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How Do We Obey THIS Command?

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Paul commands us to focus our *mind, our thoughts*, on Christ in heaven, not on this world, because we died with Christ and are hidden with him in God. Like a page in a book, we are hidden in Christ. We who were once alive to the world and dead to Christ, must see ourselves as dead to the world and alive to Christ.

But what, exactly, does it mean to focus our "minds" on Christ in heaven? How do we obey this command? In part, we focus our thoughts on Jesus, his teaching and life. It means believing what he says about us, rather than the lies that demean us.

Stephen's Vision

Does it also mean to imagine yourself with him in heaven? I have such a picture in my mind. When I think of Jesus in heaven, I recall Stephen's vision. Before the Jews stoned him to death, the first Christian martyr saw a vision. In Acts 7:55-56 we read, "But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, [56] and said, 'Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!'"

That's the only biblical snapshot we have of Jesus at God's right hand in heaven. But other biblical passages give us insight into what Stephen saw. As people can't look directly at the sun, neither can they look into the face of God (Exodus 33:20). It would seem, though, that the glory of God appears like a dazzling light (Ezekiel 10:4).

In Stephen's vision, to the right of God's glory, stood the resurrected Jesus. Did the Lord appear as he did on the Mount of Transfiguration? If so, Luke's description helps, "And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing *became* white *and* gleaming" (Luke 9:29).

Eyes of Faith

When I think of Christ in heaven, I visually imagine the scene described by Stephen. And I imagine myself with Jesus, at God's side. We can only see this with eyes of faith. Of course, we can imagine it. But to imagine such an image and believe it represents reality, requires faith. The author of Hebrews defines faith in Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, being convinced of what we do not see" (NET).

Here and There

Somehow, you are currently here—with the issues of life—and there—in Jesus Christ, sharing his resurrection life. Your mental and emotional focus must be there, not here. Such focus creates clear eyes and a pure heart. Why? Because as you think resurrection, you'll see resurrection in every loss. I believe that's what Jesus meant when he said:

“Very truly I tell you,

Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground

And dies,

It remains only

A single seed.

But if it dies,

It produces

Many seeds”

John 12:24

Much in the world denies your identity in Christ. Hardship fights it. Your history denies it. Skeptics question it. Yet, lies form the basis of such fights, denials, and questions. And you can learn to identify and reject such lies. This is the slow daily process of living the resurrection life of Christ, until he suddenly returns and unveils your hidden beauty.