

Set Your Mind in the Right Direction

In Colossians 3:1-2, the apostle Paul has specific and vitally important instructions for every believer in Christ who has accepted Him as their Lord and Savior. I have taught about these verses from the Amplified Bible, Classic Edition, which says, "If then you have been raised with Christ [to a new life, thus sharing His resurrection from the dead], aim at and seek the [rich, eternal treasures] that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. And set your minds and keep them set on what is above (the higher things), not on the things that are on the earth."

Notice in verse 1 that those who have new life in Christ are to "aim at and seek" things that are above. I like the use of the word seek because the original term in the Greek language means "to crave, to pursue, and to go after with all your might." This is what it means to really seek God.

Paul continues his instructions by saying "and set your minds on things above." The Amplified Bible, Classic Edition, reads, "And set your minds and keep them set on what is above" (emphasis mine). Setting our minds on the right thing once or twice won't do us much good but if we set them in the right direction and keep them set, we will be victorious.

When Paul urges us to set our minds and keep them set "on things above," he is not simply telling us to prepare for the day we will go to heaven or to envision the pearly gates. He means that if we want to live lives that honor God, we cannot think about things that are low, base, common or ungodly.

We need to put our minds where we want our lives to be because our lives will follow where our thoughts lead. According to Proverbs 23:7, however we think in our hearts, that's how we

will turn out. I always say, "Where the mind goes, the man follows."

To help us understand what it means on a practical level for us to think about "things above," meaning right and excellent things, let me start by listing some low things people often think about. Thinking about what you don't have instead of what you do have is a low thing. Thinking about people who have things you would like and saying they don't deserve them is low. Thoughts of jealousy, pride, anger, comparison and judgment are low, as is holding grudges against people instead of forgiving them. Focusing on your faults instead of your strengths is low and so is wallowing in self-pity and feeling condemned about your past mistakes.

Of course, high thinking is the opposite of low thinking. When your thoughts are set on things above, you thank God for every blessing you do have instead of complaining about what you don't have. You rejoice with others over their successes instead of being envious. You encourage people who are pursuing what you would like to do or what you would like to have instead of secretly hoping they don't get it. You choose peace over anger, humility over pride, mercy over judgment and forgiveness over unforgiveness.

You pray instead of worrying; you trust God in every situation instead of taking matters into your own hands; you stand firm in faith that God has a bright future for you instead of feeling guilty over your past. There are many other ways to think high thoughts and I believe these examples will help you know how to do that.

I hope you will always remember how powerful your thoughts are. A made-up mind is very powerful. What you think about will determine the quality of your life. When you think happy thoughts, you live a happy life. Don't let the devil control your thinking; do your own thinking. Think according to God's Word and believe the best of everyone.

Once you have set your mind on something, it's important to keep it set and to not doubt yourself or become double-minded. The apostle James says, "The one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do" (James 1:6, 8, NIV).

Once you have explored your options, prayed, sought God's will and made a decision in a matter, you can set your mind firmly on that course of action. You have to reach the point where you know that what you plan to do is the right thing and say, "My mind is made up. With God's help, this is what I'm going to do and it will produce good results in my life."

Today, make a determined decision to seek God more and to set your mind on the promises in His Word. If you do, you'll find there is nothing you cannot do through Christ!

For more on this topic, order Joyce's teaching resource A Bible Study of Colossians Action Plan. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting .

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