

FOCUS

Col 3:1 If, then, you were raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is sitting at the right of God; Psa. 110:1

Col 3:2 mind the things above, not the things on the earth.

Col 3:3 For you died, and your life has been hidden with Christ in God.

Col 3:4 Whenever Christ our life is revealed, then also you will be revealed with Him in glory.

Col 3:5 Then put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil lust, and covetousness, which is idolatry; [Literal Translation]

Focus is a powerful thing. Another word for focus is attention. God has given us the ability to focus or place our attention on anything we want to. The more we focus on something the clearer and larger it gets. Our focus works much like binoculars or a microscope. What we focus on will become larger, increase, or grow. Our focus can also be likened to a water hose in a garden. Where we direct our hose upon will get watered, and whatever gets watered in our garden will grow! What we place our focus upon the most will become our obsession. See, we all are obsessed with something or someone. **Usually it is our self!** That is why self-help programs proliferate outside and inside the church. These self-help/recovery groups give people the opportunity to focus on themselves and their problems. That is why most people in recovery programs never recover! They are always recovering. They always need to work through their problems, hang-ups, and past. They are obsessed with themselves and self. There is no end to self! Not realizing it, they end up watering self and causing their problems with self to grow and continue.

Paul had a different focus than most. That is why he had a Christian life that was different than most. Paul learned that his focus needed to be turned from self and behavior modification [legalism] to Christ and His finished work [faith]. In Colossians Paul tells us that we all must change our focus if we are going to see our natural life and our sinful tendencies change to godliness. Paul tells us to place our mind, our focus, our attention upon things above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Christ is sitting in heaven. This reveals He is resting. He is resting because His work is finished. What He came to do, He finished. He came to live under the Law to obtain perfect righteousness under the Law so He could give it to us as a gift. [Rom. 5:17] He also came to be a sacrifice for all of

our sins and trespasses. [1 Cor. 15:3] He also came to give us new life so that we could be reborn as a righteous, holy, and beloved child of God. [2 Cor. 5:17,21] When this was finished Jesus ascended into heaven and sat down at God's right hand. [Heb. 1:3] Because He was our covenant representative when He sat down, we were made to sit as well. **There are no more works I must do to be accepted by God. There is nothing more I have to do to be right with God. There is nothing more I have to do to be as I ought to be for God.** The work was finished by Christ as my representative. He did the work for me before God. I now can rest. However, many are not resting. They are still struggling in their efforts to be made acceptable, to be as they ought to be, and to change their behavior to match God's. The more one focuses on bad behavior the more they will struggle with it. The more one focuses on the bad things about their natural selves the more bad it becomes. It is tied to the principle of focus. The carnal and immature in Christ focus on the natural- upon self and upon performance. The spiritual and mature in Christ have their focus turned to Christ and to His finished work for them. The first focus produces defeat, the second focus manifests freedom!

Paul is telling the Colossians that they should no longer focus on their natural selves and where they do not measure up. They are to focus on Christ and where He measured up for them. Many Christians struggle with sexual sins, uncleanness, various passions, evil lusts, and covetousness. They struggle in these areas because their focus is on them. They are focused on changing these behaviors and they try to become more like Christ by working through their natural issues and their past. They think by focusing on their problems they would be resolved, but they do not realize they are just causing them to grow and continue. Paul discovered this principle and he describes it in the book of Romans chapter 7.

Rom 7:14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, having been sold under sin.

Rom 7:15 For what I work out, I do not know. For what I do not will, this I do. But what I hate, this I do.

Rom 7:16 But if I do what I do not will, I agree with the Law, that *it is* good.

Rom 7:17 But now I no longer work it out, but the sin dwelling in me.

Rom 7:18 For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good. For to will is present to me, but to work out the good I do not find.

Rom 7:19 For what good I desire, I do not do. But the evil I do not desire, this I do.

Rom 7:20 But if I do what I do not desire, *it is* no longer I working it out, but the sin dwelling in me.

Rom 7:21 I find then the law, *when* I desire to do the right, that evil is present with me.

Rom 7:22 For I delight in the Law of God according to the inward man;

Rom 7:23 but I see another law in my members having warred against the law of my mind, and taking me captive by the law of sin being in my members.

Rom 7:24 O wretched man *that* I *am*! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Rom 7:25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then I myself with the mind truly serve *the* Law of God, and *with* the flesh *the* law of sin.

Paul was obsessed with his problem areas and was working real hard to eliminate them. The harder he tried to get rid of his sinful tendencies, the more they took control of him. He could not understand his problem, until he had a revelation. His focus was WRONG! He was focused on self, therefore self was being watered! He was focused on the big I! COUNT HOW MANY TIMES PAUL USES THE WORD "I" IN THE VERSES ABOVE! Paul was obsessed with himself and what he could do to improve himself for God! Paul finally came to the end of himself and he cried out to God. He received a revelation- I need to focus on Christ and His finished work for me! Paul said with a sigh of relief- **"I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord!"** Once Paul turned His focus to Christ and His finished work of redemption, then Paul discovered the freedom that comes from the Spirit of Christ working in Him. **[Rom. 8:2]** Once Paul accepted that all of his sins were atoned for and forgiven, he could proclaim, "There is therefore now no condemnation in Christ". He also accepted that he was born again and made perfectly righteous in Christ. That was when the power of the Spirit went to work to mortify the sinful tendencies in his life. **[Romans 8:13] The sinful tendencies were not conquered by Paul, but were conquered IN Paul, by the Spirit of Christ as he focused upon Christ and not self.** This is why Paul told the Colossians in chapter 3 to change their focus from themselves (what is upon the earth) to Christ (what is above at God's right hand) and **THEN** put to death the sinful deeds of fornication, uncleanness, passions, lusts, and covetous. Once their focus was changed from self to Christ and His finished work, **THEN** the sinful tendencies of the flesh would be put to death by the Spirit of Christ.

Where is your focus today? Are you focused on your failings, sinful habits, and bad things about you, or is your focus upon Christ and His finished work for you? Are you focused upon how unrighteous you are, or that you are righteous because of what Jesus did for you at the cross? Are you obsessing about trying to change what is wrong about you, or are you resting in what is right about you because of Jesus? Your focus will determine what you will experience. Religion tells you to focus on the bad things about you and to work hard to get rid of them- asking God to help you of course! This does not work. God will not help self get the victory! This focus will only strengthen self and sin in your life. The Bible tells us to do the direct opposite of what religion tells us to do.

Phm 1:6 that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

The Bible tells us that our faith will become effective and grow by the acknowledgment of every **GOOD** thing which is in us **IN CHRIST JESUS**. Instead of focusing on what is wrong in you and trying to overcome it, we need to cast our eyes upon Christ and all that His finished work has done for us and in us. To do this we must continue to look into the mirror of God's Word. We need to continue daily in focusing on the finished work of Jesus- His perfect life under the Law for us, His death on the cross, His burial, His resurrection, and His seating at the right hand of God. If we will see Christ and our connection with Him in this work we will see more outward changes take place in our life by accident than ever on purpose! These changes will be done by the Spirit of Christ and not yourself. Then guess who gets the glory for it? Yep, Jesus does! So, today place your focus above where Christ is seated and resting upon His finished work. Resist the temptation to focus on yourself and your junk. God will get rid of it for you as you focus on Him!