

Eternal Perspective: [Focusing on Heavenly Realities](#)

[What's the Big Idea?](#)

Christ-followers should focus on heavenly realities because of their past, present, and future union with Christ.

[What's the Problem?](#)

We tend to focus on earthly things to the neglect or exclusion of heavenly realities. We're prone to be ignorant of or forget about our union with Christ.

[What's our Response?](#)

Understand the things that are true of us because we're connected to Christ, and let these things be the lens through which we view and live life.

[Memorize](#)

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Colossians 3:1

[What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?](#)

This passage is a literary hinge connecting chapters 2 and 3. In chapter 2 Paul tells his readers what to avoid if they're going to center their lives on Christ. Chapter 3 approaches life in Christ from a positive perspective. In this passage Paul emphasizes a mindset that focuses on heavenly realities, a mindset that's grounded in the things that are true of us because of our connection with Christ. Help your group grasp how their past, present, and future is radically different if they have faith in Christ. Challenge them to draw on God's grace to live in light of these radical differences.

[Focus on Heavenly Realities-Colossians 3:1-2](#)

In chapter 2 Paul makes a case for how glorious Christ is. Because Christ is so glorious, a life founded on anything other than him is wholly inadequate. Since this is true and since the Colossians have been raised up with Christ, they should keep seeking the things above. When Paul refers to being raised up with Christ, he's giving a specific doctrine of a doctrine called our union with Christ. Through faith in Christ, we're connected to Christ, whether in his life, death, resurrection, ascension, or return. When Paul says we've been raised up with Christ, he's saying that there is a spiritual sense in which we as Christ's followers have ascended with him into the very presence of God the Father. Because we have this privileged position, we should live in light of it by focusing our attention on the heavenly realities that surround Christ's presence at the right hand of God the Father.

Help your group understand that recognizing their spiritual position with Christ at the Father's right hand changes our perspective in life. Help them consider the ways they can set their minds on things above and reflect on how that will make a difference in their lives. Also help them see that focusing on heavenly things doesn't absolve them from day-to-day living. But it does change the way we approach life and relationships.

[Our Life is Wrapped Up in Christ-Colossians 3:3-4](#)

These verses explain why we should focus on heavenly realities: our past, present, and future life is wrapped up in Christ.

Our past is wrapped up in Christ because we have died (verse 3). This refers to a spiritual death in which God frees us from our old way of life and whatever previously defined us by forgiving our sins (2:13) and releasing us from bondage to spiritual powers and authorities that are hostile to Christ (2:15).

Our present is wrapped up in Christ because our life is hidden with Christ in God (verse 3) and because he is our life (verse 4). Through faith in Christ, he is now the source of our life and the one who defines us at the core. New Testament scholar Doug Moo says “hidden with Christ in God” may refer to a couple things. First, our heavenly nature and destiny, owing to our union with Christ, isn’t apparent to those around us while we walk on this earth. Second, God through Christ protects and preserves our lives so that we will one day live with him eternally.

Our future is wrapped up in Christ because someday Christ will return in all his glory. When that happens, we as his followers will share in that glory. We’ll have glorified bodies that are conformed to Christ’s image (1 Corinthians 15:43; Romans 8:29).

Lead your group to appreciate how these truths are an amazing expression of God’s love for us. Help them see how having our past, present, and future lives wrapped up in Christ should move us to seek and set our minds on things above.

What Are the Questions?

Launch

What thing in life are you most passionate about seeking? Why are you so passionate about seeking this thing?

Explore

Read Colossians 3:1-2

1. What do you think it means to be raised up with Christ?
2. Where is Christ according to verse 1?
3. What do you think it means that Christ is seated at the right hand of God?
4. If we’ve been raised up with Christ and if Christ is seated at the right hand of God, what does that say about our spiritual position?
5. What is the logic of the command to keep seeking the things above?
6. What do you think it means to “keep seeking the things above”?
7. What emphasis does the command “set your mind on the things above” bring to verses 1-2?
8. What do you think it means that verse 2 says we shouldn’t set our mind on things that are on earth?

Read Colossians 3:3-4

9. What do you think it means when it says “you have died”?
10. What do you think it means when it says “your life is hidden with Christ in God”?
11. What is verse 4 talking about when it refers to Christ being revealed (see 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)?
12. What do you think Paul means when he says, “you also will be revealed with him in glory”?

Apply

13. What difference do you think it would make in your life as a follower of Christ if you were to realize each day that you have been raised up with Christ, who is seated at the right hand of God?
14. What do you think it would look like for you to “keep seeking the things above,” given your current circumstances?
15. What is one practical step you can take in God’s power to “set your mind on the things above”?
16. How do you see your life changing as a Christ-follower as you grow in your realization that “you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God”?
17. How does the prospect of Christ’s glorious return and the glory you’ll share with him as his follower motivate you to keep seeking the things above and set your mind on the things above?

What Are the Answers?

1. If we’ve placed our faith in Christ, we’ve experienced a spiritual resurrection that gives us new life.
2. Seated at the right hand of God.
3. Christ is in a place of ultimate power and authority and unparalleled intimacy with and access to God the Father.
4. There’s a sense in which we share the power, authority, intimacy, and access related to God the Father that Christ has.
5. Since we experience power, authority, intimacy, and access to God the Father through faith in Christ, we should seek to experience these things to the full.

6. We should pursue the things that let us experience to the full our relationship with Christ.
7. It emphasizes that we need to focus our mental energies on things related to our relationship with Christ.
8. We shouldn't focus attention and passion on things that don't center on our relationship with Christ.
9. Christ's followers have died spiritually. They are no longer bound by the evil powers of this world. And they are no longer defined by whatever used to define them before they came to Christ.
10. The true life of a Christ-follower is bundled up in Christ himself. He protects and preserves our life eternally.
11. Christ's glorious return.
12. Just as Christ will be revealed for the whole world to see when he returns, his followers will be also. They will share glorified bodies as Christ has, and they will share in the glory of him establishing his eternal kingdom (see 1 Corinthians 6:2-3, 15:51-57).
13. Allow the group to discuss.
14. Allow the group to discuss.
15. Allow the group to discuss.
16. Allow the group to discuss.
17. Allow the group to discuss.