



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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Sept. 16, 2012

JUMP START #554

Col. 3:2- “Set your mind on things above, not on things that are on the earth.”

The third chapter of Colossians addresses the walk of a Christian. Paul reminds us that Christ is our life and is first in all things. The chapter is a quick examination of the practical things that the Christian walk involves. Included in this list is, purity, attitude, speech and relationships. To walk with Christ involves much more than just going to church services on Sunday. What happens on a Tuesday is as important as what happens on Sunday. What comes out of a Christian is as important as what goes in a Christian.

Walking with Christ is more than direction and journey, it is becoming, becoming like Christ. It's that “becoming” aspect that is hard. Sometimes we can be stubborn and simply not wanting to change, especially our attitudes. It is those attitudes that will trip us and from truly becoming.

Our verse today sets the pace for all of these things. This is one of the ways these things are accomplished. It begins by setting your mind on things above. We might use the word “focus” or “concentration,” for the idea of setting your mind. Keeping focused. Some have trouble with this in life. Some need help. The choices that we make come from what we determine is important and what we are thinking about.

I have talked to more than one person who was in a terrible mess. They made some foolish choices that took them down some dead end roads spiritually. The consequences caught up with them and they were in trouble. Many times when asked what happened, the reply is, “I just wasn't thinking.” Isn't that what Paul is trying to remind the Colossians? Think. Set your mind. Concentrate. Focus. Pay attention.

It's pretty easy to fail- in just about any area. It's easy to flunk a test, whether in the third grade, or graduate school. Simply don't study and that's a sure way to get that “F.” It's easy to get fired, just don't show up. Sooner or later you'll be released. It's easy to be overweight. Just eat junk food and don't do anything. That's easy. The hard thing to do is get on the honor roll. It's hard to get a promotion at work. Staying fit, isn't easy. You have to work at it.

The same thoughts apply financially. It's easy to be in debt and broke. It's hard to build savings. The same apply in knowledge. It's easy not to know much. It's hard to learn a subject.

The same applies spiritually. It's easy to be a sinner. It's easy to be selfish. It's easy to stay in bed on Sunday, especially on a dark, cold day. It's easy to gossip. It's easy to neglect what ought to be important. It's easy to live in spiritual ignorance. It's easy to sit on the sidelines of life and do nothing. Anyone can do that. Most do. Paul is after the opposite. It takes effort, focus and determination to do right, to walk in righteousness and to be holy. When others are failing spiritually, you must do different.

You must go when you want to stay. You must think of others, when you feel like only thinking of self. You must, as our verse tells us, set your mind on things above.

Without doing that, a person will fail spiritually. It's nearly guaranteed. Setting that mind on Heaven makes a person think about Jesus and what would the Lord want. It makes him realize that there are consequences to all choices and responsibilities that God wants us engaged in.

If you need to get up at a very early hour, you set your alarm clock. It is something you have to do. Setting your mind on things above works the same way. You have to know about "things above" before you can set your mind on it. You have to understand some things and think about some things.

Last summer, my wife and I went to Disney. First trip there in over 15 years. First trip there without any kids. I got on-line to see what has changed. I read about things. I set my mind or prepared for it.

This is what Paul is wanting us to do about Heaven. Have you thought about it in a while? Have you read about it? What will you do there? Do you know? What do the Scriptures teach about it? Are you excited? Do you wish you were there now? Do you realize that what you do today, impacts that? It does. Set your mind on it. Make choices that improve your spiritual health. Do the things that strengthen your soul and heart for God.

Set. Fix. Focus. Determine. Plan. Dream. Hope. Long. Want. Wish. And then, do things that reflect that, help that, and make that. It begins with Jesus. Without him, you won't make it. Honor him. Obey him. Follow him. Trust him. Then see through the shallow trinkets that Satan dangles in front of your eyes each day. Lust, greed, selfishness, materialism, living only for today-that's Satan's menu. It never changes. It's the same. It always brings heartaches, bellyaches, and a host of problems. His menu looks good, but it's not good for you. Krispy Krème donuts are like that for me. I once could eat them 24/7. I thought my car had a steering problem, because every time that "hot" light came on, my car just turned in there. Krispy Kreme diet was making my clothes not fit. I didn't like that. It's either keep buying more clothes, or stop buying the donuts. Set your mind. What do you want to be like in 5 years? Paul is talking this way spiritually.

It starts today. Set your mind. It affects what TV shows I watch. It affects what I say and how I say it. It affects what I do with God.

Set your mind.....it's up to us.

Roger Shouse