

## **Colossians 3:1-4**

**If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.**

**<sup>2</sup> Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.**

**<sup>3</sup> For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.**

**<sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.**

Intro: Today is also a good time for God's people to take inventory of their walk with the Lord.

We should take an awfully close look at where we are in our relationship with Him.

We need to examine ourselves and see where we have been, where we are and where the Lord wants us to be.

This passage gives us the opportunity and the challenge to do just that.

The other day my wife Lady Karin was occupied in cleaning out one of our closets and our bedroom. The room had become cluttered with a lot of things that were no longer needed.

Of course, there were a few things in there that just needed to be relocated.

As she cleaned that room in our house, there were some things that were retained, some things that were released and some things that were remembered.

As I read these verses, I find that they challenge God's children to do the same thing.

## 2 Colossians 3:1-4 AN OLD CHALLENGE FOR A NEW BEGINNING

As we look at our lives in the light of these verses, we are challenged to retain some things, to release some things and to remember some things.

I want to open these verses today and share with you the challenges that they contain.

**I want to show you that God has a plan for your life;**

that He wants certain things from your life;  
and that He has the right to demand these things from your life.

Notice the challenges contained in these verses as I preach on the thought **An Old Challenge for A New Beginning**.

### **I. v. 1-2a SOME THINGS MUST BE RETAINED**

**Colossians 3: (1) If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.**

Every time we cleaned our cluttered and stored rooms in the past, we found several items that **were important to us**.

We did not throw these items away, but we kept them so that they might be of use to us.

**In a spiritual sense, Paul is telling us that there are a couple of precious spiritual possessions we would do well to hang on to**

#### **A. v. 1a An Awareness Of Our Foundation**

**Colossians 3: If ye then be risen with Christ ...**

Paul tells us that we are **“risen with Christ”**.  
The word **“if”** is not a statement of possibility,

### 3 Colossians 3:1-4 AN OLD CHALLENGE FOR A NEW BEGINNING

it a declaration of a spiritual reality.

Paul is saying, **"Since you are risen with Christ..."**

#### **Paul is discussing our spiritual position!**

When Jesus Christ died on Calvary, every person who would ever place their faith in Him also died that day,

In a spiritual sense, we died to the penalty and the power of sin when Jesus died on the cross.

Because I am dead to my sins, I do not have to worry about being punished for my sins.

**Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.**

**Romans 6:1-11 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? <sup>3</sup> Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: <sup>6</sup> Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. <sup>7</sup> For he that is dead is freed from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: <sup>9</sup> Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. <sup>11</sup> Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**The price has been paid and I have already died,**

**Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.**

**Because I have died with Christ,  
I have also been liberated from the power of sin in my life,**

**There is a sense in which every child of God is dead!  
They are dead to sin,**

**Colossians 2:20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,**

In this verse, Paul reminds us that we have also been raised up with Jesus.

When He died, we died.

When He rose from the dead, we rose from the dead as well!

When He got up, every person who would ever believe in Him got up as well!

**We must never forget that we are dead to sin and alive to a new life in Jesus! This knowledge will help us live clean and close for the glory of God.**

## **B. v. 1b-2a An Attention To Our Focus**

**Colossians 3: (1) If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.**

## 5 Colossians 3:1-4 AN OLD CHALLENGE FOR A NEW BEGINNING

Since we have been raised to a new life in Jesus, we are told to **"seek those things which are above"**.

The **verb "seek"** is in the Present Tense, Imperative Mode.

In other words, we are told to

**"continually be seeking those things which are above"**.

**Verse 2** builds on that thought by telling us to **"set" our "affections on things above, not on things on the earth"**.

The word **"affections"** refers to the **"mind"**.

We are told here to focus our thoughts on heavenly things not earthly things.

We are to set our minds on the things of God and on the things that bring glory to Him.

A quick look at some of the verses following this verse give a little insight into what Paul is talking about here.

### **We are to pursue:**

- **A deeper knowledge of Jesus, Colossians 3:10**  
**And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:**

- **A clean, holy life, Colossians 3:5-9** <sup>5</sup> **Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: <sup>6</sup> For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: <sup>7</sup> In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. <sup>8</sup> But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;**

- **Godly virtues,**

**Colossians 3:12-17**

**<sup>12</sup> Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; <sup>13</sup> Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. <sup>14</sup> And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. <sup>17</sup> And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.**

- **Holiness in our domestic life,**

**Colossians 3:18-21 <sup>18</sup> Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. <sup>19</sup> Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. <sup>20</sup> Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.**

- **Holiness in our social life, 3:22-4:1**

**Colossians 3:22-4:1 <sup>22</sup> Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; <sup>23</sup> And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; <sup>24</sup> Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.**

**<sup>25</sup> But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. 4 Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.**

- **An effective prayer life**

**Colossians 4:2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;**

- **A fruitful witness –**

**Colossians 4:3-6 <sup>3</sup> Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: <sup>4</sup> That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. <sup>5</sup> Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. <sup>6</sup> Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.**

**In other words,**

- **Godly virtues,**
- **Holiness in our domestic life**
- **An effective prayer life**
- **A fruitful witness**

**we are to live like** Jesus lived,

**1 John 2:6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.**

**We are to live out the fruit of the Spirit** on our life's day by day,

**Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, <sup>23</sup> Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.**

We are **challenged to live out our lives with genuine spiritual values**, and not the values of a fallen world.

As we give our attention to these spiritual, heavenly things, we are enabled to live a heavenly, holy, God-honoring life in this world.

We are to allow a heavenly perspective to govern our earthly walk!

Every decision, every activity, every plan and purpose is to be considered in the light of eternity.

Everything is to be laid out before the Lord and considered not from an earthly, sensual perspective, but from the viewpoint of Heaven.

God's people are called upon to become heavenly minded. This is possible because of our Lord's presence in Heaven.

From His place at the Father's right hand, Jesus makes intercession for us and He gives us all that we need to live for Him in this world,

**Hebrews 7:25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.**

**Romans 8:31-34 <sup>31</sup> What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. <sup>34</sup> Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.**

As we prepare to START living in view of eternity instead of just the flesh, may the Lord help us to realize who we are and what we have in Jesus.

**May that realization change our walk for His glory!**

**I. v. 1-2a SOME THINGS MUST BE RETAINED**

**II. v. 2b SOME THINGS MUST BE RELEASED**

**As we cleaned our rooms the other day, we came across several items that just had to go.**

We really did not have room for some of them; and some of that stuff was only plain trash!

It has to go, and it did!

The trash is sitting on the curb waiting to be picked up.

Several bags of stuff that we no longer needed went to the house of the blind.

While we retained some things, other thing had to be released.

In our spiritual lives, the same thing is true.

Some things have to be let go!

There are some things that try to attach themselves to our lives that are only plain trash.

Those things need to be kicked to the curb!

Other things simply do not have a place in our lives and those things need to be let go.

Paul tells us in **verse 2** that we are to focus our thoughts on Heavenly things.

**<sup>2</sup> Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.**

While we do that, we are to avoid getting caught up in all the things in this world that would swamp our minds and hinder our walk.

**If we allowed the mind to focus on this world, it would have no time to give itself to the things of God.**

Here in Colossians, Paul mentions some dangerous distractions that would hinder our walk if they could.

Let me show you what he says we need to avoid.

### **A. 2:8 False Doctrine**

**Colossians 2:8 <sup>8</sup> Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.**

Paul warns these early believers about those who would carry them off into false doctrinal beliefs.

The word **"spoil"** means **"to carry off the booty; to carry someone off as a captive"**.

The enemy would love nothing better than for God's people to get themselves trapped in some false system of belief that takes the emphasis off Jesus.

He tells us that the enemy does this through:

**Philosophies** – This refers to wisdom of men.

Man has invented some strange belief systems over the years, and every single manmade belief system is at variance with Jesus Christ.

If what a person teaches is not backed up by the Word of God; that system is to be avoided by the believer.

**Vain Deceit** – This phrase means “**empty tricks**”.

It refers to those who deceive through trickery or through a slick message.

Again, if the message is not Jesus it is not of God.

**If the focus is not on Jesus only and His shed blood, it is not of God!**

## **Traditions of Men**

Believers are warned to be careful of long held beliefs.

Just because people have believed something to be true and have been taught that something is true, does not make it true!

We are not to base our faith and our walk on the traditions of men, no matter how godly or worthy of respect the man may be. We are to base our belief system on the Word of God alone!

## **The Rudiments of the World**

Again, believers are warned against falling away from a mature faith to accept a simplistic doctrine.

This phrase refers to an alphabet, or things in a row.

It speaks of simple things in contrast to deeper truth.

**We are to stay with the Bible and try every teaching against the clear Word of God.**

If you listen to certain high-profile preachers in our day, you hear the very things Paul warned the Colossians about being taught in the pulpits of our day.

We are to avoid false doctrine at all costs.

We are to run from it, regardless of the package in which it is presented.

## **B. 2:16-17, 21-23 Foolish Demands**

**Colossians 2:16-17** <sup>16</sup> Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: <sup>17</sup> Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

**Colossians 2:21-23** <sup>21</sup> (Touch not; taste not; handle not; <sup>22</sup> Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? <sup>23</sup> Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body: not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

**Paul also warns believers to watch out for people who would place them back under the Law.**

Jesus came to deliver us from legalism and from the harsh, impossible demands of the Law.

Christians are to stand in the liberty they have been given in Jesus Christ.

Paul is telling these believers

**that "no man has the right to be their judge".**

**If they have been saved by Jesus, they have been delivered from the demands of the Law and they enjoy great liberty in Jesus.**

The only reason that liberty should be limited is for the sake of a weaker brother or sister, **Rom. 14-15; 1 Cor. 8-10.**

The whole point of these verses is this: **true spirituality does not consist in the keeping of man-made, external rules; but in a personal, faith relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**What you “do” or “do not do” is not what makes you a spiritual person. Spirituality comes from knowing Jesus and allowing Him to live through you!**

## **C. 3:5-10 Fleshly Deeds**

**Colossians 3:5-10 <sup>5</sup> Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: <sup>6</sup> For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: <sup>7</sup> In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. <sup>8</sup> But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; <sup>10</sup> And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him**

In these verses, Paul lists several common sins of the flesh and admonishes believers to eliminate them from their lives. Let us take a quick look at these verses and what they forbid.

### **v. 5 Fornication**

**Colossians 3:5<sup>5</sup> Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication....**

This word is translated from a Greek word that refers to any type of sexual expression. Paul is telling us that any sexual activity that takes place outside the confines of a marriage relationship is a sin and must be put away from our lives.

### **v. 5 Uncleanness**

This word means **“impurity”** and it looks beyond the acts of the body into the very thoughts of the minds and the motives of the heart.

**Not only is the outward man supposed to be clean, so is the heart and the mind!**

## **v. 5 Inordinate Affection**

**Colossians 3:5<sup>5</sup> .... inordinate affection...**

This speaks of **"wicked passions"**.

It has the idea of lust for forbidden things.

God has marked certain things as being off limits; this kind of lust seeks out those things and longs for them.

## **v. 5 Evil Concupiscence**

This means **"evil desires"**.

It speaks of a mind that longs for forbidden things.

The person with this kind of mind MIGHT never commit evil on a physical level, but they live in a fantasy world where their most wicked thoughts are acted out in the heart and mind.

## **v. 5 Covetousness**

This word **means "to have more"**.

It refers to the insatiable desire to possess more than one has been given by God.

It is a refusal to accept what you have as the gift of God.

It is the placing of things ahead of God and of His will for your life. That is why it is called **"idolatry"**.

## **v. 8 Anger**

**<sup>8</sup> But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.**

This word refers to a deep, smoldering, bitterness.

It is an anger that dwells in the heart and makes the angry person hard to deal with.

The angry person will tend to lash out in both words and deeds.

## **v. 8 Wrath**

This word refers to anger that boils over. It speaks of sudden, explosive outbursts of anger.

## **v. 8 Malice**

This is anger mixed with **a desire to do harm** to the focus of the anger. When malice is involved, the angry person strikes out to do damage to another person.

## **v. 8 Blaspheme**

The word literally **means "to slander"**.

It can refer to slanders directed at God or at other people.

We slander others when we insult and belittle others.

This happens in gossip and when we put others down behind their backs.

## **v. 8 Filthy Communication**

This refers to **"abusive speech"**.

It speaks of words that are thrown around to hurt and wound someone.

**This usually happens when people say things they should not say in a moment of anger!**

## **v. 9 Lying**

**<sup>9</sup> Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;**

**When we lie to one another, we are using the tool and tactic of the devil,**

**John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.**

This characteristic has no place in the life of a child of God!  
If any of these things are in your life, they need to be out away!

They will hinder your walk with God and cripple you spiritually!  
How can we be victorious over the sin in our lives?  
One step we can take is to starve the fleshly appetites.

**Do not feed the anger.**

**Do not feed the lust.**

**Second**, we can overcome by crowding it out.

We can so fill our lives with positive things that evil has no room to flourish.

When we fill ourselves with the things of God,

**Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.**

, and the Word of God, sin cannot gain a foothold in our hearts.

**Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.**

**I. v. 1-2a SOME THINGS MUST BE RETAINED**

**II. v. 2b SOME THINGS MUST BE RELEASED**

**III. v. 3-4 SOME THINGS MUST BE REMEMBERED**

As we cleaned up our room's we opened a large tote.  
On top were several things that did not matter.  
They were discarded.

As we dug deeper, we discovered some things that caused us to  
take a trip down memory lane.

We found pictures of our children when they were young and  
cute.

It was a good opportunity for us to stop and remember the  
blessings of the Lord.

**These last two verses of our text serve as reminders of  
some important spiritual truths today.**

We need to consider them before we leave these things behind.

## **A. v. 3a There Has Been A Death**

**<sup>3</sup> For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.**

We are reminded again that we have died to sin and to the  
influence of this world.

One of the surest ways for the child of God to enjoy spiritual  
victory in his or her life is for that person to understand that they  
are crucified with Christ,

**Galatians 2:20 <sup>20</sup> I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I  
live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I  
now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God,  
who loved me, and gave himself for me.**

If we can get a grip on that truth and do what Rom. 6:11 tells us  
to do, we would grow deeper in the things of the Lord.

**Romans 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be  
dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus  
Christ our Lord.**

## **B. v. 3b There Has Been A Deposit**

**<sup>3</sup> ... and your life is hid with Christ in God.**

When we were saved, we were given new life in Jesus.

This new life imparts to us **the "divine nature"**,

**2 Pet. 1:4.**

This new life guarantees the believer eternal security,

**1 Pet. 1:5; Heb. 7:25; John 10:28.**

**John 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.**

Because we are hidden in Jesus, we are in protective custody and none of the enemies of the soul can approach us, attack us, or take us out of Jesus.

## **C. v. 4 There Has Been A Dream**

**<sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.**

Paul closes this paragraph by reminding us that this world is not the best there is. We may have to deny our flesh down here, but it will be worth it all over there.

We might have to battle Satan here, but we will enjoy victory there. When Jesus comes, our faith in Him will be vindicated and we will be glorified with Him.

Right now, every believer in this room battles the world, the flesh and the devil.

Each of these enemies does everything they can to hinder us and to cause us to fail.

One day, the battles will be over!

This flesh will be changed and remade in His image,

**1 Corinthians 15:53-54 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.**

**<sup>54</sup> So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.**

**1 John 3:1-3 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup> And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.**

We will leave this world with its sin, its evil, its problems, its devil and we will go to land of perfection to bask in the glory of our Redeemer forever, **Rev. 21:4.**

**Revelation 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.**

Right now, I have a dream.

I dream of a day when I will go home.

I dream of a day when I will see the Lord Jesus Christ.

One day that dream will become a reality and

I will be in His presence!

**That is what we need to remember as we fight the good fight of faith!**

**Conc:** That is a lot to take in, isn't it?

But, as we stand here on the cusp of a finishing this year strong, we need to take a good, hard look at our lives and at our walk with the Lord.

Are there some things in your life that need to be **Retained**?  
Does your focus need to be adjusted?

Are there some things in your life that need to be **Released**?  
Do you need to lay down some of the things mentioned in this message?

Are there some things in your life that need to be **Remembered**?  
Do you need to take a trip down memory lane and nail a few things down today?

If there are needs and the Lord has spoken to your heart, this altar is open. You mind Him!

If you need to be saved, you can do that today.

If He is calling you, then you need to come to Him and be saved.

Whatever the needs may be today, you should listen to the voice of the Lord and do what He us telling you to do.

Let us seek to make 2022 and 2023 the best year of our lives for the glory of God!

**I. v. 1-2a SOME THINGS MUST BE RETAINED**

**II. v. 2b SOME THINGS MUST BE RELEASED**

**III. v. 3-4 SOME THINGS MUST BE REMEMBERED**

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