



Colossians 3:1-2 (NRSV)

¹ So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth,

The roughest backpacking I ever did as a kid was in Connecticut many years ago. The mountains were not high -- on occasion from 1,500 to 2,000 feet from valley to peak. The problem was that that 1,500 to 2,000 feet may occur in as short a distance as 2-3 miles. What that meant was that occasionally you are going practically straight up, using small trees and tufts of grass to pull yourself up with -- all of this with 45 lbs. on your back.

I remember one mountain on that trip vividly, its 1,500-foot climb was accomplished in a mile and a half or two miles. It was, therefore, partly straight up and occasionally quite dangerous--they had even installed a cable at one point so you could pull yourself up a vertical piece. That day I had almost fallen off a sheer granite face. I was cranky, not feeling good, and generally wondering why I had started this ordeal. All of a sudden, I spotted the peak of the mountain lying another few hundred yards away. The climb got no easier, but my attitude toward it changed. Tired and sore as I was, I could now see where I was headed. I quit feeling sorry for myself and was able to concentrate literally on higher things. I still had to watch and pick my way carefully -- in places footholds and handholds were few and you had to be very careful. But I could, when I wanted, glance up and see my goal. My mood instantly became better, my fatigue eased and I found myself thinking, "This is a really nice trip, it is an experience I will long remember."

Perspective, that's what I had gained. I had added, if you will, another dimension to the trip up that mountain. I had gained that added dimension by setting my sights on something outside my immediate situation--a goal, in this case, the peak.

As Christians caught up in the web of life's difficulties, we can gain something from that image. Colossians says:

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. {2} Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. (3:1-2)

What the writer of Colossians is saying is, "Gain some perspective on life -- add another dimension."