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<sup>1</sup> So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above,  
where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God

<sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth,  
<sup>3</sup> for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Colossians 3:1-3

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Where Is Your Head At? Have you ever found yourself going from one room to another with a sense of purpose – to do or get something – but when you arrive, you find you have forgotten what it was? Sometimes we may wonder if the cause is physical. But most of this it is because we are simply not paying attention.

All of us, at some time, have had this experience. We know this occurs for many reasons. Quite simply, we may not be paying attention. Or it could be that we have a lot of other things on our mind. Or we could be experiencing what some now call ‘languishing’ – that is, a feeling of not being depressed, but not feeling quite ‘connected’ (a phenomena much discussed after a COVID affected world – where people are wondering why they have to do what they do).

Where Is Your Head At? Of course, there is also another element that often distracts us. The world has a way of getting us down. It fills us with distractions, temptation, and entertainment, promising us happiness but never fully delivering. Perhaps you have felt weighed down when looking at the state of the world—overwhelmed by the corruption and confusion that surrounds us. Even the day-to-day responsibilities that we are given can feel burdensome.

In an old Candid Camera episode, an actor is on a busy sidewalk and begins looking at the ground. He walks around a bit and continues to look down. People are passing by him and a few give him strange looks. After a couple minutes, he decides to get down on his hands and knees and begins feeling around with his hands. People begin to slow down and watch what he’s doing. Finally, one person stops and starts looking at the ground. Then another one begins searching the sidewalk.

In a few minutes, the camera shows about a dozen people looking down, some even on their hands and knees! At that point, the actor, who got all this started in the first place, quietly gets up and walks away. No one else notices that he has left. They’re so intent in their search that they never even bothered to ask what it was they were looking for.

This is a good picture of how many people live in our society today. They’re searching for something because they know there’s got to be more to life. But, the sad part is that they’ll never find it if they don’t know what it is that they’re missing.

When we focus on these earthly things, it is so Easy for the eyes of hearts to slip from the “things above.” We forget the blessings and promises we have through our adoption as sons and daughters of Jesus and our satisfaction in Christ slips away as well. Indeed, we can also be ‘languishing’ in our Christian faith (and often not realising this). Yet, it doesn’t have to be this way!

In our Bible Reading for today (Colossians 3:1-3): the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul says this: *"If you then were raised with Christ, desire those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on earth. For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."*

At first glance, this looks like a clear command for us to ‘get our minds right’, and if it feels like you are ‘forgetting about God’, then you have a problem. But as we come to this Bible verse, it’s important to pay attention to the tense of the verb. The tenses here are important. ‘Go on setting your mind continually (that’s a present tense – meaning on-going action) – ‘you died once for all’ (that’s an aorist tense – meaning a once only completed action – and that’s really good news for us, which we will get to in a moment) ----- ‘your life has been hid and still is’ (that’s a perfect tense – meaning it’s something that has happened to you by someone [here God is doing something], and we are called to remain in it).

‘Set your mind continually.’ All people have their minds set on something to which they give maximum attention. It may be sport, or a hobby, or success at work, or music, or travel. But none of these things should so grip the Christian. Our mind is to be set on things above, not on things on the earth, and it is to those that he must give maximum attention. But this is predicated on the next clause...

Paul says ‘You died’ and your life now is ‘hid with Christ in God’. Notice that Paul didn’t say you’ve raised yourself. He didn’t say that you were dead and brought yourself back to life. That’s impossible! Paul elaborates on this in Ephesians where he says, “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked.” Before you knew God or believed in Jesus, you were dead. D.E.A.D. Dead! The physically dead can’t do anything for themselves, and neither can the spiritually dead. Like a smashed-up car or a doctor with a burst appendix, you needed help from outside yourself. That help comes from Jesus and Jesus alone.

‘Setting our minds’ (affection) on ‘things above’ is not about us somehow trying to make ourselves ‘Christians’, but rather simply rejoicing that we already have new life in Christ. Think about a butterfly that has emerged from a cocoon after being a caterpillar. Can a butterfly go back into a cocoon after it’s come out as a caterpillar? Of course not. It can’t happen. Once the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, it is what it is — a butterfly. As a believer in Christ you are like that butterfly — you come out of your cocoon. You become a new creation in Christ, you are what you are. You are a new creation. The Bible says in , “Anyone who belongs to Christ is a new person. The past is forgotten, and everything is new”

And what a place of security and blessing that is. You are ‘with Christ’, united with Him as one like husband and wife (Ephesians 5:23-32), joined with Him because He is our representative, the last Adam, the second man, who has redeemed humankind in Himself (1 Corinthians 15:45; 1 Corinthians 15:48). We are one with Him as members of His body and as branches of the true vine (John 15:4-5). And ‘with Christ’ we are ‘in God’, surrounded by God, who has enveloped us in His arms (Deuteronomy 33:27), having our being in God (John 14:20) as He has His being in God (John 1:18; John 10:28-30; John 14:10-11).

‘Your life is hid.’ The world will only see glimpses of it. It has no conception of what the Christian’s life is really like. That is safely kept and preserved in the heart of God. And that is where our treasure should be, and our heart.

There is a well-known pastor illustration (which you have probably heard many times) about two men, both seriously ill, in the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed, and his bed was next to the room’s only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back. The men talked for hours on end. And every afternoon the man by the window described all the things he could see outside the window. The other man began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be enlivened by all the activity and colour of the world outside. He was told about a park with a lovely lake, ducks and swans playing on the water, children sailing their model boats, young lovers walking arm in arm, and flowers of every colour of the rainbow. But one day, the man by the window died. The other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. He slowly strained to turn and look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall. He asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate to describe such wonderful things outside this window. She said he was blind and could not even see the wall. “Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you to help you see the world to which you one day will return into.”

*“So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.”* Of course, here we must note carefully what Paul means by that. He is certainly not pleading for an other-worldliness in which the Christian withdraws from all work and activities of this world and does nothing but contemplate eternity. Immediately after this Paul goes on to lay down a series of ethical principles which make it quite clear that he expects Christians to go on with the work of this world and to maintain all its normal relationships, indeed, in a God-pleasing way (according to His Word). But there will be this difference--from now on the Christian will view everything against the background of eternity and no longer live as if this world was all that mattered. Grace only can fix the “affection” heavenward; but the Christian, none the less, is to use thought and will in the matter.

Where is your head at? Your head is Christ, and he has risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God. This is why we set our minds on things above. Because that is where Christ is, and “your life is hidden with Christ in God.” Paul writes: “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”

We seek what we set our minds on. Yes, we have many things in life we must tend to daily, but we are not to let these become our aim, our goal or master. When the mind is seated in Christ, we will take care of the pressing things that demand our attention at work or with family, but as soon as our mind has dealt with these needs it returns to its centre of gravity that is Christ.

And so we come back to our opening question: Where is your head at?

Your head, the head of the church, is Christ Jesus our Lord. He is our life, both now and forever. And that is why Paul is also led to say, "*When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*"

When we focus on things of this world, our peace is stolen from us. We become wrapped up in the transient things and forget the eternal foundation and unshifting identity we have in Christ. The world may shift and quake beneath our feet, but Christ is our strong tower, our refuge, our peace (Psalm 91:2). Isaiah 26:3 states that the Lord will keep us in "perfect peace". And so later in this letter Paul will say, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, for to this you were called as members of one body. And be thankful." – Colossians 3:15. Note again the tense of the main verb "Let". Again, it is a passive. That means God is already at work within you. We are called to simply recognise this.

Paul has explained that we were buried with Christ and raised to new life in him (Colossians. 2:12). We are new creations, new people, and our identity is now in Christ. We have the resurrection power dwelling in us. The Christian is raised with Christ and shares Christ's new life. We share in the triumphant victories of resurrection life. These words remind us of Ephesians 2:5-6. "Even when we were dead in our transgressions, [God] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

What does this mean for our heavenly mindedness? It means that our minds are most full of heaven when they are most full of Christ. Heavenly mindedness is an invitation to recognise that Jesus is always with us. And this prepares us for the day when we will be with Him always in heavenly glory. These great truths not only give us security for today, but also hope for tomorrow. It gives us inner strength for living the Christian life. Because Jesus Christ is our life, He is also our hope, our only hope for time and for eternity. The Lord Jesus Christ is Life itself. He springs up within your heart, rising to eternity.

So begin your day with Jesus, fix your meditations upon Jesus, and retreat throughout the day to Jesus. Christ has brought us into the heavenly places (Eph. 1:20), and that should transform the way we think — including the way we think about ourselves. Our new life is to be patterned on the reality that Christ has brought us into the divine life, into the fellowship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. You belong to God, now and forever. Amen.