

## Colossian 3 Series #4

*“Continually Ponder Eternal Things”*

We started this year resetting our focus on what is important. It is easy to allow ourselves to become distracted from what is important by what seems urgent. It is equally easy to become distracted from what is essential by what feels comfortable. Paul instructs all those who have been raised up with Christ to continually pursue and ponder the important eternal things above over the non-essential temporal things on earth.

*Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ (and you have), keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.*

*For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. Colossians 3:1-4*

EVERYONE who has been made alive in Christ lives in a new spiritual dimension. We have been given new longings and desires. Our heart has been changed to desire spiritual things. We have a new spiritual awareness and perspective. This new heavenly heritage calls for a new earthly direction in life.

Two things should be the focus of our life.

1. Continually **PURSUE** things above.
2. Continually **PONDER** things above.

Pursue and ponder -- Seek and contemplate things above.

Why should we focus on “things above”?

1. The “old us” died and God established a brand new core.
2. Some aspect of our new resurrection life right NOW resides with Christ above.
3. When Jesus returns we will come to a full realization of our new nature both spiritually and physically.

Last week we spent our time together exploring the instruction to seek or pursue.

*Glory in His holy name; Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad. Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His face continually. Psalm 105:3-4*

*One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall **seek**: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to **meditate** in His temple. Psalm 27:4*

We are to seek, deeply desire intimate relationship with God. It is the yearning of our NEW nature. Interestingly, Jesus used the same word “seek” to describe God’s passion concerning us.

*The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is **seeking** such people to worship him. John 4:23*

Only those who have been raised with Christ can worship God in spirit and truth. This message will focus on the second of the two lifestyle commands pronounce by Paul.

### **Continually set your mind on (ponder) things above.**

Did you ever make a choice in life due to a lack of knowledge? You did not have the whole picture. You didn’t have sufficient information. You didn’t make an informed decision. Had you had just one other piece of information you would not have gone that direction.

We make decisions based on the programming in our brain. Who programmed our brain? Our thinking process is the result of multiple factors and sources of information; parents, education, friends, teachers, friends, pastors, media. The world system bombards our brains with constant input. Today, interaction with the internet continually floods our brains with information. Not all of it correct or valid. Even so, it is that information that affects how we think and act and feel. What we think and feel determines how we act and live! Paul calls us to pursue eternal things and fill our brains with truth.

Earlier I suggested some possible specifics about “things above” we are to pursue and ponder. This message focuses on the specific command to focus our minds on truth, eternal things.

Renewal of our thinking is essential to the renewal of our living. We all act according to our belief system. A change of thinking lies at the core of any lifestyle change. The brain is an essential key in everything we do. From the time we are born, certain concepts and thoughts form pathways in our brains that effect how we live our life. If we were continually programmed that we are a loser, we will live like a loser. A continual message that God is mad at me prevents me from pursuing deeper relationship. Continually being told that I will never amount to anything neutralizes any motivation to achieve anything.

The Scriptures continually draw attention to thinking and knowing. This passage encourages continual contemplation on things above. So often, our ability to live well depends on thinking well or knowing something. Paul used a word here that indicates an inward reasoning or thinking that determines outward behavior. He instructs us to form opinions based on what corresponds with the things above. Literally, the term refers to the diaphragm that regulates breathing. Thinking is like breathing. Allow proper thinking to determine proper living. He contrasts the world’s way of forming opinions with the divine way of forming opinions. Continually check your thoughts against a Biblical standard.

Paul instructed the Philippians to espouse the same thinking as Jesus did.

*Have this thinking in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus... Philippians 2:5*

In that context, thoughts of humble service and obedience directed the actions of Jesus.

Paul calls us to adopt the same mindset as Jesus that directs the course of all our relationships.

Paul reminded the Corinthians that God gave them spiritual insight unavailable to the “natural” man. We have access to the very thinking of Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

*For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind (thinking) of Christ. 1 Corinthians 2:16*

Inner transformation of our spirit generates further transformation in the other areas of our life.

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2*

Continual exposure to the ways of the world eventually conform us to its behavior. When we reason like the world, we will act like the world. Paul urged the Roman readers to experience life transformation by the renewing of the thinking in accord with the thinking of Jesus.

Even though we have experienced a supernatural transformation in the core of our being, there is still work to do. Our physical brains have already been programmed at a fleshly level. New pathways need to be ingrained in the brain. We have the mind of Christ but not the brain of Christ. The brain is renewed through exposure to scripture and input from the regenerated spirit.

*For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 1 Corinthians 2:11*

*For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12*

“Conformed” describes change generated from outside influence. (Brainwashing)

“Transformed” describes change generated from inside influence. (Caterpillar to Butterfly)

How important is it to continually ponder, consider, think about eternal things? Following are some Biblical applications to knowing or focusing our thinking on the eternal.

Peter failed to set his mind on God’s interest but man’s.

*But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." Matthew 16:23*

*For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. Romans 8:5*

*Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. Philippians 3:17-19*

Paul encourages us to set our mind on things above not on earth.

How does pondering the things above practically affect our daily lives?

*This is eternal life, that they may **know** You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. Jn 17:3*

We can exult in tribulations **knowing** that they produce spiritual growth. Rom 5:3

We can be assured we are new creatures **knowing** that our old self was crucified Rom 6:6

We are to **consider** as fact that we are dead to sin but alive to God. Rom 6:11

Love one another **knowing** that it is time to live differently. Rom 13:11

Persevere **knowing** that our labor is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor 15:58

Take comfort **knowing** we are sharers not only in suffering but comfort. 2 Cor 1:7

Believe in God **knowing** that the same God who raised Jesus will raise us. 2 Cor 4:14

Be of good cheer **knowing** that we have opportunity to serve the Lord while alive. 2 Cor 5:6

Be motivated to share Christ **knowing** just how awesome He is. 2 Cor 5:11

Stop trying to earn your salvation **knowing** that a man is not justified by works but faith. Gal 2:16

Work as though working for the Lord **knowing** that God is the source of our reward. Eph 6:8

Refuse useless argument and ignorant speculation **knowing** they only produce quarrels. 1 Tim 2:23

Accept ill-treatment graciously **knowing** we have a greater lasting inheritance. Heb 10:34  
Moses passed up the riches of Egypt because He was **looking** for a greater reward. Heb 11  
Show hospitality to strangers **knowing** that we may be entertaining an angel. Heb 13:2  
Consider (think) it all joy when you encounter trials **knowing** those trial bring maturity. Jam 1:2  
Live godly **knowing** that we were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. 1 Pet 1:18  
Resist the attacks of Satan **knowing** you are not the only one suffering and the God has  
promised to personally perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. 1 Peter 5:10-11  
Don't **think** more highly than you ought to think but accurately Rom 12:3  
Christians are to have the same **thinking** that views each other as important. Rom 12:16  
God will point out **thinking** that does not conform to His **thinking**. Philip 3:15  
All relational conflict comes from bitter jealousy and selfish ambition. James 3-4  
Peace comes from a mind focused on God Isa 26:3

*Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 2 Peter 1:2-3*

A true knowledge of Christ provides everything necessary for life and godliness.

A true knowledge of Christ brings increased grace and peace.

Later in Colossians 3

*(Act an live godly realizing that) You have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him. Col 3:10*

Fix your eyes, your thinking on Jesus.

*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes(thinking) on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him (consideration of the future goal) endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:1-3*

*So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will **know** the truth, and (knowing) the truth will make you free. John 8:31-32*

*Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:13*

The final step to experiencing the fullness of God in our life is to understand and know the love of Christ.

*and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:19*

Paul prayed for increased knowledge in the followers of Jesus.

*I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the **knowledge** of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will **know** what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. Ephesians 1:17-19*

*And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real **knowledge** and all **discernment**,  
Philippians 1:9*

*For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the **knowledge** of His will in all spiritual **wisdom** and **understanding**, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the **knowledge** of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously Colossians 1:9-11*

*Grow in the grace and **knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. 2 Peter 3:18*

Paul provided the Philippians with a specific framework for right thinking.

*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, **dwell** (think, ponder) on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:8-9*

Not only think about them but DO them. Do you want peace in your life? Think on and practice the truth.

Why did Paul instruct the Colossians to ponder eternal things? Their minds were programed with earthly things and philosophies that had affected their behavior.

Like the Ephesians...

*They were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which they formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. Ephesians 2:1-3*

Like the Romans...

*For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Romans 1:21-23*

In order to bring about new living there has to be new thinking. God first enables a new capacity to think and reason on a spiritual level. Then, out of that new heart longing we must retrain the brain to track on a spiritual level.

Where do we find true life?

How should I now live in this devil-driven world?

What pleases God?

Life change begins in the mind. The mind is the major battle field that the enemy attacks.

Remember! Garbage in, garbage out.

*The mind of the intelligent seeks **knowledge**, but the mouth of fools feeds on folly. Proverbs 15:14*

The whole armor of God (Eph 6) all has to do with right thinking about spiritual realities.

First we have to know that the true enemy is NOT visible flesh and blood but unseen spiritual.

Then we find protection from the devil's lies by right thinking concerning Jesus.

He is our source of truth.

He is our source of righteousness.  
He is our source of salvation.  
He is our source of faith.  
He is the source of peace.  
His word is the offense weapon against the enemy's lies.  
Communication with Him is necessary for victory over the enemy.

*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the **knowledge** of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete. 2 Corinthians 10:3-6*

When we think right we live right. Every issue we face and struggle we fight relates to stinking thinking somewhere.

How do we change our thinking? Be transformed by the renewing of our thinking according to the truth found in the Word.

*How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You. Psalm 119:9-11*

How did David seek God? He sought Him through His Word. Reading Scripture it is good but God promises success to the one who takes it a step further.

*How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he **meditates** day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers. Psalm 1:1-3*

*This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Joshua 1:8*

*But know that the LORD has set apart the godly man for Himself; The LORD hears when I call to Him. Tremble, and do not sin; **Meditate** in your heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. Psalm 4:3-4*

*I shall **remember** the deeds of the LORD; Surely I will **remember** Your wonders of old. I will **meditate** on all Your work And muse on Your deeds. Psalm 77:11-12  
I will **meditate** on Your precepts And regard Your ways. I shall **delight** in Your statutes; I shall not forget Your word. Psalm 119:15-16*

*My eyes anticipate the night watches, that I may **meditate** on Your word. Psalm 119:148*

*On the glorious splendor of Your majesty and on Your wonderful works, I will **meditate**. Psalm 145:5*

What occupies our thinking?

Whatever comes into the mind, affects our soul.

The mind is the gateway to the soul.

Some of the things we allow into our mind deaden the soul.

Paul urges us to fill our minds with the things that transform the soul.

If we have truly been changed on the inside, then deep down, there is a longing to pursue and think about our Heavenly Father, Jesus our friend, the Holy Spirit our encourager, our heavenly home, our future inheritance, the true nature of our relationship with God and others.

*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell (think, ponder) on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in the Scriptures practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:8-9*

Our last message challenged us to set our heart (decide) to pursue the Lord.

This message I ask you to set your heart to intentionally ponder eternal things over earthly.