

# COLOSSIANS 3:1-11: Things Above

## Chapter 3 Overview

- \* Paul contrasts the OLD LIFE & the NEW ... BEFORE Christ & IN Christ ... CARNAL & SPIRITUAL
  - \* In chapters 1 & 2, our NEW IDENTITY is revealed; in chapters 3 & 4, we learn how to LIVE consistent with that NEW IDENTITY.
  - \* Carnal (sarkikos) = The Old Self: FLESHLY, IMPULSIVE, SELFISH HUMAN NATURE.
  - \* Spiritual (pneumatikos) = The New You: FILLED, MOULDED & GOVERNED by the Spirit of God.
  - \* The Col 3 description of carnal is rather UGLY; no wonder Paul says PUT IT TO DEATH (v5) & GET RID OF IT (v8).
- *What do the labels 'carnal' and 'spiritual' mean to you? What are the hallmarks of a Christian who is still carnal? What makes a Christian stand out as spiritual? How do you mature from one into the other?*

## IMPERATIVE #1: SET your MIND on THINGS ABOVE

- \* SET = SEEK, AIM AT, CRAVE
  - \* i.e. Get those things IN YOUR VIEW & KEEP them there.
  - \* There will be countless DISTRACTIONS & TEMPTATIONS attempting to pull your thoughts off the HOLY & onto the WORLDLY.
  - \* Whatever / whoever has HOLD of your MIND has a hold over YOU (Prov 23:7 KJV, Heb 12:2, Isa 26:3, Rom 12:2 NLT).
- *How disciplined are you in your mind? What 'things below' tend to get in the way?*
- *What is the difference between your mind and your heart? Why is it just as important to 'set your affections on things above'?*
- *"If Satan can infiltrate & distort your thinking, he can mess with your life. Worse than that, if he can dominate thinking, he can manipulate your life and if he can pollute your thinking, he can defile your heart." Discuss! How does this work in reverse, if it is the Word of God that's dominating?*

## THINGS ABOVE

- Your RELATIONSHIP with the Lord
- The CHARACTER of God
- The TEACHING of Jesus
- LOVE & GRACE
- Your NEW IDENTITY in Christ
- The PROMISES of God
- The WISDOM of the Holy Spirit
- KINGDOM PURPOSES
- The UNITY of the SPIRIT

## j) SERVING FAITHFULLY

- *Any others you'd like to add to that list? Any here that you feel particularly strongly about?*
- *What would change in your life if you only saw the world (circumstances, relationships, decisions) through these ten filters?*
- *How do these protect you from carnality and move you to spirituality?*

## THINGS BELOW

- COVETING what others possess
  - Pursuit of MATERIAL things
  - PRIDE & personal PROMOTION
  - COMPARING yourself with everyone else
  - Political MANIPULATION & POINT-SCORING
  - DISRESPECT for & REBELLION against delegated authority
  - OUTRAGE & OPINIONATION
  - GOSSIP
  - LUST & SEXUAL temptation
  - FEARFUL & ANXIOUS downward spirals
- *Do you struggle with any of those? Are there any others you'd add to the list? What are the catalysts that tend to get you slipping into any on the list?*
- *What happens if you let your mind regularly go to any of those places? How might they let the Enemy in and what damage might they cause?*

## How do you SET?

- DISCIPLINED HABITS → Without discipline & habits, you DRIFT. We rarely DRIFT in the right direction BY ACCIDENT.  
→ *What habits do you already have in place / feel you ought to put in place?*
- ENVIRONMENT AVOIDANCE (Matt 5:27-30) → If you know it's likely to DRAW you into things BELOW, STAY WELL AWAY.  
→ *What environments do you try to avoid? Any people / groups / temptations?*
- REACTIONARY REPLACEMENT (Luke 6:27-38) → If you find yourself in danger of being sucked down that dark alley, have a plan to do something COUNTERACTIVE.  
→ *How was Jesus' advice to bless those who curse you an excellent example of C. in action? Do you have any strategies that work for you? Are there any areas where a good strategy might help?*
- SUCCESS by SATURATION (Phil 4:8) → Train yourself in THANKSGIVING, fix your eyes on the PROMISES & surround yourself with HEALTHY INFLUENCES.  
→ *"The more you focus on the positives, the more the negatives stand out. The more you practise & exercise grace, the more ugly judgment, disrespect & outrage start to look. The more familiar your mind becomes with the truth of scripture, the more unpleasant & unpalatable the enemy's lies become. The more you set your mind on things above, the more easily you'll recognise / disqualify things below." Discuss!*