
THE MIND OF THE SPIRIT

Session X: The Heavenly Mind

- I. Things Above
 - A. Colossians 3:1 (NRSV) *“So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”*
 - B. We must view ourselves as citizens of heaven because we have been accepted into the new age of the Kingdom of God.
 - 1. Philippians 3:19-20 (NIV) *“Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven.”*
 - 2. “Because Philippi was a Roman colony, believers there who were Philippian citizens were also Roman citizens and hence understood what it meant to be a citizen of a place other than where they currently lived.”—Craig S. Keener
 - 3. We still live in the already/not yet tension of God’s kingdom. We have one foot in each “city.”
 - 4. It’s important to think of Heaven as more than just a place above, but also the concept of the reign of Christ.
 - 5. Our thoughts should reflect people who have the full rights of citizenship in this new kingdom.
 - C. By focusing on things above we are focusing on the character of Jesus. Our thoughts are on the glorious, exalted King.
 - 1. That Jesus sits at the right hand of God is a clear indication of his authority and glory.
 - 2. Focus on the concept of Jesus as ruler.
 - D. “Someone who truly understands who he or she is in Christ is further along the road to genuine holiness than someone who, in confusion, anxiously imagines that the new life is the result, rather than the starting-point, of the daily battle with temptation.”—N.T. Wright
- II. Results of Heavenly Thinking
 - A. Our entire self belongs to Jesus’ reign
 - 1. Mind
 - 2. Attitude
 - 3. Ambitions
 - 4. Outlook
 - 5. Body
 - B. Thinking above vs. earthly matters
 - 1. This doesn’t mean that the earth itself is bad. God is going to redeem the world and our bodies at the end.
 - 2. It means that what we concern ourselves with on earth is filtered through what matters in Jesus’ Kingdom.
 - C. Jesus as Lord impacts your daily life.
 - 1. We can’t segregate our work life, family life, church life, etc.

2. Jesus' reign affects every relationship, activity, thought, and more.
 3. We should approach every component with a heavenly perspective.
 4. "Believers should be so heavenly minded that they do more earthly good."—Craig S. Keener
- D. Heavenly thinking directs you toward the end.
1. Stephen Covey advised in The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People to begin with the end in mind. This is not a new concept as Paul follows the talk on Heavenly thinking with a view of history's completion.
 2. If we think about the end and our resurrection, we are encouraged to live today with that goal in mind. Our thoughts change and we think like people who are working toward a glorious outcome.
 3. Understanding our resurrection gives us hope.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 15:19 (NIV) *"If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied."*
 - b) Hope changes the way that we think and act. We don't have to despair because we have confidence in God's resolution.
- E. Leads to a more Christlike character
1. "To concentrate the mind on the character of Jesus Christ, on that unique blend of love and strength revealed in the Gospels, is to begin on earth to reflect the very life of heaven."—N.T. Wright
 2. The more we align our lives with Jesus as our King the more we align our thoughts to Jesus' Kingdom.
 3. Our connection to Heaven creates in us a desire to think and act like Christ.
- F. Breaks down barriers
1. Colossians 3:10–11 (NRSV) *"and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!"*
 2. In God's kingdom the things that separated us before like social or ethnic distinctions are broken. This was a revolutionary thought in the first century.
 3. This frees our minds from thinking of others as less than/greater than or as of a different nature. We are all one in Christ.
 4. Our mind is renewed in this knowledge so that we can walk in the expanded knowledge and understanding.
- III. Application
- A. As citizens of this Kingdom then we should think like Christ's people.
 - B. Begin with the end in mind. Think like a person who will one day be resurrected and live in God's Kingdom.
 - C. As members of God's Kingdom we should break down old barriers and live as one people.