



III. THE THREAT OF EARTHLY AFFECTIONS (Colossians 3:1-4)

A. The Call to Match Position and Practice (Colossians 3:1-2)

1. The position stated—"If ye then be risen with Christ" (Colossians 3:1)
 - a. The change in tone
 - (1) The diligent Bible student should note the difference in wording between the first half of the first verse and the second half of the first verse through the end of the second verse.
 - a) The positional statement—"If ye then" (Colossians 3:1)
 - b) The practical charge—"seek those things...Set your affection" (Colossians 3:1-2)
 - (2) The tone is different because the desired purpose is different.
 - a) As it pertains to the position, the purpose is to get one to examine whether or not he has been saved.
 - b) As it pertains to practice, the purpose is to get one to bring his practice in line with his position in Christ. This just so happens to be the greatest challenge of the Christian life.
 - b. The continuation of teaching
 - (1) The indication of an earlier teaching—"If ye THEN"
 - (2) The location of the earlier teaching
 - a) While it is true, as we will discuss below that these truths are taught elsewhere in the Bible, this would not likely be the point made by the apostle Paul. After all, keep in mind that these believers were not likely reading an entire Bible, but were limited to letters received in their immediate location.
 - b) That being said, the earlier source referenced by the apostle would likely be found within the same letter.
 - i) Our death
 - (a) "Buried with him in baptism" (Colossians 2:12)
 - (b) "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ...why, as though living" (Colossians 2:20)
 - (c) Note: It should be understood that this death is not the same as our being dead in trespasses and sins prior to salvation. In fact, this death comes about through and because of salvation.
 - ii) Our resurrection
 - (a) "Also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God" (Colossians 2:12)
 - (b) "And you...hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Colossians 2:13)
 - c. The confirmation of the truth
 - (1) Our death (Romans 6:4-8; Galatians 2:19-20)
 - (2) Our resurrection (Romans 6:9-11; Galatians 2:19-20; Ephesians 2:5-6)



2. The practice admonished (Colossians 3:1-2)
 - a. Seek those things which are above (Colossians 3:1)
 - (1) What is to be sought? In all likelihood, this refers to spiritual and heavenly virtues which would make sense in the immediate context (see Colossians 3:12-14).
 - (2) Where is it to be sought?
 - a) Above
 - b) Where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God
 - b. Set your affection on things above (Colossians 3:2)
 - (1) Upon what is our affection to be? (see above)
 - (2) Where is the affection to be set?
 - a) Above
 - b) Not on things on the earth (1 John 2:15-17)
- B. The Saint's Position in Christ (Colossians 3:3-4)
 1. The present hiding (Colossians 3:3)
 - a. Ye are dead
 - (1) To the astute student, this should present a bit of a conundrum.
 - (2) Two verses prior, we read "If ye then be RISEN with Christ."
 - (3) Now we read, "ye are dead."
 - (4) The only way both of these can be true is for one to be a heavenly perspective and the other to be an earthly perspective.
 - a) Heavenly—ye are "RISEN with Christ"
 - b) Earthly—"ye are DEAD"
 - b. Your life is hid with Christ in God (Galatians 2:20)
 2. The future appearance (Colossians 3:4)
 - a. The time of this appearance—"When Christ...shall appear"
 - b. The place of this appearance—"in glory"
 - c. The explanation of this appearance
 - (1) After we are gathered unto Christ in the clouds, we will follow Him into the presence of the Father (1 Thessalonians 3:13).
 - (2) At first glance, we might feel tempted to force this into a Second Advent return application. Context, however, suggests a completely different meaning and application for the passage.
 - (3) This coming refers to Christ's return to the Father "with all his saints" after the saints have been gathered in the clouds.
 - (4) This same truth (that Christ will return to the Father with all His saints) is the focus of Paul's teachings expressed in our passage, but from an even more unique perspective. Not only will the dead in Christ return with Jesus when He returns to the Father, but we too (those alive at His coming) will "appear with him [Christ] in glory" at Christ's appearing before the Father.
 - (5) Glory does not refer to the Christian's state of being (glorified bodies) but to the Father's location (Heaven).
 - (6) First Timothy 3:16 points out the location of "glory" as Christ's abode after He ascended back to the Father (Ephesians 4:10).



The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and Philemon

The Believers' Practical Calling in Christ

Colossians 3:5-25; Colossians 4:1

- I. THE CALL TO MORTIFY (Colossians 3:5-7)
 - A. What Is to Be Mortified? (Colossians 3:5)
 1. Understanding mortification
 - a. The word *mortify* has to do with death or killing. As a verb, which is how it is used in our passage, it involves putting something to death.
 - b. It can involve the death of one part of a person while the rest of the members and the individual retains life.
 2. The cause of our mortification
 - a. The indication of the cause—"therefore"
 - b. The source of the cause
 - (1) We are risen with Christ (Colossians 3:1).
 - (2) We are dead to this world (Colossians 3:3).
 - (3) Our true lives are hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3).
 - (4) We will appear with Christ in the presence of God, the Father (Colossians 3:4).
 3. The nature of our mortification
 - a. Your members
 - b. Which are upon the earth
 4. The target of our mortification
 - a. Fornication
 - (1) Its usage in scripture—the word *fornication*, along with its variations (fornication(s), fornicator(s)), is found forty-four times in forty verses.
 - a) Of those occurrences, only five appear in the Old Testament, three of which are in Ezekiel chapter 16.
 - b) The remaining thirty-nine occurrences are found spread throughout the New Testament, but are especially emphasized in Paul's first epistle to Corinth (eleven times) and the book of Revelation (twelve times).
 - (2) Its definition
 - a) Although there may be some overlap at times between the definitions of the words *fornication* and *adultery* that they are different is evident in passages like Matthew 5:32.
 - b) In a general sense, it involves an ungodly union.
 - i) This can be physical (1 Corinthians 5:1) or spiritual in nature (2 Chronicles 21:11)
 - ii) But it should be understood that spiritual fornication generally yields physical fornication



- c) More specifically, by comparing Matthew 5:32 with Deuteronomy 24:1, it would seem to indicate the relations was pre-marital, at least for one of the parties involved. This definition was carried into the common understanding of our society.
- (3) Its importance
 - a) It is a sin of the heart (Matthew 15:19).
 - b) It is a sin against the body (1 Corinthians 6:18).
 - c) It is to be avoided by the people of God desiring right fellowship (Acts 15:20, 29; Acts 21:25; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3).
 - d) Its participants are to be avoided by those who desire a walk with God (1 Corinthians 5:9-11).
 - e) Its participants do not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9).
 - f) It is a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:19).
- b. Uncleaness
 - (1) Its usage in scripture—the word *uncleaness*, along with its variation (uncleaness(es)), is found forty-one times in thirty-six verses.
 - a) Of those occurrences, thirty appear in the Old Testament, nineteen of which are in the book of Leviticus.
 - b) The remaining eleven occurrences are found in the New Testament, with all but two appearing in Paul's epistles.
 - (2) Its definition—physical or moral impurity causing one to be defiled
 - (3) Its importance
 - a) It can and does involve ungodly physical relations (Romans 1:24).
 - b) It opposes holiness and righteousness (Romans 6:19; 1 Thessalonians 4:7).
 - c) It is a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:19).
 - d) It is the desire of those who are past feeling (Ephesians 4:19).
 - e) It is not becoming of saints (Ephesians 5:3).
 - f) It is connected to lawlessness (2 Peter 2:10).
- c. Inordinate affection
 - (1) Its usage in scripture
 - a) The word *inordinate* is a descriptive word found two times in scripture:
 - i) Once to describe love (Ezekiel 23:11)
 - ii) Once to describe affections (Colossians 3:5)
 - b) The word *affection*, and its variations (affection(s), affectionately, affectioned), appears ten times, with all but one found in the New Testament.
 - (2) Its definition—disorderly or uncontrolled feelings of attraction; to put no control on the imaginations of the heart



- (3) Its importance
 - a) God rejecters are commonly given up to vile affections (Romans 1:26).
 - b) They lack natural affection (Romans 1:31; 2 Timothy 3:3).
 - c) They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts (Galatians 5:24).
 - d) Believers are admonished to have affection toward:
 - i) Other believers (Romans 12:10; 2 Corinthians 7:15; 1 Thessalonians 2:8)
 - ii) Things above (Colossians 3:2)
- d. Evil concupiscence
 - (1) Its usage in scripture
 - a) The word *evil* is a descriptive word found over 600 times in the Bible.
 - b) The word *concupiscence* appears three times in scripture, all of which are found in the New Testament.
 - (2) Its definition—the word *evil* tends to indicate that which causes harm while the word *concupiscence* involves unrestrained lust or for one to do whatever is imagined
 - (3) Its importance
 - a) It is a fruit of sin working in a man (Romans 7:8).
 - b) It is typical in those who do not know God (1 Thessalonians 4:5).
- e. Covetousness
 - (1) Its usage in scripture—the word *covet*, along with its variations (covetousness, covetous, covet, coveted, coveteth), is found forty-one times in thirty-nine verses.
 - a) Of those occurrences, eighteen appear in the Old Testament.
 - b) The remaining twenty-three occurrences are found in the New Testament.
 - (2) Its definition—to desire or wish for inordinately or without regard for the rights of others or of the cost required to obtain
 - (3) Its importance
 - a) It is the opposite of contentment (Hebrews 13:5; 1 Timothy 6:5-10).
 - b) It disqualifies from serving God (Exodus 18:21; 1 Timothy 3:3).
 - c) It keeps one from obeying the commands of God (Psalm 119:36; Ezekiel 33:31; 1 Timothy 6:10).
 - d) We are not to keep company with those who covet (1 Corinthians 5:11).
 - e) The Lord abhors those who covet (Psalm 10:3).
 - f) Hating covetousness prolongs one's life (Proverbs 28:16).
 - g) Those who are covetous shall not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:10).
 - h) Covetousness is connected to idolatry (Ephesians 5:5).