

# Higher Ground



## Colossians 3:1-4 (NKJV)

### *Living as Those Made Alive in Christ*

<sup>1</sup> Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. <sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

## Introduction

- A. The hymn, "Higher Ground" ("I'm pressing on the upward way," by Johnson Oatman) describes the Christian's climb. Quote the first verse in the introduction and use one of the succeeding verses at the conclusion of each main point.

## I. Put Your Mind on Things Above (1-4)

- A. The opening verses of Colossians 3 are more logically attached to the preceding section. They remind us not to be bound by earthly rules and human limitations, but to be subject solely to Christ.
- B. **Obviously there is much evil all around us.** We are being brainwashed by the world-conditioned to like what it likes, react as it does.

**This is dangerous:**

### **1 John 2:15 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him

**We should do the opposite:**

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## Romans 12:2 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

**C. With our minds set on heavenly things, we have two assurances:** our life is hid with Christ in God (v. 3); when Christ returns, we will be with Him in glory (v. 4).

## II. Put Off Fleshly Habits (5-11)

### Colossians 3:5-11 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. <sup>7</sup> You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. <sup>8</sup> But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. <sup>11</sup> Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

**A. Paul lists some of the specific sins that must be removed (vv. 5, 8, 9)** They may be classified in three categories:

1. Sensualism Sins
2. Pride Sins
3. Unbrotherly division Sins

**B. We must shed these habits like an old, tattered garment.** Whatever the price, these sins must be removed.

**C. The apostle next explains why we must shed these habits (v. 6).** God will not tolerate sin. You may fool others, but not Him. Instead, live a renewed life (**v. 10**). Put off fleshly habits.

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## III. Put on Christlike Character (12-17)

### Colossians 3:1-17 (NKJV)

*<sup>12</sup> Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. <sup>13</sup> Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. <sup>14</sup> And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. <sup>15</sup> Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

**A. Paul lists the Christian graces that characterize a holy life (12–15).** How are we to acquire these traits?

1. Through God's Word (v. 16)
2. Through help from other believers (v. 16)
3. Through dedicating all our efforts to the Lord (17)

**B. Note that Christianity is more than what we don't do.** It involves an active life of service, desiring always to please God. Verse 17 might well be a motto for life.

1. Following it can help us avoid questionable behavior.
2. It focuses our eyes on Heaven.
3. The question we must ask: "What would Jesus do?"