



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Sunday, July 31- August 6 (C) – Colossians 3:1-11

Focus: *Set your Mind on God*

word of life

“Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” (Colossians 3:2-3 NRSV)

Read Colossians 3:1-11

Because! Because God acted in Jesus Christ to extend grace to humanity, life is changed. We are part of a new creation with a calling to re-direct our energy and priorities to things above. In baptism, we are joined with Christ in his death and resurrection. “So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.” (Colossians 3:1 NRSV)

1. *How might a believer seek the things that are above?*
2. *Describe the scene of Christ seated at the right hand of God.*

Life with Christ is a radical life-altering commitment which does not pull believers from this world. Instead those who follow Christ continue to live within God’s creative world with all of its joys and sorrows. The church and its members daily face those things which both draw us closer to God as well as distract us. Each day we are tempted to forget our baptism and live independently from Christ.

Just because someone attends a church or confesses Jesus as Lord does not mean he or she is beyond temptation or strife. The words from this passage provide solid advice given from a mature believer. To live as Christ does not automatically happen. It is not like flipping on a switch to bring light to a dark room. Adopting the ways of Christ for daily life includes intentionally letting go of negative behavior and attitudes as well as adopting godly traits.

The words to the Colossians ring true for the church today. “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” (Colossians 3:2-3 NRSV) With a single-minded focus, we seek and set our minds on things that are above.

3. *Is it the same to “seek” as to “set our minds” on things that are above? Explain your answer.*
4. *When does a believer finish seeking or setting his or her mind on things that are above?*
5. *What does it mean to say that a believer’s life is hidden with Christ in God?*
6. *How does that part of our life hidden with Christ remind us of our dependence on God?*

Like those preparing for a significant examination or athletic competition, believers are to adopt healthy habits, attitudes, and relationships. Review the list of “earthly” behavior found in Colossians 3:5 as well as the list in Colossians 3:8.

7. *Describe the differences between Godly and earthly behavior.*

The imagery of putting on new clothing is a reference to the gown put on after baptism in the early church to represent becoming a new creation in Christ. Old boundaries and divisions are gone as the body of Christ does not distinguish between Greek and Jew, free and slave, as well as all other categories. Connection to Christ is all that matters.

8. *What characteristics and attitudes best reflect Christ?*
9. *Describe what it means to be clothed with a new self in Christ?*

Word among us

All summer the football coach pondered how to motivate his young, talented football team to reach their potential during the fall season. Never had the coach seen such speed, raw talent, and grit. But he knew there was minimal natural leadership on the team. That meant negative attitudes and divisive behavior might spread quickly through his players. It could easily be his hardest year of coaching, but also his most satisfying.

It was not so much about holding up the trophy at the end of the season—though that would be special—but providing the opportunity for his players to experience excellence, the satisfaction of reaching their goals, and the support of teammates. The coach knew his attitude had to be positive, encouraging, and consistent. He had to model to his players a discipline which did not come naturally for him. Could he become the coach the players deserved?

1. *Why was important for the coach to intentionally seek and set his own mind?*
2. *How might that help him in coaching his team and influencing their attitudes?*

This passage to the Colossians is reminiscent of a coach who is trying to get a team focused on those attitudes most helpful for success. “Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth...” (Colossians 3:2-3 NRSV) Those words cannot be repeated enough times in the living of our lives. Attitudes grow into behavior; consistent behavior grows into habits; and habits grow into a life of faithful living.

3. *What does it mean to set your mind on things that are above?*
4. *Describe a coach, teacher, or mentor who encouraged you to set your mind on God.*
5. *What are the challenges (at this point of your life) to set your mind on God?*

faith practice in daily life

Live among God’s faithful people

We have been clothed in our baptism with a new self and made into a new creation in Christ. Yet, the old creation lingers, waiting for opportunities to grasp and hold us under the power of sin. We cannot be casual about our attitudes and behaviors. Instead, we are to actively rid ourselves of negative things such as “anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language.” (Colossians 3:8 NRSV) We are to be vigilant when it comes to our attitudes as well as our practices.

It is empowering to hear of the freedom we have been given to respond to events in our lives and to recall the renewing process of God in Christ Jesus. Again and again; we set our minds on things that are above until that mantra becomes integrated into our whole being and we practice our faith in daily life.

6. *How long does it take before we can fully set our minds on things from above?*
7. *What can you do this week to remind yourself where to set your mind?*

Prayer

Holy One, set our minds clearly on those things which are above, not on things that are on earth. Amen

last word

Repeat these words as often as possible,
“Set your mind on things that are above.”

Daily Faith Practices

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