

Clothed With Compassion

Timeless Truth

“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.”

– Colossians 3:1-2

Compassion compels. One Father’s Day I decided to celebrate by going fishing. We went to a close by, barbless fishing pond since the kids were young, simplicity was key, and we didn’t need to catch fish that day. Suddenly one of the kids hooked a big one! ...A big snapping turtle! The celebratory fishing trip turned into a lesson of compassion as the kids joined me at the local veterinary ER where I anesthetized the turtle to get the hook out. His injury required rehab... Therefore, we adopted him for the night and then safely placed him in the hands of a local rehabilitator.

Praise the Lord compassion compels! The book of Colossians was written by Paul to warn believers against false doctrinal teaching and encourage Christian maturity. The book highlights Christ is Lord over all creation visible and invisible. It proclaims His sufficiency as our Redeemer who enables us to take part in his death, resurrection, and fullness of life¹. Colossians chapters one and two teach us Christ’s ultimate compassionate love for us and victory on the cross empowers us². Chapters three and four teach us believers are equipped to radically live for an audience of One (Jesus) which will impact how we live with and love others³.

As it was then in Colossae, so too it is now... False beliefs influence and come from false connections *and* a lack of true connection. Trust impacts the timeless truths we choose to connect with and live from. To trust in Jesus is to: 1) Live for Him because we love Him, not to earn His love; 2) Seek His will over our own (in love, submit to His sovereign control)⁴, not actions just seeking rewards; 3) Be empowered by His Holy Spirit, not self-determination, self-motivation, and self-control, and 4) Be in constant contact and communication with Him to lead to unity with Him and those who follow Him. Are you connected⁵?

False connections syncretize (blend) worldview philosophies and non-Christian beliefs and distracted the Colossians from faith in Christ alone as they do us, too. These are the “hooks of life.” Remaining on these hooks, ends in death⁶. Obtaining knowledge⁷, stuff or status⁸ is temporal and *will not* last...

What *will* last, Colossians 3:1 tells us what our heart and minds should be set on... And even reveals how... By getting connected to timeless truth... Set your heart and mind on eternal things. Like the turtle on the hook, so we all are born into this fallen world “trapped on the hook” of sin⁹. Yet, in God’s unfailing compassionate love, while we were sinners, He sent His one and only Son, Jesus, to pay the penalty of our sin (eternal separation from him) by dying on the cross in our place. He could have left us on the hook - we deserve(d) it¹⁰, but God desired a relationship with us¹¹.

Therefore, if Christ is your Lord and Savior, you have been raised with Christ, so live out this connectedness! While navigating seasons of life, I found this filtering phrase to ask myself... *Will*

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it matter in Eternity? Holding onto the non-eternal things impacts living connected... Instead, we are called to abide (to dwell, to remain, be present, be held and kept) in the Lord¹². This also impacts our interaction with others¹³.

As believers, a life focused on things above (eternal matters) where Christ is now seated at God's right hand in Heaven (not on earth, nor in the tomb and honored because Jesus is fully man and fully God as our triumphant, living Redeemer interceding on our behalf before the throne in heaven¹⁴) impacts what captivates our heart. This focus means that the things that break God's heart, will break ours as we abide in Him.

Sometimes hearing, reading, memorizing, or meditating on the word of God can be insufficient to staying focused on eternal things. James 1:22 says to be doers of the word not just hearers otherwise you deceive yourself. John 14:15 says to do what Christ says if we love Him... Could you be like Noah and by faith build the Ark when it had never rained and while enduring ridicule from others for 100 years in the process¹⁵? Action to obey and follow Christ will have a cost, Jesus showed that to us on the cross¹⁶.

Call upon the Holy Spirit to empower you to stay eternally focused... Colossians 3:1 states you were raised with Christ. The same Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead sealed you from the day you call upon the Lord as your Savior¹⁷. Watch out for "hooks" and fix your eyes upon Jesus!¹⁸

- 1) Who do you know far from God?**
- 2) Like the turtle... Why are you "on the hook of sin" or no "longer on the hook of sin?" How does that correlate to your relationship with Christ?**
- 3) What if you set everything you value on an altar of fire... What would burn away? What would last?**



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Footnotes: **1)** Ephesians 1:4-10; **2)** Colossians 1-2; **3)** Colossians 3-4; **4)** Luke 22:24, John 14:15 **5)** John 15:5; **6)** Proverbs 14:12, John 14:6; **7)** Colossians 2:8; **8)** Matthew 6:19-21; **9)** Colossians 2:13-14, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:6-8; **10)** Isaiah 64:6, Romans 6:23, John 3:16; **11)** Colossians 1:16; **12)** Colossians 2:20; **13)** 1 John 4:20-21; **14)** Romans 8:34, Hebrews 1:3; 2 Corinthians 4:18; **15)** John 5:39-40; Hebrews 11:7; **16)** John 15:12-17; **17)** Romans 8:11, Ephesians 1:13; **18)** Hebrews 12:2