

Minding Earthly Things

Phil. 3:17-21¹

Introduction:

- A. A Christian's life should be heaven-centered rather than earth-centered.
 - 1. Text contrasts those who mind earthly things and those whose citizenship is in heaven.
 - 2. Our affections (minds) are to be on things above rather than things on the earth. (Col. 3:2).
 - 3. Same as being spiritually minded rather than carnally minded. (Rom. 8:5-7).
 - 4. The difference in minding earthly things and minding heavenly things is mostly one of emphasis.
- B. Minding earthly things manifests itself in several ways:

Discussion:

I. Over-emphasis on Earthly Possessions.

- A. People possessed by their possessions, rather than possessing their possessions.
 - 1. Life revolves around either what one has or wants.
 - 2. Leave themselves open to many sorrows. (1 Tim. 6:10).
- B. Offers no real security. (Matt. 6:19-21)

II. Over-emphasis on Earthly Pleasure.

- A. In philosophy this is called "hedonism" – the doctrine that pleasure is the highest good.
 - 1. Happiness becomes an end within itself.
 - 2. For a thing to be good it has to be "fun."
- B. Causes some to find their "fun" in sinful activity (cf. Heb. 11:25; Gal 5:19-21).
- C. Causes responsibilities to be shirked because they are no "fun."
- D. Causes the good in serious activities to be measured by the "fun factor."
 - 1. Educational activities must made "fun."
 - 2. Religious activities must be made "fun."
 - a. Worship services.
 - b. Bible Classes.
 - c. Sermons.

III. Over-emphasis on Earthly Promises.

- A. Promises of heaven or threats of hell mean little to those who "mind earthly things."
- B. Hence, much of our motivation for serving God has become earth-oriented.
 - 1. Peoples urged to serve God because it makes better homes.
 - 2. People urged to obey God because it make a better society.
 - 3. People urged to serve God to bring them happiness in this life.
 - 4. People urged to serve God to promote better health.
 - 5. Sermon topics have become more this world oriented.
- C. Earthly benefits become the objective rather than going to heaven
- D. Earthly consequences become the fear rather than going to hell.
 - 1. "Aids" or "pregnancy" becomes the reason for abstaining rather than "flee fornication."
 - 2. "Getting caught" becomes reason for law-abiding, rather than "conscience sake." (Heb. 13:5)
- E. Fearing and obeying God will bring earthly benefits, but they are not the prime benefit.
 - 1. Brings one the necessities of life, but real reason to serve God (Matt. 6:33).
 - 2. Makes better husbands, wives, parents, etc., but real reason is to serve God.
 - 3. Makes better neighbor, employer, employee, but real reason is to please God.
- F. Danger in making earthly benefits the goal, people may turn to other means to reach their goals.

Conclusion:

- A. Let's turn our eyes more heavenward and less earthward as we attempt to serve God.
- B. Let's make our real reason for living to please God and go to heaven and avoid hell.

1. Phil 3:17-21

17 Dear brothers, pattern your lives after mine, and notice who else lives up to my example. 18 For I have told you often before, and I say it again now with tears in my eyes, there are many who walk along the Christian road who are really enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their future is eternal loss, for their god is their appetite: they are proud of what they should be ashamed of; and all they think about is this life here on earth. 20 But our homeland is in heaven, where our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is; and we are looking forward to his return from there. 21 When he comes back, he will take these dying bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same mighty power that he will use to conquer all else everywhere.

TLB