



## On our watch

### Introduction

The purpose of this study is challenge us to think about the times in which we live, and our role and responsibility in encouraging and pointing one other to the things that last forever.

### Opener

Think about someone who has inspired you and stretched you in a positive way. For example, a school teacher, a sports coach, a manager, an expert in something, your pastor! What was it about them – their example, words, actions – that inspired you?

### Bible study

Read Colossians 3:1-4.

#### Question 1

Colossians 3:1 begins with the phrase, “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ...” In view of what he has just written in chapter 2:9-23, what does Paul want us to understand?

*Paul wants us to understand that by virtue of our connection to Christ (we are “in him”) we share in his death, burial, and resurrection. We were spiritually dead, but now we have been made spiritually alive, because Christ is alive, and we are united to him. Christ was raised to the throne of his Father, so if that is where he is, that is where we are too in a spiritual sense! This knowledge of who we are, whose we are, and where we are, should shape our thinking and desires.*

#### Question 2

“Set your hearts on things above ... Set your minds on things above” translates six Greek words which literally say, “The above seek ... the above think.” Paul tells us to strive and search for, and to set our minds on, heavenly things. What do you think this means?

“He’s so heavenly minded, he’s no earthly use!” How do you interpret this phrase, and how is it different from what Paul is describing?

*Paul’s invitation to set our minds on heavenly things is intensely practical, as the verses which follow demonstrate. The “so heavenly minded, no earthly use” saying describes someone whose thinking is detached from the realities of life.*

#### Question 3

Author Chip Ingram writes in *Good to Great in God's Eyes*, “Picture a train, if you will. The engine is our thinking, and it pulls first the car of emotions, then the car of behaviour, and then the car of consequences. Good thoughts will influence our emotions for good,



which in turn will influence our behaviour and produce positive consequences. Negative thoughts have the same influence in the opposite direction. *What we think will determine the course of our life.*"

What hinders you from setting your mind on things above? What are your challenges (e.g. drifting mind, unwelcome thoughts, tiredness) and what strategies do you find helpful in overcoming these?

### *Application*

Watch the video for this session. This video is available from [https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/541000/Where\\_do\\_we.aspx](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/541000/Where_do_we.aspx).

#### **Question 4**

In the video, Ken describes how he found himself in the unexpected role of player coach (as opposed to coach driver!) at a table tennis competition, and how this affected his behaviour: the attention he paid to what was happening in the games, the questions he asked the players, and any advice he gave.

If we accept some degree of responsibility towards each other, and towards those who don't yet know Jesus, (see Colossians 3:16 and Philemon 6, for example), how will that affect our behaviour?

#### **Question 5**

The phrase "Not on my watch" is likely to have its origins in the military, navy or law enforcement, where the day and night shifts (or parts of them) are divided into "watches" and officers take turns to be responsible for what happens during their watch.

What parallels can you draw between the responsibilities of an officer on a shift and those of a disciple of Jesus? (Ezekiel 33 provides an interesting chapter for comparison. See verses 1-9, for example).

When you think about the state of church life generally in the UK, what other thoughts does the phrase 'not on my watch' suggest to you?

#### **Question 6**

What are the kinds of questions we could be regularly asking to help point each other to 'things above', particularly in the context of our frontline<sup>1</sup> situations?

What questions can we ask each other which will lead to better informed help, hope, encouragement and prayers for our frontlines?

### *Taking it forward*

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<sup>1</sup> The frontline is where we encounter most people on a day-to-day basis, typically our workplace or home environment



Note that there is no feedback video for this session.

Think about at least one person, and at least one question you are willing to ask them over the course of the next week to point them to the 'things above'.

Share your thoughts with others in your group (unless the matter is confidential) and pray for boldness and wisdom for one another to translate these thoughts into actions.