

How To Leave the World Behind In Order to Save It

“Colossians: Together for Christ”

Colossians 3:1-4

July 15, 2018

BIG IDEA

A believer is raised to life by Christ. We are blessed. But many in our community are still trapped in the world we were rescued from. They are dead in sin. This passage will help us understand that we need to focus on new priorities that reflect our new-found life. We need to leave the world behind in order to save it.

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Context:

This section is pivotal in Paul's letter to the Colossians. It marks the end of his refutation of false teachers and provides a bridge to a practical guide to living in a manner worthy of God.

Colossians 3:1-4

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

MAIN IDEAS

As we “seek the things above” our lives will become attractive to non-believers. Thus, we can reach back and save those that are still trapped in a world full of darkness. You can help save them by:

- Remembering who you are and where you came from
- Seeking the things of God and not of culture
- Becoming content in Christ

1. Remember Who You Are and Where You Came From

Romans 6:8 – Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Colossians 3:1-3 – If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

We have died to our old way of life and have been raised to a new way of living through our relationship with Jesus. We were once dead. Now we are alive! At the moment we come into a relationship with Jesus we die to our old way of life, which was driven by our sinful nature. We are raised new, clean, and forgiven. Paul wrote about this within his letter to the church in Rome:

Romans 6:6-8 – We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

- a. **Do you remember what it was like to live without Christ? Describe it to the group.**

- b. **Many of those around us are still trapped in the world you escaped. Do you feel like you have a responsibility to reach back and help rescue them? How can you do this?**

2. Seek the Things of God and Not of Culture

Colossians 3:1b-2 – ...seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.



Paul is not advocating that we avoid involvement with this world. He's saying that life in this world will be better and more impactful if lived by power found beyond this world that emanates from the risen and ascended Christ.

Colossians 3:1b-2 closely align with Paul's letter to the church in Corinth:

2 Corinthians 4:18 (NIV) – So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

When believers do this, they are transformed and are brilliant lights within a dark world. Philippians 4:8 helps us to see what this looks like:

Philippians 4:8 – Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

- a. What do you seek? Are you focused on things below or things above? Make a list of your most desired possessions and dreams. Then, ask yourself this question: Will the things on this list help me to reach the lost? Will they draw me closer to Christ?**

- b. Is there anything that you are watching, reading, or listening to that is causing you to focus on this temporal world? Confess it to Jesus. He will forgive you!**

3. Find Your Fulfillment In Christ

Colossians 3:4 - When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Paul describes Christ as our very life. The key to living an unusual and victorious Christian life is to stay centered on Christ. Jesus, not the things of this world, must be the center of our universe in order to leave the world behind and save it. One day when



he appears we will be with him, and we will be glorified with him. The Lord's immanent return should be the object of our attention, not the things of this world.

Each of us can leave the world behind in order to save it by being humble and remembering where we came from, making an inventory regarding what we're dwelling on, and finding contentment in Christ.

- a. **Are you content in Christ or is the enemy causing you to want more than you have? Confess this to the group so your friends can encourage you and pray for you.**

- b. **This text clearly commands us to "seek the things that are above." Take a few minutes to pray and ask God to turn your eyes upward so that he can use you to save a very lost world.**

PRAY

Lord, I am sorry for focusing on myself instead of on you. The world is so distracting. Help me to get my priorities straight. Help me to be the kind of person that reflects you to others. They so desperately need you. Use me. Amen.

DIG DEEPER

For further study this week:

- [*The Master Plan of Evangelism*](#) – a book from Robert E. Coleman (Revell)
- [*Surprise the World: The Five Habits of Highly Missional People*](#) – a book from Michael Frost (NAV PRESS)

NEXT WEEK'S BIG IDEA

We must be putting off our old life in order to fully embrace Jesus (Colossians 3:5-9).

