

**Sermon Series:** True Spirituality  
**Sermon Title:** "How to Be Heavenly Minded"  
**Sermon Text:** Colossians 3:2

**Pre-Sermon:** This is to help you prepare for hearing from God's Word.

- Read Colossians 3:2
- How would you explain this command in your own words?
- How well do you think you are obeying this command? Why or why not?

**Sermon Discussion Questions:** This will help you think through the passage and what you heard in the message.

- Describe the context for Colossians 3:2. What is happening in verses 1-4? How do verses 1-4 fit with verses 1-17? How does 3:1-17 connect to 2:16-23? How does 2:16-3:17 expand on 2:9-15? And how does 2:9-15 build on 2:6-8?
- We are going to zone in on just this one command today. What is that command? What were the two reasons mentioned why we were going to pause and look at this command in more depth?
- What are some other passages where Paul emphasizes the importance of how we think? What stood out to you from those passages?
- What are some things that make it difficult to obey this command?
- What does it mean to set your mind on things above?
  - What are some other translations and how do they help us understand this command?
  - What other places in the Bible that use this phrase and how do they help us understand what Paul is saying?
- We gave an illustration about sailors and the north star as a way of explaining this command. What did that tell us about setting our minds?
- Do you understand what is meant by a biblical worldview? What is the work involved in having a biblical worldview?
- What does Paul mean by things that are above and things that are on earth? How does the context help us interpret these phrases?
- What would it mean for you to orient your life according to the things above and not the things that are on earth?
- Think about why we should obey this command?
- Why is the why so important?
- There's a whole lot of explanation in verses 5-17 about how to obey this command, but today we gave three additional ways to work at being heavenly minded. What were they?
- Would you say that you spend much time thinking deeply about heavenly realities? If not, what reason would you give?
- Why do you think people don't seem to think deeply about these truths much anymore?
- What would need to change in your life for you to make a priority out of thinking deeply about the things above?

**Sermon in a Nutshell:** A sermon has a lot of words, and this short summary may help you quickly understand what it was all about.

1. We are going to stop and look at one particular command in Colossians 3:1-4 that is an incredibly important part of living the Christian life and yet also very difficult to obey. Specifically, I want to show you:
  - a. What it means to set your minds on things above
  - b. Why it is so important to set your mind on things above
  - c. How you can work on setting your mind on things above

**Important Quotes:** The following quotes are intended to help you think a little about the message today and how to apply it.

- “Have you ever read a few chapters in your Bible, closed it, and then realized, “I don’t remember a thing I’ve read”? When this happens, don’t blame your age, IQ, or education, for they’re not the cause. Nearly all Bible readers frequently experience this forgetfulness. In most cases, however, the problem has more to do with the method of engaging God’s Word than anything else. For if you merely read the Bible, don’t be surprised if you forget most—if not all—of what you’ve read. What’s the simple solution? (And I do believe that benefiting from the intake of God’s Word must be fundamentally simple since the Lord expects it of all His people, regardless of age, IQ, or education.) The solution is not only to read the Scriptures, but to meditate on them. Reading, of course, is the starting place. Reading is the exposure to Scripture, but meditation is the absorption of Scripture. And it’s the absorption of Scripture that leads to the transformation of our lives.”
- “Here is one line from Pascal (from #136) that is worthy of a lot of meditation: ‘I have often said that the sole cause of man’s unhappiness is that he does not know how to stay quietly in his room.’
- Commenting on this quote of Pascal’s, one author has written, “We ought to have much more time, more leisure, than our ancestors did, because technology, which is the most obvious and radical difference between their lives and ours, is essentially a series of time-saving devices. In ancient societies, if you were rich you had slaves to do the menial work so that you could be freed to enjoy your leisure time. Life was like a vacation for the rich because the poor slaves were their machines. . . .[But] now that everyone has slave-substitutes (machines), why doesn’t everyone enjoy the leisurely, vacationy lifestyle of the ancient rich? Why have we killed time instead of saving it? . . . We want to complexify our lives. We don’t have to, we want to. We wanted to be harried and hassled and busy. Unconsciously, we want the very things we complain about. For if we had leisure, we would look at ourselves and listen to our hearts and see the great gaping hole in our hearts and be terrified, because that hole is so big that nothing but God can fill it. So we run around like conscientious little bugs, scared rabbits, dancing attendance on our machines, our slaves, and making them our masters. We think we want peace and silence and freedom and leisure, but deep down we know that this would be unendurable to us, like a dark and empty room without distractions where we would be forced to confront ourselves. If you are typically modern, your life is like a mansion with a terrifying hole right in the middle of the living-room floor. So you paper over the hole with a very busy wallpaper pattern to

distract yourself. You find a rhinoceros in the middle of your house. The rhinoceros is wretchedness and death. How in the world can you hide a rhinoceros? Easy: cover it with a million mice. Multiple diversions.”

- “In the middle of the seventeenth century in France, Blaise Pascal went to great lengths to expose those diversions that kept people from seeking truth in matters of ultimate significance. His words still ring true. In his day, diversion consisted of things like hunting, games, gambling, and other amusements. The repertoire of diversion was minute compared with what is available in our fully-wired and over-stimulated postmodern world of cell phones, radios, laptops, video games, omnipresent television (in cars, restaurants, airports, etc.), extreme sports, and much else. Nevertheless, the human psychology of diversion remains unchanged. Diversion consoles us—in trivial ways—in the face of our miseries or perplexities; yet, paradoxically, it becomes the worst of our miseries because it hinders us from ruminating on and understanding our true condition. Thus, Pascal warns, it “leads us imperceptibly to destruction.” Why? If not for diversion, we would “be bored, and boredom would drive us to seek some more solid means of escape, but diversion passes our time and brings us imperceptibly to our death.” Through the course of protracted stupefaction, we learn to become oblivious to our eventual oblivion. In so doing, we choke off the possibility of seeking real freedom. Diversion serves to distract humans from a plight too terrible to encounter directly—namely, our mortality, finitude, and failures. There is an ineluctable tension between our aspirations and our anticipations and the reality of our lives. As Pascal wrote, Despite [his] afflictions man wants to be happy, only wants to be happy, and cannot help wanting to be happy. But how shall he go about it? The best thing would be to make himself immortal, but as he cannot do that, he has decided to stop thinking about it. Pascal unmasks diversion as an attempt to escape reality, and an indication of something unstable and exceedingly out-of-kilter in the human condition. An obsession with entertainment is more than silly or frivolous. It is, for Pascal, revelatory of a moral and spiritual malaise begging for an adequate explanation. Our condition is “inconstancy, boredom, anxiety.” We humans face an incorrigible mortality that drives us to distractions designed to overcome our worries: Man is obviously made for thinking. Therein lies all his dignity and his merit; and his whole duty is to think as he ought. Now the order of thought is to begin with ourselves, and with our author and our end. Now what does the world think about? Never about that, but about dancing, playing the lute, singing, writing verse, tilting at the ring, etc., and fighting, becoming king, without thinking what it means to be a king or to be a man. Pascal notes that “if man were [naturally] happy, the less he were diverted the happier he would be, like the saints and God.” Diversion cannot bring sustained happiness, since it locates the source of happiness outside of us; thus, our happiness is dependent on factors often beyond our control, so that we are “liable to be disturbed by a thousand and one accidents, which inevitably cause distress.” The power may go off, the screen freeze, or the cell phone connection may break up. Worse yet, our own sensorium may break down as sight dwindles, hearing ebbs, olfactory awareness fades, and all manner of bodily pleasures become harder to find and easier to lose. As the Preacher of Ecclesiastes intones, “Remember your creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come, and the years draw near when you will say, ‘I have no pleasure in them’ ” (Eccl 12:1). Diversions would not be blameworthy if they were recognized as such: trivial or otherwise distracting activities performed in order to temporarily avoid the harsh and unhappy realities of human life. However, self-deception often comes into play. In the end “we run heedlessly into the abyss after putting something in front of us to stop us

seeing it." According to Pascal, this condition illustrates the corruption of human nature. Humans are strangely not at home in their universe. They cannot even sit quietly in their own rooms. "If our condition were truly happy we should feel no need to divert ourselves from thinking about it." Woody Allen highlights this in a scene from the movie "Manhattan." A man speaks into a tape recorder about the idea for a story about "people in Manhattan who are constantly creating these real unnecessary neurotic problems for themselves because it keeps them from dealing with more unsolvable, terrifying problems about the universe." The compulsive search for diversion is often an attempt to escape the wretchedness of life. We have great difficulty being quiet in our rooms, when the television or computer screen offers a riot of possible stimulation. Postmodern people are perpetually restless; they frequently seek solace in diversion instead of satisfaction in truth. As Pascal said, "Our nature consists in movement; absolute rest is death." The postmodern condition is one of oversaturation and over-stimulation, and this caters to our propensity to divert ourselves from pursuing higher realities."

**Sermon Notes:** This is a place you can record your own notes and thoughts as you listen to the message today so that you can think about them later.

**Sermon Application:** We don't listen to messages just to gain more information. We want to know God, love Christ and be transformed more and more into His image. Sermons are God-given opportunities to help us pursue that.

1. What encouraged you about the gospel today?
2. What do you have to worship and thank God for as a result of this message?
3. Where was your thinking challenged? How could you think or live differently as a result of what this passage taught us?
4. What did you receive from this message that you can think about more this week?