

Casting the Devils' Intent

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As Christians, we are told to “set our minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” (Col. 3:2). The Greek language in highly inflective and it’s doing something here that demands our utmost attention. Diligent bible students will discover the text here is (1) in the *imperative mood*, a command from Paul, under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. (2) it’s in the *middle voice*, indicating that this is a personal responsibility, your preacher can’t do it for you. (3) it’s in the *present tense*, indicating that this is progressive and an on-going activity of the Christian life. It is most evident due to our fallen nature and sin to often find our minds doing the complete opposite isn’t it? It seems that our minds are bent towards fleshly things, rather than the things of God. (Gal. 5:19, Rom. 7:18). The secular man outside of Christ hates God and does not want God in their thinking at all (Rom. 1:21). For the Apostle Paul states in the book of Romans, “For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.” (Romans 8:6). Paul is referring to the mind as in one’s worldview, mindset, and thought patterns. We need to be very clear at this point that Paul’s words “*life and peace*”, in this context refer to two events. *First*, one’s present state; At conversion we are raised from spiritual death to spiritual life (Romans 6:4, 8:10). It is only at this point to we now begin to relate to God on His terms of objective peace but also internal peace of mind (Romans 5:1-2). *Secondly*, “*life and peace*” refer to one’s eternal destiny, the final blessings of eternal life and of eternal peace in heaven. Another way to say it’s like this, setting your mind on things above is not how you come to Christ; it is the necessary evidence of one who is ‘in Christ’

A secular society would view this kind of talk as non-cynical and utterly ludicrous. However, this is what God requires for the one who wants to bear the name Christian. The world has a mind upon the desires of the eyes, the pride of life, and the lust of the flesh (1 John 2:16). But as we know that all of this is not of God the Father, but it is of the world. We must remember that the world is passing away along with all it’s lust (2 Peter 3:1-15). The true Christian is not blinded in this manner any longer (2 Cor. 4:3-4). Therefore, if we are in Christ, we now desire God’s will above doing our own will. God has spoken (frightful words to a pagan) and He has spoken final in His special revelation, the Bible. The Bible is clear that God desires that our minds be set upon things above. To what end?

- I. To develop a healthy fear of God that results in a deep love for God and a love for lost souls outside of Christ.

- II. To prepare to meet God (Amos 4:12), and we can meet Him in grace *here and now* or we can meet Him in judgement and condemnation *then and there*, facing His wrath.
- III. Considering our eternal dwelling (1 Peter 1:4), and our final sanctification where we will be like Christ completely sinless in heaven (1 John 3:2).
- IV. Setting our minds above, causes us to examine our purity of doctrine, the purity of our lives, and the purity of the Lord's Church.

Casting The Devil's Thoughts

Due to the fact that there is still indwelling sin within the baptized believers' we set our minds upon things above to also remind us of the daily duty of mortifying sin within our life (Col. 3:5). This is all part of progressive sanctification, separating ourselves more and more from sin and closer to holiness and righteousness (2 Peter 1:8-9, 2 Peter 3:11, 1 John 3:9, Romans 6:18, 1 Thessalonians 4:3). But although Christians are fully ransomed (Matthew 20:28), we are not fully redeemed (Romans 7:15-25). If you didn't know, sin still has a beachhead upon us all. Therefore, we can still cast the devil's thoughts and not even know it!

I would kindly ask that you consider the apostle Peter (Mark 8:31-33). Our Lord was going along with His disciples through the villages of Caesarea Philippi and He asked them, "Who do people say that I am? (Mark 8:27). After the followers of Jesus gave some erroneous views about their views of who Jesus was (v.28), Peter unhesitatingly retorted on behalf of the 12 "You are the Christ." Thus, affirming that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus goes on to affirm that truth statement made by Peter by describing that you can't have a Messiah without the rugged cross, which the 12 did not understand (v.31-33). Jesus went on to explain that He would suffer (Mark 8:31), and after three days He would rise again.

In light of all this Peter comes back and begins to publicly rebuke Jesus in the open air, in a brash outburst (Mark 8:32). Now, no doubt Peter was thinking a few things here. (1) That he was justified in his remark. I mean Peter just answered the theological question with the right answer! So, it's possible that inflated his pride a little bit. (2) Peter was expressing a presumptive attitude although he didn't understand Jesus, he did love Him. (3) I'm sure Peter thought that the devil was nowhere around that outburst. Little did he know the devil was all over him! Jesus told him, "*Get behind Me Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.*" (Mark 8:33). Peter cast the devil's thoughts and didn't even know it.

Conclusion

What a great reminder for us if we have been buried with Christ (Col. 2:12), the necessary evidence of our new birth will be manifested by a seeking mindset of the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God (Col. 3:1). Meditating upon the Master will always change the creature. The more we grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18) it will produce a radical change in our daily lives. What are you seeking?

*“And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure”
1 John 3:3*