

Prophetic Insights

Do You Reflect Collectively On Eternal Matters?

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Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, Who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory”
(Colossians 3:1-4)

In this passage the apostle Paul is voicing to us today the command of the Holy Spirit: to set our hearts *and* our minds *on things above*. We’ve previously written about this “things above” focus as the “vertical dimension”—goals and purposes fixed on our Lord and walking in His Word—while “things of this world” are “horizontal,” concerned with temporal values and earthly pursuits.

- Have you ever discussed what setting your hearts and minds *on things above* means for both your daily life as well as eternal life?
- Your *way of life* reflects what you set your heart and mind on. What does *your* way of life say to others about your priorities? What do the lives of people close to you in the faith say about *their* goals, values and choices?
- Have you considered what it means to be *hidden with Christ*? And, what are the responsibilities that are yours when you’re hidden with Him in His Father?

The answer to these questions can only be found through reflection: turning your heart and mind to the Spirit of our Lord and to Christ’s gracious commands.

In our last Prophetic Insight we encouraged you to take time to reflect on your life, especially looking to how you’ve lovingly put into practice the commands

found in God’s Word. If the Spirit of our Lord is abiding in you and you’re attentive to His input with a heart of trust, He’ll reveal what you need to know. But if you don’t reflect, you can’t discern if your way of life is pleasing to our Lord. Christians who try to hide their “secret sins” don’t want their un-Christ-like motives brought to light. Yet only through reflecting and realizing that your choices are displeasing your Father will your heart be stirred to confess them to Him, turn away from them, and by His grace walk in a good and righteous way instead.

“Things above” also include an *awareness of eternity* which God has preprogrammed into our being. That eternal aspect separates humans who are made in His image from all other living creatures.

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end” (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

eternity: an infinite or unending time; a state to which time has no application.

We’re each born with an awareness of eternity. Before they’ve been tainted by the worldly pursuits of their parents or society’s disdain of God, little children are already aware of Someone eternal. But this awareness diminishes as their parents instill worldliness in them by role modeling that “horizontal” choices are more important than “vertical” living.

Many Christian parents corrupt the heart and spirit of their child(ren) by implanting *a need* for worldly accomplishment, success and acclaim. The unbridled quest for personal recognition has created SELF-promoting, egocentric generations like no other. Unwittingly,

parents are raising their children to idolize themselves and to ignore others.

“What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes” (James 4:14).

Over the years we’ve met so few in Christendom who discuss eternal issues *with an intent to align their way of life with that of our Lord*. Their “Christian dialogue” most often centers on worldly concerns and temporal goals. Yes, we do live in physical bodies in a physical world, so it seems natural that our minds would focus on things of this world. Yet since *God* has set eternity in the hearts of people, why do so few comprehend the eternal plan of our eternal God?

Since most “Christians” belong to some form of faith community, they assume they’ll end up in heaven for eternity. Comfortable with the deceived crowd they sit with every Sunday who live for themselves in the ways of the world, they’re deluded by their conclusion that they’re better than non-church goers.

But consider this:

If those who *think* they’re going to heaven because they’re “good people” would set their hearts and minds on *eternity and the things above*, they’d be unrelenting in pouring themselves out in loving service to our Lord. At the same time, out of grateful love they would wholeheartedly pursue sanctification—becoming more like Jesus in lives that are set apart as holy for His use. The outflow of grace producing loving actions confirms their earthly pilgrimage’s destination.

A personal note: No one has been able to disprove from the Scriptures the truth of our Hebraic Article, *The Gospel of the Covenant is the Pilgrimage to Salvation*.

To be “born again” is only the beginning of a pilgrimage to salvation at the Judgment when the names of those found in the Lamb’s Book of Life will be proclaimed in the heavenlies. (This Book of Life is cited 8 times in the Bible, making it a very real volume!)

During our earthly journey the Bible repeatedly shows us what it means to be sanctified. We find throughout its pages our *need* to willingly yield to the Spirit so He can transform our hearts and character to be wholly available for our Father’s purposes and will (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 12:2; 2Corinthians 3:18; 2Peter 1:5-11). If we individually and with others in the faith *don’t* intentionally keep our focus on eternal matters and the things above, the critical requirements in our pilgrimage to our salvation diminish in importance, ultimately falling off our spiritual radar.

- **Those who center on the “horizontal” values and goals of this world find that the spiritual responsibility for pursuing sanctification requires too much effort and limits their earthly pursuits.**
- **They also realize that to serve our Lord wholeheartedly requires far greater *love-based trust* than they want to give Him.**

Genuine faith is authenticated by the action it produces (James 2:14-26). It’s the actions that *flow from your faith* which testify whether you belong to our Lord *and* will be welcomed at His Throne.

An alarming consequence awaits you when you resist reflecting on things above and on our Father’s commands for you in His Word. You’ll go on chasing headlong after the things of this world and thus make yourself *His enemy* (James 4:4). And while you may find personal satisfaction in “fellowshipping” with

others of like worldly values, you're avoiding the issue that really matters:

WHERE WILL YOU END UP FOR ETERNITY? AND, HOW MUST YOU RESPOND NOW TO ENSURE WHERE YOU'LL SPEND ETERNITY?

You Must Flee “Uninspired” Christians!

*“To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? **What are they like?** They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to each other: ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not cry’ (Luke 7:31,32).*

Oddly enough this simile by our Lord has encouraged the two of us. As He, the Son of God, walked among His own creation, He faced so many who refused to believe what He spoke to them. They refused to be *inspired* by His words! They wouldn't *hear* with the intent to *obey*. But that doesn't surprise us. Over the years of our own faith journey we've observed how easy it is for the spiritually lukewarm to seduce many of the dedicated to *lose their intensity* to follow Jesus.

Only those who are fully determined and committed by His grace to live for eternity with God can resist worldly seduction. And they're not only concerned for their own eternal destiny; they also pour themselves out in prayer and action so that others will join them there.

In our early faith walk we were privileged to be disciples by some individuals whose spouses were martyred while sharing the gospel or who were persecuted themselves but kept on sharing the gospel. I (Mike) served in Vietnam and can understand that kind of commitment to something greater than myself. These followers of Jesus inspired us as to the *minimum standard of obedient trust* our Lord

calls for in order to follow after Him:

*“If anyone would come after Me, he must **deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.** For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever **loses his life for Me** will save it” (Luke 9:23,24).*

Christianity not only overflows with the “uninspired”; its leadership can be categorized that way as well. If you haven't been persecuted or excluded or harassed at some point because of your loving trust in Jesus and your way of life that's contrary to the world's ways, then you need to ask yourself if your *fear of man* is greater than your *holy fear of God*. If you haven't faced any “fires” for following Jesus, then your faith is no more than an **opinion** instead of your heartfelt **conviction**. What is the difference?

- **The opinionated seek their own happiness, security and comfort on earth.**
- **The convicted seek to bring as many as possible with them to heaven. This motive evidences their eternal understanding of their own life purpose on earth.**

So many Christians have told us how they've been “inspired” by Christian books, music, even certain sermons. Yet when we ask what *responsive action* they took as a result of their “inspiration,” they're silent. What most Christians call “inspiration” is really just a feel-good emotion over a song or DVD or even a new piece of information. But inspiration from our Lord's perspective *produces an action*.

Only those who have eternity in their heart motive are inspired to willingly respond as He commands them. Is it any wonder that our Lord clearly differentiates between pursuing worldly wealth and storing up heavenly riches?

*“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. **But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also**” (Matthew 6:19-21).*

If you haven't honestly reflected on where your “treasure” is, we encourage you to do so. We have an adage about what's most important to people:

“Whatever a person speaks about first or most often is what they value the most.”

How is this saying enacted regarding your own values?

Finally, please don't entertain and live with the doubt that plagued the apostle Thomas. In this very scientific-oriented society, people are brainwashed from elementary school onward: **“If I can't see it or prove it by experiment or reasoning, it must not be real.”** Don't discount the impact of the God-less humanism which permeates all elements of your child's education. Young people take as truth everything their teachers say and everything they read in their textbooks regardless of what *you* say. After all, you've chosen to send them to that school, so you must approve what's being taught there!

But the God-denying agenda of humanism can't be ignored if you're intent on raising offspring who have an eternal viewpoint of their values and goals. Your children's and grandchildren's teachers may be “nice people”, but most have been *indoctrinated* by their university professors.

Charles Crismier attests in his important book, *The Secret of the Lord*, to this misplaced trust of college students (your kids' teachers) which allows them to be

intellectually manipulated. As one professor unabashedly crowed, *“I use that trust to **effectively brainwash them...our teaching methods are primarily those of propaganda.** We appeal—without demonstration—to evidence that **supports our position.** We only introduce arguments and evidence that supports the currently accepted theories and **omit or gloss over any evidence to the contrary.**”*

Humanism creates skepticism and disbelief concerning both eternity and your responsibilities to our Lord NOW in this life. From our Lord's perspective, your skepticism is like bitterness in its effect. Both create an emotional barrier that keeps you from realizing how *you* have hurt others or let them down. In your own self-imposed prison of skepticism or bitterness, you live an uninspired life—***and you're dead while you live!*** Neither the skeptic nor the bitter is acceptable to our Lord in their unrepentance, either now or for eternity. Don't be one of them!

We leave you with Paul's exhortation to those who do have an eternal view of their life on earth:

*“After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will **be with the Lord forever.** Therefore encourage each other with these words” (1Thessalonians 4:17,18).*