



## The Next Level (Grad Edition)

Justin Worden – *Tupos SM*  
 Wednesday Night Live – June 1, 2011

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

### I. The Upward Life of a Believer

#### a. It's An Upward Thrust

- i. It's what the Christian life is all about, going from something lower to something higher... Think about these concepts: "resurrection", "baptism", "forgiveness"
  1. As grads... you are going from the high school level to the college level, or from the college level to a career...
  2. Same with faith = Christ takes you when you are at your lowest and brings you up
- ii. "To be raised with Christ is to walk a higher road than ever before. It is to leave behind forever our lower self-expectations and 'rise to the occasion.' It is to lift our eyes to view with eager anticipation the pristine purity of what we are even now becoming." (DB Devo, December 14th)
- iii. Three important parts to this upward life
  1. Highest Christ (exalted)
    - a. "He is exalted, The King is exalted on high, I will praise him, He is exalted forever exalted, And I will praise His name..."



- b. Exalted = "high, lofty, glorified, dignified"
- c. Exalting God in our lives means that He is **most** important (in all!)
2. Higher Heart (v.1b)
  - a. "Set our hearts on things above" not on the things of this world!
  - b. Our affections... our desires should be God before video games, sports, hobbies, money, "toys", and even family.
  - c. PROMISE: God first! Then he'll bless us in everything else!
    - i. "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33, NIV)
3. Higher Mind (v.2)
  - a. We need to set our minds on things above... not on this world!
  - b. Think about God first, not yourself
  - c. "See things from his (Christ's) perspective." (Colossians 3:2, Msg)
  - d. Imagine how things would be different if we looked at things from God's perspective:

- *Our loved one died, God is blessed to have them with Him*
- *Our co-worker is annoying, God has given us a perfect witnessing opportunity*
- *Our classmate hates church, God needs you to show 'em love*
- *Our friend thinks Christians are fake, God is saddened they don't know "real" Christians*
- *Our parents just don't understand our lives, God is waiting for us to bridge the gap and show some love anyway*

iv. It's all about your perspective!

"Once upon a time a farmer's mule fell into a dry well. When the farmer heard the mule's braying and realized what had happened, he determined that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving.

Instead, he called his neighbors together and enlisted their help in burying the old mule in the well and putting him out of his misery.

Initially, the old mule was very upset. You would be, too, if you were in a deep hole and people started throwing dirt in on top of you! But as the dirt rained down on his back, the old mule had a thought. He decided that every

time a shovel of dirt landed on his back, he would shake it off and step up. And that's what he did. As the dirt cascaded down the well, the old mule kept shaking it off and stepping up.

Hours later, the exhausted mule finally stepped over the wall of the well. What was meant to bury him actually helped him!

The next time you find yourself trapped in a seemingly hopeless situation, you know what to do: shake it off and step up! (**Hot Illustrations 1.0, "Shake It Off"**)

- v. James 1:2-3 = "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance." (NIV)
- vi. God's got a higher plan for our lives, will we step in His elevator and begin living upward?

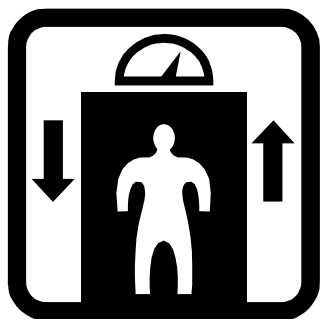
#### b. It's An Eternal Reality

- i. Focusing on Heaven more
  - 1. "A little girl was taking an evening walk with her father. Wonderingly, she looked up at the stars and exclaimed; 'Oh, Daddy, if the wrong side of heaven is so beautiful, what must the right side be!'" (Charles L. Allen in Home Fires)
  - 2. The idea here is to live more for Christ and less for me... live with an upward lifestyle then an outward lifestyle (things around us).
  - 3. More eternal than temporal (earthly)

### II. The Upward Direction of the Elevator

#### a. Where's Our Spiritual Elevator Headed?

- i. Up or down? It won't stay at the same level for long.
- ii. How do we get to the next level? (Or as Ed Young says it, how do we get to "a ho 'notha level" [HNL]?)
  - 1. Like an elevator, we've got to:
    - a. Hit the "up" button (decide we want to go up, believe we want it!)
    - b. Get on when the doors open (take a step of faith and get involved = reading God's Word and worshipping with God's people)
    - c. Hold on for the ride (don't get off early, even if the ride takes longer or is harder than you thought it would be... stick it out!)
    - d. No matter what, trust the operator of the elevator of life (even if you can't see Him)



- iii. 2 Corinthians 4:18 = "So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen; for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (HCSB)

### III. The Outward Thrust of Our Faith

#### a. Are You Taking It To The Next Level?

- i. The next level of your devotional life
- ii. The next level of your prayer life
- iii. The next level of your example ("tupos")
- iv. The next level of your faith
  - 1. Spiritual check-up: Where were you in your faith this time last year compared to now?
  - 2. It is very easy to get disconnected from our faith (especially when you leave home)

My advice: Stay connected! Find community!

Video = "ConGRADulations! Class of 2010: College Ready"

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h\\_dnqhN4yuU&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_dnqhN4yuU&feature=player_embedded)

#### b. Are You Living For His Renown?

- i. This song we sang earlier, did you mean the words? Do you understand & believe these words?

**"It's rising up, all around, It's the anthem of, the Lord's renown"**  
*(Chris Tomlin, Holy is the Lord)*

Anthem = "song of praise, our theme, what we're about"

Renown = "popularity, celebration, fame, recognition"

*It is time to go to the next level... by living our lives more for Him and less for us, by living with a higher heart and a higher mind for the highest Christ!*

**ALL FOR HIS RENOWN!**

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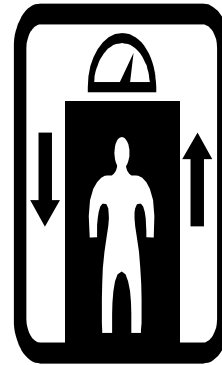
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 elevator of life (even if you can't see Him)
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### III. The \_\_\_\_\_ Thrust of Our \_\_\_\_\_

#### a. Are You Taking It To The \_\_\_\_\_?

- Stay \_\_\_\_\_! Find \_\_\_\_\_!

#### b. Are You Living For His \_\_\_\_\_?

- Anthem = "\_\_\_\_\_"
- Renown = "\_\_\_\_\_"

*It is time to go to the next level... by living our lives more for Him and less for us, by living with a higher heart and a higher mind for the highest Christ! ALL FOR HIS **RENEW!***