

SETTING OUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE – LESSON ONE

COLOSSIANS 3:1-3; HEBREWS 11:13-16; 1 PETER 2:5-11

“FIVE MINUTES INSIDE OF ETERNITY I BELIEVE EVERYONE OF US WILL WISH THAT WE HAD SACRIFICED MORE, PRAYED MORE, LOVED MORE, SWEATED MORE, WEPT MORE ...”

-LEONARD RAVENHILL

Introduction

The great evangelist was right, “*Five minutes inside of eternity I believe everyone of us will wish that we had sacrificed more, prayed more, loved more, sweated more, wept more ...*” Possibly this is why we find, in **Revelation 7:17** that “*God shall wipe all tears from their eyes ...*”

A FEW PROBING QUESTIONS:

- Can these tears that God will wipe away be tears of remorse and regret for what we could have done and should have done, but didn't?
- Can we honestly say that we have sacrificed enough, prayed enough, loved enough, sweated or labored enough?
- Can it be possible that many of the redeemed of God will look back upon their lives here and see that they wasted what God had entrusted into their care?
- Can we honestly say that we are living a life that is truly pleasing to God and bringing glory to His beloved Son?

READ COLOSSIANS 3:1-3 & HEBREWS 11:13-16

The apostle Paul wrote, “*If ye then be risen with Christ (saved), seek those things which are above (eternal), where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection (your love and devotion) on things above (eternal things), not on the things of this earth*” (**Colossians 3:2**). Not being of this world means we should be “*dead*” to all of its attractions, allurements, and ambitions. In other words, we should “*set our affection on things above.*” Yes, we live in the world, we are sent to the world as missionaries and ambassadors, but we are dead to the things of this world. The apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, makes it clear that for those of us who profess to be saved (“risen with Christ”), must “*seek those things which are above.*”

- This command, to “seek those things which are above,” as found in **Colossians 3**, is not an **option** for the true believer, this is an **obligation**.

And, this will not happen unless we first “**set** [our] affection on things above.” The word “set,” according to *Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language* means “To fix; to place; as the heart of affections; to fix firmly!”

It is interesting to note that Webster's not only gives the definition but they refer to this verse. In other words, to set our affections on things above means *to be firmly fixed or focused on things above* [that which is heavenly], not on things which are below [earthly].

WHY SHOULD WE SET OUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE?**(1) OUR LORD JESUS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THIS WORLD WAS NOT OUR HOME AND THAT WE SHOULD INVEST INTO ETERNITY**

Our Lord Jesus said, “*My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight ..*” (**John 18:36**). Not only is Christ’s kingdom not of this world, but His subjects (that’s you and me) are not of this world.

John 17:14-18 (KJV), ¹⁴ I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. ¹⁸ As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

Matthew 6:19-21 (KJV), ¹⁹ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: ²⁰ But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: ²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

(2) EVEN A CASUAL STUDY OF THE BIBLE, AS WELL AS CHURCH HISTORY (ESPECIALLY PRIOR TO CONSTANTINE) REVEALS THAT THE EARLY CHURCH AND OUR SPIRITUAL FOREFATHERS WERE A PEOPLE WHO RECOGNIZED THAT THIS WORLD WAS NOT THEIR HOME.

In **Hebrews 11** we read that Abraham and his Old Testament descendants who, by faith, “*confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*” They were, according to the Scripture, “*seeking a country*” not of this world, one that was being prepared by God (**Hebrews 11:13-16**).

Paul explained to the church at Ephesus that, while they were at one time citizens of this world, yet by way of the new birth, they now had a heavenly citizenship (**Ephesians 2:19**) and had become “*ambassadors*” for a heavenly kingdom (**2 Corinthians 5:20**).

A second-century elder exhorted his congregation, “*Brothers, let us willingly leave our sojourn in this present world so we can do the will of Him who called us. And let us not fear to depart out of this world ... deeming the things of this world as not belonging to us, and NOT FIXING OUR DESIRES UPON THEM. ...The Lord declares, ‘No servant can serve two masters.’ If we desire, then, to serve both God and money, it will be unprofitable for us. ... This world and the next are two enemies. ... We cannot therefore be the friends of both.*”