

Dead in Christ, Alive in Christ
Colossians 3:3

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Colossians 3:1 Therefore since you have been raised up with Christ, (at the point of your initial faith in Jesus Christ as your savior) **keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.**

Colossians 3:2 Set your mind on the things above,...

Here in verse 2 we noted nine points on what the Bible has to say about our thinking, beginning with ‘you are what you think.’

not on the things that are on earth. We should pay as much attention to the negatives as we do to the positives. This tells us what God does not desire us to think about. There are two major ‘negatives’ in Biblical Greek. This particle of qualified negation is used with a subjunctive mood of the verb to imply ‘uncertainty’. This negative denies ‘hypothetically’ recognizing the fact that many believers will not obey this imperative. The imperative (**set your mind on things above**) is to daily keep your mind on Jesus Christ, on the Word of God, on what God is doing in your life, and preparing for the Judgment Seat of Christ. This requires being constantly filled with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, not many believers are going to fulfill this mandate.

Not on the things of the earth This list is too long to develop here. It includes not only the ‘things’ on earth—material things, wealth, but also human view point about life and about death. These things are covered in

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Colossians 2:8 ...philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world...rather than according to Christ;

and in

1 Timothy 6:20 O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge”—

Colossians 3:2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

1. According to the Word of God Satan is the ruler of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).
2. Satan fills the earth with his Satanic propaganda and deceives the world. (Rev. 12:9)
3. While point one teaches that Satan is the ruler of this world, 2 Corinthians 4:4 teaches that he is also ‘the god of this world,’ worshipped by multitudes, feared and believed.
4. Therefore, Jesus Christ came into the world to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). And why did Jesus Christ do this? Because God so loved the world (John 3:16). We must understand that the sins of the world are the sign of the citizenship of those living under Satan’s kingdom. We are all born sinners and therefore we are born

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citizens of Satan's kingdom. Christ came to deliver us (save us) out from Satan's kingdom of darkness.

5. Therefore, the great conflict:

Satan = ruler of the world;

Jesus Christ = Savior of the world for all who will believe in Him as Savior. (John 3:17; 4:42; 1 John 4:14)

He gave His life for the world (John 6:33)

6. This conflict is seen in the contrast of darkness and light. The world, Satan's kingdom, is called the Kingdom of Darkness and Jesus Christ came to be The Light of the World (John 8:12; 9:5).

7. The conflict is officially over:

for Jesus Christ has overcome the world (John 16:33)...

Therefore the believer who abides in the Holy Spirit has the 'peace of Christ.'

8. Since you have been redeemed out of this world by faith in Jesus Christ, you must not conform to this world in your thinking or living

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

The conflict is a battle for your mind—your thinking.

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9. Another reason we are to set our minds on things above not on things of the earth: God has made foolish the wisdom of this world (1 Cor. 1:20 and 3:19). The world has a way of trying to make the Christian who believes and lives by the Word of God look and feel foolish. But we are not to listen to the wisdom of the world, it is foolishness to God, from the world's thinking, from Creation to Salvation

10. Therefore, it is imperative that once we have been rescued from Satan's kingdom on earth, we must think like God with regard to 'kosmos diabolicus.' There are a multitude of passages in the Word of God that emphasize the importance of what you think, and what you should be thinking! Passages like

Col. 3:2 set your mind on things above.

Phil.2:5 have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.

Prov. 23:7 for as he thinks within himself, so he is.

Isa. 26:3 The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace.

God has created you with a brain capable of thought, it is up to you what you think. Remember: *my ways are not your ways, my thoughts are not your thoughts* (Isa 55:8)

Colossians 3:3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

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Alongside ‘*set your thinking on things above*’ is this important recognition of yourself, repeated several times in the Word of God.

for (because, since) Here, this conjunction expresses an explanation of why we should keep our mental concentration on things above where Christ is sitting.

For you have died.

Aorist—This is a culminative aorist in which the Aorist tense is used when it is wished to express an event in it’s entirety, but...to regard it from the viewpoint of existing results = **you have died**

Active—This happened to you if you have believed in Jesus Christ as Savior. God identified you with Christ in His death.

Indicative—expressing reality that happened to you (Col. 2:12 and 20; Rom. 6:3-4)

Question: In what sense has the believer died? The Bible speaks of seven deaths and only one is applicable to our study.

Biblical Deaths

1. [Spiritual Death] The first death in the Bible is Spiritual Death! It is extremely important for the believer to understand Spiritual Death. Unfortunately, few believers know about it or properly understand it. It is important in our eternal salvation or deliverance from the penalty of sin and in our temporal salvation or deliverance from the power of sin It is first mentioned in

Genesis 2:16 The LORD God (pre-incarnate Christ) **commanded the man, saying, “From**

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any tree of the garden you may eat freely; Genesis 2:17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

A better translation of the Qal infinitive absolute followed by the Qal imperfect of the same verb ‘to die’ is **dying, you shall die** where *dying* refers to the death they died the very instant they violated the command not to eat. *You shall die* refers to physical death years later. Both deaths are a result of personal sin of Adam and Eve. A number of Greek lexicons speak of spiritual death:

The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament, page 1007.
The Complete Biblical Library, Volume 4 page 244.

In basic understanding, spiritual death is separation from God, no capacity for fellowship with God, no relationship with God. Spiritual death is the condition of all members of the human race at physical birth. At physical birth we are born physically alive but spiritually dead. This is because we are imputed with Adam’s Original Sin. At physical birth we are born into Satan’s kingdom of darkness as citizens of his kingdom. No one is spiritually dead because he sins; everyone is spiritually dead because he is born with an Inherited Sin Nature. Personal sins do not cause us to be spiritually dead. Being born with Adam’s Original Sin imputed to us by the Justice of God causes us to be spiritually dead. Jesus Christ was born of a virgin which means that He was the only person ever born into this world without an Inherited Sin Nature and therefore without spiritual death. Jesus Christ was therefore born free. Because He

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was born free He was able to redeem or purchase our freedom at the cross.

So, this death describes how everyone of came into this world.

2. [Physical Death] The second Biblical reference to death in the Bible is in the same passage as the first Biblical reference to death:

Genesis 2:17...dying you shall die

This last phrase refers to *physical* death. Physical death is also a result of sin. This is the death that most people are familiar with and many fear. This death is referred to in a multitude of passages in the Word of God. Matt. 8:22; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:21; Rom. 8:38-39. Physical death is the soul separated from the body and for the believer the soul and the human spirit separated from the body. When the soul separates from the body, the person is physically dead. This is something every believer should think about before the viewing of the dead in open caskets. The person you loved has departed, the body that carried them is no longer occupied. Be careful of having your last vivid memory of that person lying in a casket.

3. [Second Death] The Bible makes reference to a *second death* in Rev. 20:12-15. It describes this death in Heb. 9:27. The Second death is pronounced at the last judgment. This is when the unbeliever stands before the Great White Throne and is judged and cast into the eternal lake of fire forever. The Second death is separation from God for all eternity.

4. [Positional Death] Positional death (the one in our passage of Col. 3:3)

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Colossians 3:3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

This death is theologically very important.

- (1) This is identification with Christ in His death on the cross.
- (2) The wages or cost of sin is death. You are being identified with Christ in His death on the cross, as He is paying the wages of sin—in Christ.
- (3) This happened at the point of your faith in Jesus Christ as savior.
- (4) The mechanics for this death is the Baptism by the Holy Spirit. This baptism places you positionally in Christ. Positional death is only one of many blessings you receive by being positionally in Christ.
- (5) Because of this death, every believer is dead to the things of this world. This is why we are commanded to keep our mind set on things above, not on things of this earth. We have died to things on or related to this earth.
- (6) By identification with Christ in His death (Spiritual Death) on the cross, we have died to earthly pursuits and gains.
- (7) We have died to sin.
- (8) We have died to the ‘old man’ our flesh nature, which is confined to this world.

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- (9) We have died to everything outside of Jesus Christ and made alive to everything related to Jesus Christ which includes His Word in the Word of God.
- (10) This death is best understood by our physical death, by which we lose complete relationship with our former life. It is in our positional death in Christ that we lose complete relationship with our former life and begin a new life in Christ. When we believe in Jesus Christ we put away our former life and begin a new life in Christ.

5. [Temporal Death] *Temporal death* this is the most important death for a believer. The moment you believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, 34 things happen and one of those is that you are not only indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but you are filled with the Holy Spirit. At this point you are spiritually alive as well as physically alive. But, once you commit a personal sin (Mental Attitude Sins, Sins of the Tongue, Overt Sins) you are spiritually, temporally dead due to the power of sin. At Salvation we are made alive over the Penalty of sin, but in time we can become dead under the power of sin. There are several passages that teach temporal death. Rom 8:6; Eph. 5:14; 1 Tim. 5:6; Rev. 3:1; James 1:15.

Question: How are we made alive throughout our lives when temporally, spiritually dead under the power of sin? By faith in the Holy Spirit Col. 2:6 and application of Eph. 2:8-9; and 1 Cor. 2:4-5.

6. [Operational Death] Closely related to Temporal death is *Operational death* recorded in James 2:26. In this state of death, the believer can produce no divine good, therefore lose out on rewards

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at the Judgment Seat of Christ. This death is related to the absence of the faith God is looking for—faith in His Holy Spirit whom He and the Son have sent to every believer so that we may perform divine good in our lives.

James 2:26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

7. [Sexual Death] *Sexual death* inability to copulate Rom. 4:16-21 and Heb. 11:11-12.

Col. 3:3 **For you have died** with Christ at the cross

and your life that you now live, on earth, after salvation; your old life is dead, so this refers to your new spiritual life after you were raised up with Christ. In effect this refers to your eternal life which began the moment you believed in Jesus Christ. Please understand this is our participation with the Resurrected Christ since you have been raised up with Him.

is hidden oh, how beautiful this is, and to the point we grasp this, we live in peace on earth. The Greek word is in the Perfect tense, which refers to something that happened in the past with results that are permanent. The passive voice indicates that the believer *receives* his life being hidden. This is the Grace of God. The indicative mood tells us this is reality in God's plan.

Question: Where is this new life of every believer hidden?

with Christ in God. That is in association with Christ who is sitting at the right hand of God and therefore hidden in association with God.

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1. Just as the darkened world refuses to see the light and life of JESUS CHRIST so it is with every believer. The world cannot see or even begin to understand the spiritual life of the believer.
2. Note the two English prepositions: **with** Christ...**in** God

First, there is the association of Jesus Christ and God the Father, then there is the association of believers with Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are also associated with Jesus Christ in association with God. We are in this relationship with God, not by any works we have performed but because by faith we are in Christ and by the Grace of Christ we are in God.

This is by the Grace of Christ in His prayer request to God the Father.

John 17:21 that they (all who believe in JESUS CHRIST as Savior) **may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.**

Many believers read over and do not understand nor grasp the significance of

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, (another of His disciples named Judas-not Iscariot. Pay close attention to the conditional clause) **“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.”**

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Again, you have to know how to love Him in the power of the Holy Spirit. We also see here the importance of loving Jesus Christ. Do you have the courage to love Jesus Christ? So many today are concerned about loving others: loving family, loving the Jews, loving Muslims, loving the immoral people in the world. Well, what about loving JESUS CHRIST? Do you have the courage to love Jesus Christ? It often will cost you to love JESUS CHRIST. I am not referring to financial cost.

2 Thessalonians 3:5 **May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.**

2 Thessalonians 3:6 **Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.**

2 Thessalonians 3:10 **For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.**

2 Thessalonians 3:14 **If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.**

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Do you have the courage to love Jesus Christ? The world will not see this as 'love' according to it's definition of love. But, our love is hidden in Christ. Do you care about Jesus Christ and God the Father coming into you and making their 'abode' in you and with you?

3. Ephesians 3:17-19

**Ephesians 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, (spiritual love)
Ephesians 3:18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,**

Ephesians 3:19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, (this is referring to human knowledge) that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

This passage in Colossians 2:3 also helps to understand the confusing passage:

1 John 2:24 As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

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In light of these passages why would any believer in Jesus Christ not want to set their thinking on Jesus Christ where He is, sitting at the right hand of God? To make Jesus Christ your life, He must be your mindset.

4. There are several passages that explain how we are dead in Christ, risen in Christ and therefore we do not live according to our first birth but our second birth in Christ, which the world cannot understand.

Gal. 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ; (dead) and it is no longer I who live, (here on earth) but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, (this is our spiritual death at physical birth) so also in Christ all will be made alive (at the moment one believes in Jesus Christ as Savior).

2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;

2 Corinthians 5:15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

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2 Corinthians 5:16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer.

17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

5. What does it mean that our lives are ‘hidden’? Hidden from whom? Our lives –our works in Christ are hidden from the world because they are concealed by God and not able to be seen by the world because our lives are spiritual. The world sees and understands only the material. As we will see, don’t look for nor expect rewards in time. Rewards will be recognized and given after the Rapture at the Judgment Seat of Christ. You are not home yet, so don’t be disappointed in this world. Continue to set your thinking on things above and perform ‘good’ works in the power of the Holy Spirit and abide in hope at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
6. One final point, even though we are dead to the world and even though we are citizens of heaven, we still possess the body into which we were physically born. So, Question: How can we keep our mind set on the things above? This is why God and Jesus Christ have given to us the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and grace provision for the filling of the Holy Spirit. It is God the Holy Spirit who will enable us to keep our minds set on things above.

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1 Corinthians 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? (We are dead to the world and our lives are not our own but they belong to JESUS CHRIST)

1 Corinthians 6:20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Colossians 3:1 Therefore since you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

Colossians 3:2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

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Verse 4 takes us to the revealing of our lives at the Judgment Seat of Christ