

The Test

“Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God ... put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you ...” Colossians 3:2-5

Even faithful Christians can be caught up in this without realizing it. Even faithful Christians set their hope in things on earth, things in this life, rather than setting their hope in eternity. There's actually a simple test to determine if we have become a person who has set their hope in this life rather than the next. No one can answer the test for you, either. It's something that will only be known to you deep in your own heart. If you'd like to know whether or not your mind is set on things of this life rather than on things above, all you must do is pay careful attention to how you answer the following question:

If you were given the option of living an eternity on earth without ever having to do anything related to God, would you take it?

We must be very honest with ourselves when we ask this. No one can answer this question for us. Are we people who add God to our Sundays in order to appease our conscience because we know we'll die one day? What if we didn't die on earth? Would we still worship God on Sundays? Are we people who understand what He's done and have devoted every aspect of our common life to God because we are His possession, whether we're mortal or immortal?

If we answer *yes*, then we must understand that God will, in some ways, grant this to us. That's what hell is. Hell is an eternity without ever having to do anything related to God – worshiping Him, praising Him or being in His presence. If our answer is *yes*, then we condemn ourselves. We choose to be apart from Him. And God is no respecter of persons: He gives people their choices. But if we answer *no*, then we must take Paul's letter to the Colossians very seriously. We must actively put to death the things that are earthly inside of us. We must never lose sight of the hope we have in God. It's easy to say that we wouldn't mind an eternity apart from God while we're on this earth because, while we may have experienced a spiritual separation from God, we've never experienced even a nanosecond of physical separation apart from God. He's been here the whole time. Those who answer *no* understand that life apart from God is no life at all. It's agony. But eternity in the presence of God is pure joy.
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