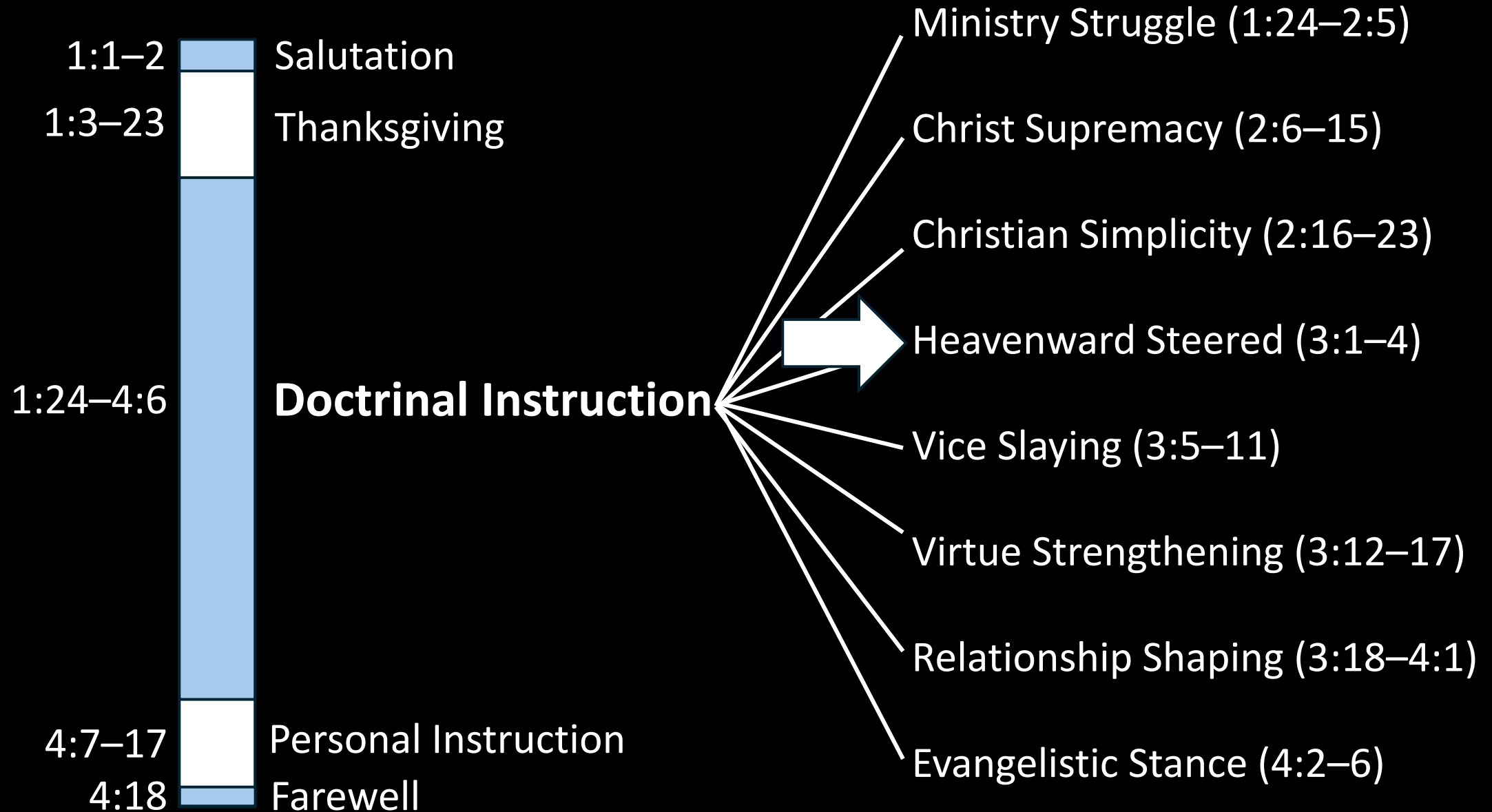


*Christ over All:
Paul's Letter to the Colossians*

“Upward and
Forward”

Colossians 3:1–4

THE OUTLINE OF COLOSSIANS



TEXT – COLOSSIANS 3:1–4

“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”

LEGALISM

- Believes biblical imperatives are equal to or more important than biblical indicatives.
- Focuses on external conformity.
- Bases assurance on personal achievements.
- Elevates the authority of man-made applications to the level of God's Word.

ANTINOMIANISM

- Believes biblical imperatives are unimportant because of the biblical indicatives.
- Focuses on external liberties.
- Bases assurance on freedom from guilt.
- Considers the effort to apply God's Word as an automatic threat to its authority.

TEXT — COLOSSIANS 3:1–4

“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”

Since legalism is not an option, where should the believer turn for help to resist the sinful flesh?

I. **Focus Your Attention Upward (vv. 1–2)**

II. **Focus Your Attention Forward (vv. 3–4)**

I. Focus Your Attention Upward (3:1–2)

“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”

- **“Therefore”** – indicates that this next section (vv. 1–4) is the logical outcome of the preceding section (esp. vv. 20–23).
- **“If”** – introduces a condition that must be fulfilled if the second part of the sentence is to be valid (*“If this . . . then this . . .”*); here, the condition is *assumed to be true*.
- **“you have been raised up”** – spiritual resurrection (see 2:12–13).

“Therefore if you have been raised up **with Christ, **keep seeking the things above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”**

- **“With Christ”** – the *association* that makes this possible: His resurrection from physical death → their resurrection from spiritual death.
 - **“Keep seeking”** – the conclusion of condition; since the first part is true, this second part must apply; “to devote serious effort to realize; strive for, aim at”; *zealous pursuit*; a way of life.
 - **“The things above”** – above the present world; above one’s flesh (compare with vv. 20–23).



“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”

- **“Where Christ is”** – the definition of “the things above”; the focus of our intent, zealous searching—Christ Himself.
- **Seated at the right hand of God”** – the current location of Christ, in *the heavens* (see Psalm 110:1; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 12:2).
- **“Set your mind on”** – a second conclusion of the condition; “to give careful consideration to; be intent on”; *careful thinking*; a way of life.
- **“things . . . on the earth”** – the material things that so often are the focus of legalism.



“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

—**Hebrews 12:1–2**

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

—**2 Corinthians 3:18**

II. Focus Your Attention Forward (3:3–4)

“For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”

- “**For**” – introduces the explanation for why we must look on *the things above*—they contain the key to our *future*.



- “**You have died**” – Paul previously stated that believers have been spiritually “raised up” through union with Christ’s *resurrection* (v. 1); now he refers to their union with Christ’s *death* (see 2:20).
- The old obligations have been cancelled.

“For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”

- **“Your life is hidden”** – “to hide in a safe place; to keep secure out of view”; your new life is *concealed* and *preserved*.



- **“With Christ in God”** – emphatic; a double layer of security; the most protected place imaginable!
- **“Christ . . . our life”** – we have been so united with Christ, that His life is ours; we do not exist apart from Him.

**“For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed
with Him in glory.”**

- **“When Christ . . . is revealed”** – “to cause to become visible; expose publicly”; the opposite of “hidden” (v. 3); the same verb is used in 1 John 3:2.
- **“You also will be revealed”** – the appearance of the currently-hidden Christ (at the right hand of God) means the appearance of our true but currently-hidden identities.
- **“With Him in glory”** – a double layer of sanctity; the most glorious place imaginable!

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”

—1 John 3:2–3



“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer 17:9). Learn much of the Lord Jesus. **For every look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ.** He is altogether lovely. Such infinite majesty, and yet such meekness and grace, and all for sinners, even the chief! Live much in the smiles of God. Bask in his beams. Feel his all-seeing eye settled on you in love, and repose in his almighty arms. . . . Let your

soul be filled with a heart-ravishing sense of the sweetness and excellency of Christ and all that is in Him. Let the Holy Spirit fill every chamber of your heart; and so there will be no room for folly, or the world, or Satan, or the flesh.”

—Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813–1843), *Memoir And Remains*, 293

“The love of the world cannot be expunged by a mere demonstration of the world's worthlessness. But may it not be supplanted by the love of that which is more worthy than itself? The heart cannot be prevailed upon to part with the world, by a simple act of resignation. But may not the heart be prevailed upon to admit into its preference another, who shall subordinate the world, and bring it down from its wonted ascendancy?”

—Thomas Chalmers (1780–1847),
“The Expulsive Power of a New Affection”

