



YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!
Winter 2017-2018 Midweek/Sermon Starter

Unit 3: Dare To Be Different

Sermon Series Title: Holding Up Our Holiness

Sermon 2: Get Your Mind Right

Bible Passage: Colossians 3:1-4, 7-10, 14-16

Introduction

“Free Your Mind” is the Grammy-award nominated hit single that was released by the all-female R&B group ‘En Vogue’ in 1992. Many groups have used this anti-prejudice song as their anthem for equality and empowerment. “Free Your Mind” is a fierce head banger that offers a strong social critique of the times with the purpose of challenging people to free their minds from shallow thinking. In essence, En Vogue invites us all to get our minds right.

Sadly, after two decades, the issue of shallowness still stains the very fabric of our society. Our communities are plagued with people who refuse to elevate their thinking. Hate, evil, bigotry, and racism still predominates culture and civilization alike.

In a world permeated by evil, there is a great need for believers to ‘get their minds right’ and to stand out against the fray.

Background/Context

Paul understood this necessity when he wrote to The Church at Colossae. In this text, Paul passionately instructed the believers to align their minds with the will of God—thus, producing godly and mature actions. Paul wrote, *set your minds on things that are above*. Today, we will learn how to keep our minds on things above.

A. Raise Your Focus
(Col. 3:1-4)

Paul opened Colossians 3 with a slight reality check. Paul reminded the believers: “you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (v. 3). Beloved, Christ’s love changes believers through salvation. Paul’s objective was to remind believers that God gives us new life; therefore, God expects all of us to embrace a new way of thinking. We are expected to elevate our minds by seeking and setting our minds on things that are above.

Paul wanted the Colossian believers to know that our minds are the control towers of our lives. Our minds serve as the hub of all our actions. Moreover, our rumination guides not only what we

do but it shapes who we are. Therefore Paul wrote, “seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above” (vv. 1-2).

Paul invited believers to raise their focus by seeking things from above. According to Paul, we seek things above by setting our minds on things from above. You see, holiness is a mindset; holy living begins with holy thinking. Hence, when we govern our attitudes, then we can control our actions.

Notice that Paul challenged the believers to seek and set their minds on things above. The verb tense in both ‘seek’ and ‘set’ signifies continual action. Therefore, all believers must make a daily decision to raise their focus—to seek and set their minds on things above.

Application Point

What do you find yourself thinking about the most? What are some ways of thinking that you entertained before becoming a Christian? Remember, right thinking produces right living. When we choose to elevate our minds by seeking things above, we regain control of our attitudes and our actions.

B. Resist Your Former Life (Col. 3:7-10)

In the second part of the text, Paul reminded believers of the actions of their former lives. Paul highlighted a few traits that are prevalent in society: anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive language, and lying. Although this list appears to be extensive, all the traits share a commonality—selfishness. More importantly, these actions are guided by a common attitude of egocentricity. I would venture and say that selfishness sits at the core of all sin, and selfishness is a contributor to all evil in the world. You see, selfishness is not merely an action; selfishness is an attitude that drives those actions.

Consequently, Paul offered a declarative, “but now, put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, filthy language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another” (vv. 8-9). Here, Paul challenged the believers to resist the attitudes of their former lives. You see, before Christ, many people were influenced and motivated by a culture that encourages selfish ambition. However, Christ’s love exposes believers to the most selfless acts: Grace and Love.

Paul reminded the believers that they stripped off the old self (selfishness) with its practices and have clothed themselves with the new self (holiness). This was a charge for the believers to move forward with their new identity and their new mindset. In essence, Paul was saying, “don’t go back!” Believers must resist the attitudes of their former lives if they wish to maintain their holiness. We must keep our minds focused forward.

Application Point

What actions of your former life do you struggle with ending? What steps could you take to ensure victory over your old ways of thinking? The only way to achieve victory over your former ways of thinking is by practicing discipline over your thoughts every day.

C. Remember Your Foundation (Col. 3:14-16)

Paul concluded this periscope with the key to successfully keeping our minds focused forward. Paul wrote, “you are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your creator” (v. 10b). What renews our new self, you ask? God’s word renews our new self—our new way of thinking. This is why Paul continued with this command, “let the word of Christ dwell richly among you” (v. 16). For Paul, the Word of God is critical for “keeping our minds right.” You see beloved, The Word of God frees our minds from our past wayward thinking and guides us forward in holiness.

Paul wanted the believers to remember the foundation of their faith—The Word of God, which teaches you to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your MIND; and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27).

So, what happens when we allow the word of God to guide our minds? We clothe ourselves with love, which binds everything in perfect harmony, we let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, we are thankful, we teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and we sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God with gratitude (see vv. 14-16).

This is our mandate. This is our purpose. We are called to live and lead with love, but this is only made possible when believers are committed to thinking and living holy by the standards of The Word of God.

Application Point

How could you use The Bible to help you overcome your old desires? In what ways could you improve your personal time with God’s word? The Bible is a gift from God that guides us toward holiness. Every day this week, be intentional about spending intimate time with God’s Word.