live for any other god. Your live for the God the of the Bible, and His Son Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

3. Your life is hidden with Christ in God.

- i. **Colossians 3:3** “For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”
- ii. What does this mean?
- iii. Now that you are saved, your life is all about Christ.
- iv. Take your index finger. That represents your life. Your other hand represents Christ. Now wrap your hand around your index finger. Just has

your index finger is hidden in your hand, your life is hidden in Christ. Your life is no longer about you. It is all about Jesus.

- v. The next verse puts it clearly.
- vi. **Colossians 3:4** “When Christ, who is your life”
- vii. Now that you are saved, Christ is your life.
- viii. When I was a kid, there were popular T-shirts that said, “_____ is life.” “Basketball is life.” “Football is life.” “Fishing is life.” “Hunting is life.” “Golf is life.” The shirt expressed a person’s passion and devotion to something. Eventually a Christian t-shirt maker came out with a shirt that said, “Christ is life.” When I played basketball, I had a shirt that said, “Christ is life,” with a basketball underneath the words. The message of the shirt was that I played basketball, but I lived for Christ. Basketball was not my life; Christ was my life.
- ix. If you are a Christian, your life is hidden with Christ in God. Christ is your desire; your pattern; your God; your love; your best friend; your purpose; your all in all.
- x. Listen to how Paul put it:
 - 1. **Galatians 2:20** “I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”
 - a. “I have been crucified with Christ.” Just as Christ died, you died to your old life. You no longer live, but Christ lives in you. Your life is not about you anymore; it is all about Christ.
 - 2. **Philippians 1:21** “For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”
 - a. Life is all about Jesus.

4. You will appear with him in glory.

- i. **Colossians 3:4** “When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”
- ii. “When Christ... appears”
 - 1. This is a reference to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
 - 2. The NT uses three words for the Second Coming:
 - a. Coming: *Parousia*. The most popular word. 1 Cor 4:5 “So don’t judge anything prematurely, before the Lord comes, who will both bring to light what is hidden in darkness and reveal the intentions of the hearts. And then praise will come to each one from God.”
 - b. Revealing: *Apokalupsis*. A disclosing. 1 Cor 1:7 “so that you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - c. Appearing. *Epiphaneia*. A manifestation. Colossians 3:4 “When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”
- iii. When Christ returns (appears), we will also appear with Him in glory.
- iv. “Glory”

1. The glory of our resurrection bodies to given to us when Christ return.
 2. Philippians 3:20-21 “20 but our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21 He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of his glorious body, by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself.”
 3. When Christ returns, He will give us our new bodies that are free from all sin, suffering, and sorrow, and we will live with Him forever in the new heavens and new earth.
5. What happened to you when you got saved?
 - i. You were raised with Christ.
 - ii. You died.
 - iii. Your life is hidden with Christ in God.
 - iv. You will appear with him in glory.
 6. Since this is true of you, this is how you should live. One thing to do; one thing not to do.

IV. HOW SHOULD YOU LIVE?

1. Seek the things above.

- i. **Colossians 3:1-2** “1 So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”
- ii. Paul uses two verbs to describe the same thing:
 1. Seek the things above. *Zeteite*. To seek or strive for earnestly. This has to do with effort. Put all your effort into striving for the things above.
 2. Set your mind on things above. *Phroneo*. Focus on; aim at; determine yourself; commit yourself. This has to do with concentration. Concentrate on things above. Set and focus your mind constantly upon heavenly things, not upon earthly things.
 - a. The **Expositor’s Bible Commentary** says, “To set the mind on things above has the connotation of giving heavenly things a large place in one’s thought life – seeing to it that the governing tendency of thought and will is toward God.”
 - b. **Bible Knowledge Commentary** “Concentrate your concern on the eternal, not the temporal.”
 - c. 2 Cor 4:18 “So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”
 - d. It is another way of saying “seek.” It’s like when someone says, “If you set your mind to it, you can achieve anything.”
- iii. Both of these verbs are on the present tense.
 1. Keep seeking things above.
 2. Keep setting your mind on things above.

- iv. So, the idea is to wholeheartedly devote your life to the things above. Prioritize the things above. Desire most the things above. Concentrate most on the things above. Mt 6:33 “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.”
- v. What are “things above”? The things of God.
 - 1. Knowing God more. Phil 3:10 “My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death”
 - 2. Spiritual growth – loving God and others more and more. Mk 12:29-31
 - 3. Heaven. Be sure that you are going to heaven. 2 Pt 1:10 “make every effort to confirm your calling and election”
 - 4. Eternal rewards. Mt 6:20 “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don’t break in and steal.”
 - 5. Soulwinning. Acts 1:8 “and you will be my witnesses”
 - 6. Glorifying God. 1 Cor 10:31 “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.”
 - 7. Building the church. Eph 4:16 “From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.”
- vi. Focus your life on God, and the things of God, and the things that matter to God.

2. Do not seek earthly things.

- i. **Colossians 3:2** “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”
- ii. Earthly things refers to two things:
 - 1. Sin. Colossians 3:5 “Therefore, put to death what belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry.”
 - a. Live a life of holiness (moral blamelessness) unto God.
 - 2. The world – things that are not necessarily sinful, but hinder your pursuit of things above.
 - a. 1 John 2:16 “For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one’s possessions—is not from the Father, but is from the world.”
 - i. The lust of the flesh – physical pleasure.
 - ii. The lust of the eyes – money and material possessions.
 - iii. The pride in one’s possessions – position and honor (the applause of the world for your achievements).
 - iv. Charles Spurgeon calls these “the trinity of defilers by which many hopeful lives have been spoiled.”
 - v. Thomas Watson calls them the “wicked man’s trinity.”

- vi. James MacDonald calls these the “Three Access Points to the Human Heart.” Three desires:
 - 1. Physical desires: Lust of the flesh. Physical pleasure.
 - 2. Visual desires. Lust of the eyes. Material possessions.
 - 3. Positional desires. The desire to gain position and prestige and impress others.
- iii. Do not seek earthly things.
 - 1. It is okay to have earthly things like money, possessions, and position/honor.
 - 2. But we must be careful not to “think only, or chiefly, of this world’s things, and neglect the world to come – the people who are always thinking more of earth than of Heaven, more of time than of eternity, more of the body than of the soul, more of please man than of pleasing God.” JC Ryle
 - 3. 1 John 2:15 “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”
 - 4. James 4:4 “You adulterous people! Don’t you know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be the friend of the world becomes the enemy of God.”
- iv. How to not seek earthly things:
 - 1. Don’t use money to buy happiness. You can’t buy happiness anyway.
 - 2. Don’t use money to impress others. You cannot be Christlike if you are trying to be cool.
 - 3. Don’t let your vocation keep you from seeking and serving God. Work hard and do your best, but don’t let work keep you from church involvement, from a quiet time, from family devotions.
 - 4. Do your work to the glory of God. Don’t leave God at home. Do everything at work and school to attract others to Jesus Christ.
 - 5. Don’t try to keep up with the Joneses. The Joneses are broke, unhappy, and hell bound.
 - 6. Increase your giving with your income. Greed is the assumption that the extra is for your consumption.
 - 7. Keep your mind out of the gutter. Sin begins with your thoughts. Beware of dirty books, movies, websites, etc.
 - 8. Spend your leisure time on spiritual things. Spend your evenings in prayer, Bible study, reading Christian literature, having spiritual conversations.
 - 9. Don’t allow your recreation to become an obsession, keeping you from the things of God. When your hobby keeps you from church, it has become your idol.
 - 10. Turn your conversation to spiritual things whenever possible. Don’t waste all your words on sports and the weather.

V. REFLECTION

1. What are you seeking? What is your mind set on?
 - i. What does your time say about what you are seeking?
 - ii. What do your thoughts say about what you are seeking?
 - iii. What do your spending habits say about what you are seeking?
 - iv. What does your discourse (the topics of your conversation) say about what you are seeking?
 - v. Are you seeking God's glory or your own?
 - vi. Are you building God's kingdom or your own?
 - vii. Are you more concerned about your physical health or your spiritual health?
 - viii. Are you more focused on your physical attractiveness or your spiritual attractiveness?
 - ix. Do you let your job keep you from church and other spiritual duties?
 - x. Are you trying please God, or impress people?
 - xi. Are you trying to keep up with the Joneses, or are you trying to build up your heavenly rewards?

VI. CONCLUSION

1. How to seek things ABOVE:
 - i. A – Aim for God's glory. Aim to please God, not impress people. Aim to make God look God, not yourself. 1 Cor 10:31
 - ii. B – Build God's church. Christ loves the church. Christ is building the church. The church will last forever. Get deeply involved in the church and work your tail off to make it healthier, and more fruitful, and more God-honoring.
 - iii. O – Offer your money to God's work. It's okay to enjoy the money that God has given you. But don't forget to invest in eternal things. Lay up treasures for yourself in heaven. Tithe. Give to the poor.
 - iv. V – Volunteer to do good deeds. As much as you can, do good deeds. Help those who are in need.
 - v. E – Evangelize the lost. Work to bring as many people with you to haven as possible.
2. Let me close with one final thought: Seeking earthly things is living for momentary pleasure. Seeking things above is living for eternal pleasure.