
Words of Truth

Setting Our Affection On Things Above

By: Brian A. Yeager

The world is full of enticing things that get our attention. Such is why Paul warned Timothy to not get entangled with the affairs of this life (II Timothy 2:3-4). The cares and pleasures of this life can choke the word of God (Luke 8:14). If we, as Christians, get entangled with the things of this world it is worse than having never turned from those things to begin with (II Peter 2:20-22). Isn't that thought provoking? Doesn't that cause you to pause and consider how the Lord stresses not turning back to the worldliness we have left behind (Luke 9:61-62)?

God tells us not to love the world or the things in the world (I John 2:15-17). At the same time, with a cautious balance (Matthew 26:41), we are permitted to enjoy some things of this life (Ecclesiastes 2:24, Ecclesiastes 3:9-13, Ecclesiastes 5:13-20, Mark 6:30-32, I Corinthians 7:32-34, and I Timothy 6:17). How do we balance those two instructions? How do we enjoy things of the world without becoming worldly? The answer to those questions is found in the focal point of our study. We can balance enjoying things of the world without falling into worldliness by setting our affection on things above.

Where Your Affection Lies Is The Key

The inspired word of God says this: *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory"* (Colossians 3:1-4).

We should first address the fact that being risen with Christ is in reference to becoming dead to sin, buried in baptism, and risen to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:1-23). Therefore, this instruction requires that one has taken the full steps included in salvation. If such has not occurred, this instruction is impossible to begin with. A citizen of this world, rather than a citizen of the kingdom of God, cannot have his or her affection on something they have yet to be a part of.

What does it mean to seek those things, which are above? The Bible answers are: *"Seek the Lord, and his strength: seek his face evermore... Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts... For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ... For here have we*

no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Psalms 105:4, Isaiah 55:6-9, Philippians 3:20, and Hebrews 13:14). Consider also: Matthew 6:19-21, Luke 12:31, Luke 13:23-24, John 6:1-27, Romans 2:7, I Corinthians 9:24-27, II Corinthians 4:8-5:1, and Hebrews 11:6.

The Lord clues us in on things above by informing us that Christ is currently where our attention should be focused. That is, Christ is in Heaven on the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19, Acts 2:29-33, Acts 5:30-31, Acts 7:51-60, Romans 8:34, Ephesians 1:19-20, Hebrews 10:10-13, Hebrews 12:1-2, and I Peter 3:21-22).

The word translated affection, in Colossians 3:2, can be researched using Strong's # 5426. It is translated in various ways throughout the New Testament. Some of those ways are as such: "saviourest" (Matthew 16:21-23 and Mark 8:31-33), "thinkest" or "think" (Acts 28:17-22, Romans 12:3, I Corinthians 4:6, and Philippians 1:7), "mind" (Romans 8:5, Romans 12:16, II Corinthians 13:11, Philippians 2:5, and Philippians 3:16), "regardeth" (Romans 14:6), "understood" (I Corinthians 13:11), etc. Knowing these things helps us to understand that we are talking about setting our thinking on things above rather than on things of the earth. That is an instruction that we should understand (Romans 12:1-3).

Our thoughts, what we regard, must be on things in Heaven for us to remain focused (Psalms 119:166, Psalms 119:174, Lamentations 3:26, John 14:1-3, II Corinthians 5:14-17, Philippians 3:4-20, I Thessalonians 5:8, Hebrews 11:8-16, I Peter 1:1-16, I Peter 4:1-5, and II Peter 3:11-12). If we set our affections on earthly things we are going to be in some serious trouble (Proverbs 23:5, Matthew 6:24-34, Luke 12:15-21, and Romans 8:1-11). Fleshly desires are not profitable to us (John 6:63, Galatians 5:16-17, James 1:13-16, and I Peter 2:11). Our thoughts are key to a proper balance in living in this world, enjoying life, but not being of the world.

Proper Thinking

The Lord says: *"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"* (Philippians 4:8). Contextually, Paul was writing about overcoming anxiety and coming to a spiritual mindset of peace (Philippians 4:6-7). Yet, the point applies broadly. What we think on is where our attention is going to be. We can love life (I Peter 3:10-11). We can live the life we love without being of the world (John 17:14). We just must have our thinking, our affection, in the right direction.

Conclusion

Don't let the world get you focused on this temporary life. Such a focus is a distraction from the things you should be considering. In Colossians 3:1-4, we read that we [Christians] are dead. Consider Paul's comments on this matter: *"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"* (Galatians 2:20). To really be alive in Christ, we have to be dead to the life we once held in this world (Colossians 2:20). Don't just leave the actions behind, leave the affection that led to the sins we are now dead to. Focus on Christ. He is our life (I John 5:12).

Milkshakes

How To Apply The Principles Of Bible Authority

By: Brian A. Yeager

In our previous study we covered how we need commands, approved examples, or necessary inferences from the Law of Christ to establish authority. When we properly seek out and live by what is authorized, all of our actions will be done to the glorification of God (I Corinthians 10:31). Where people often fail is not in understanding the need for authority, but in knowing how to apply commands, approved examples, and necessary inferences.

As an example for our study, let's consider the commands here: *"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come"* (I Corinthians 11:23-26). From these commands we can see the need to eat bread and drink something from a cup in remembrance of our Lord's death. What kind of bread? When should we do this? What are we to drink? Are we to drink from a specific cup? Can we use multiple cups? None of those questions are answered from the Scriptures I quoted above. We have to look further into the Scriptures for those answers.

The only specified "when" for us is given by way of an approved example. Notice: *"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight"* (Acts 20:7). We infer from this that we are to remember our Lord's death every first day of the week. That is an inescapable conclusion because if it were monthly, or annual, there would be more specifics. We see this in the Old Testament in how Israel was instructed to observe the Passover (Exodus 12:1-51). In the above quoted example we can see we are to eat "together". Such is emphasized later in the command to wait for each other before we remember our Lord's death (I Corinthians 11:33).

Now to find out about the bread and the drink, we have to go to the reference Paul made to Jesus instituting His supper the night in which He was betrayed. We can find that the only bread available to Jesus at this time was unleavened bread (Matthew 26:17). In the same context, we find that they were drinking "fruit of the vine" (Matthew 26:28-29). In Luke's account of Jesus' supper we find that they did not drink from one cup, but the fruit of the vine had been divided amongst them (Luke 22:15-20). Thus, from this example, we see we are to eat unleavened bread and drink the fruit of the vine as we divide it up amongst ourselves.

God fully equips us to do every good work (II Timothy 3:16-17). You can see how that our questions regarding the Lord's Supper could all be answered by seeking out commands, approved examples, or our inferring things from the Scriptures that are incontrovertibly true. We found that we can even see authority for how those commands, examples, and inferences are to be lawfully carried out. God has left nothing to our imaginations. However, what if we could not find the answer to a question? Should we act without authority if we all feel it is the right answer? That is our next study!