

## SEEKING A HIGHER LEVEL

### INTRODUCTION

This world is incredibly focused on things negative. When we watch, or listen to news broadcasts, most of the time is spent on focusing on negative things such as wars, crime, murder, natural disasters, economic problems and so on.

Social media doesn't help either, posts are deliberately focused on getting a specific reaction from people. What's worse is that fake news and deception are being used to stir up emotions and get people to think, and do things which they would never have focused on before.

The world is also very secular. Whether it be in entertainment or even the things that people say, sexuality is often top of the agenda. Sexual innuendo is everywhere. It seems like we are living in a sex driven society.

Very seldom is the focus of the world around us on that which is pure, right and good. As Christians, it's easy to get drawn into a very negative mindset, we struggle with what we see, hear and experience and we can easily lose our God-given joy and victory. It's just as easy to fall into worldly thinking. The mind is certainly a battlefield and the attack is relentless.

What do we need to do to break out of this negative cycle and gain victory over the influence of this world that we are in but not part of? The word of God has the answer – God calls us to a higher level of thinking. If we can achieve this, we will re-discover the joy and victory we should have as children of the Living God.

### MESSAGE

**Colossians 3:1-3** (NKJV) If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

These three verses from Colossians contain several truths, all of which speak about attaining a higher level.

#### **1. We have died to something!**

Colossians 3:3 reminds us that we have died – died to what? To our old sinful life. To our old carnal, fleshly lifestyle and the desires and thoughts linked to that lifestyle. To this world and the things and entrapments of this world.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** (NKJV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

We have been raised to a whole new way of living. The challenge we face is to embrace this new way of living in every aspect of our lives.

This can be a challenge for the Believer. Paul rebuked the church in Galatia for this. **Galatians 1:6** (NLT) I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to himself through the loving mercy of Christ. You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News.

What happened to these people? They must have lowered their thinking and found themselves in a place of deception, resulting in them straying from the truth.

## **2. We have been raised from death to life – this is a higher level.**

Verse 3 reminds us that we have died and verse 1 on the other hand reminds us that we have been raised with Christ.

Here we see the first picture of being higher. Death takes one lower, but resurrection raises one higher. We are normally lower when we are lying down than when we are standing.

We identify here with Christ's death and resurrection. He died and was raised physically, and we died and are raised spiritually.

## **3. We are seated with Christ at a much higher level.**

**Ephesians 2:4-5** (NKJV) But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

We are seated in heavenly places with Christ – How high is this? **It is above all else** – we see that from **Ephesians 1:20-21** which describes just how high heavenly places are: Father God seated Jesus Christ at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet,

## **4. We have been raised to life in Christ**

Life in Christ is the victorious life. Its not carnal Christianity, it's the real thing. In fact verse 3 of the Colossians 3 tells us that no only are we dead to the other kind of living, but we are hidden from it in God through Christ Jesus.

## **5. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.**

I believe this is the key statement from these 3 verses. **IF** we have been raised from death to life, **IF** we are seated in Christ in heavenly places, **IF** we are dead to the carnal life and alive and hidden in Christ, **THEN** we need to

begin thinking, not on the old level from where we came, but on the new level, aligning our thinking with our positioning in Christ.

***When we bring our thinking to the higher level, to the spiritual level, where we are seated with Christ in Heavenly places, our minds are protected from what is going on in the earthly, carnal realm. And by protecting our mind, we are protecting our heart because the two are directly connected.***

## **A HIGHER LEVEL OF THINKING WILL REQUIRE A DETERMINED CHOICE**

**Colossians 3:1-3** (NKJV) If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

We are to SEEK the things that are above and we are to SET our minds on those things.

Even as an alarm clock will not set itself, so our mind will also not set itself. We must choose to set our thoughts on the things which are above and not on the things of the earth.

We can say today, "I deliberately set my mind on things above!". "I direct my thoughts to where Christ is".

- It means we must be aware of what we are thinking and we must arrest wayward thoughts.
- Joyce Meyer calls that wrong thinking, "stinking thinking".
- We must choose to deal with our stinking thought life, whether it be dealing with negativity or carnality.

### **How do we do it?**

**2 Corinthians 10:4-5** (NKJV) For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

- Picture a creeper plant growing up a wall. If you want to remove it, you need to pull it down.
- We need to pull down wrong thinking that is trying to creep up into our minds like a spiritual creeper.
- God has given us mighty spiritual weapons – His word, prayer, faith.

- We use these to pull down everything that is trying to access our higher-level thinking.
- We pull down and cast down every form of wrong thinking that is trying to “exalt” itself or “raise itself” or “lift itself” up to challenge who we are , who God is and even try to pull us down from our high position of being seated in Christ.

***1 Corinthians 2:16 tells us that we have the mind of Christ. Let us think like Jesus. Then challenge every form of wrong thinking, cast it down, pull down each stronghold. Arrest it and take it captive today. Raise your own spiritual level of thinking to align with the Father and the Son. Pray for the mind of Christ to be firmly established in your life.***

### **SATAN WANTS TO ASCEND**

Why is a higher level of thinking so important? Because Satan wants that position and it belongs to us not him!

**Isaiah 14:13-15** (NKJV) For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation. On the farthest sides of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ 15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.

Look at that, every one of the devil’s “I” statements was about getting to a higher level! “I will ascend”, “I will exalt my throne above the stars (angels) of God”, “I will sit on the mount”, “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds”, “I will be like the Most High (in heavenly places)”.

Yet he was brought down to “the lowest depths of the Pit”; **Genesis 3:14** (NKJV) So the LORD God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, You *are* cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life.

Now his greatest ambition is to bring the worlds thinking into the lowest depths of the pit with him! And he is not happy with that alone, he wants to drag us into that pit with him to. His weapon is to get us to begin thinking like he does.

***This is why getting our thoughts to a higher level is so important. Where would we prefer our thoughts to be, In heavenly places with Christ or in the Pit with the devil?***

### **WHAT DOES HIGHER LEVEL THINKING LOOK LIKE?**

**Philippians 4:8** (NKJV) Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Higher level thinking focuses on:

- Truth, not lies and deception.
- Noble matters – fine personal qualities not gutter thoughts and behaviours.
- Justice – as opposed to inequity and injustice.
- Purity as opposed to defilement.
- Loveliness – love based, God-given beauty.
- Good report – not all the negatives of life.
- Things of virtue – High moral standards.
- Things that are praiseworthy – things which will bring God glory!

***Ask the Lord to change the focus of your thoughts, train your mind. Lift it up from the gutter, lift it up from hopelessness and helplessness and anxious thoughts. He will guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus.***

## **CONCLUSION**

**Philippians 3:14-15** (NKJV) I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

Paul again mentions a higher level, the goal is “the upward call”, then he addresses as many as are mature and tells them to have this mind and ask God to reveal it to you if you have a different mindset.

We are invited today to break free from the carnal and worldly type of thinking that has been holding us back, and to begin thinking at a higher level. Let us break free from carnal, lower level, devilish thinking and lift our thought life higher and higher in Christ Jesus, our Lord where our victory is secure.