



## On our watch

### Main video

Colossians 3:2 says, “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

It's a very straightforward verse but it's so hard to do that very often; our minds are so often focussed on earthly things. If we think beyond that just for a moment we do need to think about kingdom things and the state of play of things in our nation and things within our stream of churches and how things are genuinely going. That's why I pick out that verse for us to look at today. What does it look like if we consistently try to set our mind on things above?

When my son was younger he played table tennis reasonably competitively. Table tennis is the game that has changed the most in my lifetime. It might not look so, but it really has. The ball is bigger than it used to be when I played table tennis. The scoring is different: it used to go up to 21, and now it's 11 for some reason. (I think they think both things would have made it more TV-friendly, but I haven't noticed it become a big TV sport as a result.) The bats have changed so much so that there's so much spin now from the bats that you have to have different colour rubbers on each side so that the opponent can see which side of the bat you are using when you play each shot. One result of that is that, at the end of these now shorter games, the rule is that you have to put your bat down on the table and leave the ball (in case you tamper with the ball as well) on the table, and then you're allowed to go up to your coach who's just standing just outside and ask him for some advice before you go and play another short game.

On one occasion the coach, for whatever the reason, was taking another team to a match and I was asked to take my son and a small group of other boys and girls to a match somewhere else, which I was very happy to do. The first game took place. It wasn't my son. At the end of that first short game up to 11 that boy put his bat down, he put the ball down by the bat so it wouldn't roll off the table, and then he came and stood next to me and paused and I realised that I was the coach. Like, nobody had told me I was the coach. I thought I was the driver, and so what would you do in that situation?

Well, I asked loads of open questions like, “So how do you think it went, why you lost that game?” “What do you think you could do to improve next time when you get out there?” After that, I realised I was the coach for the whole day, and I watched a lot harder, and I asked more poignant questions and, because I know a little bit and I could see a little bit of what was going on, I tried to give some advice. What if we are that sort of coach to each other regarding what's going on in the whole of our lives? What are the questions that you can ask of one another in order to help one another when we get back out there, back into the game? And, if we're church leaders, what are the questions and resources we can ask and the pointers that we can give to help one another, our congregations, get back into the game as well?



We need to be honest with each other and take a looking from above, setting our hearts on things above and our minds on a “things above” attitude to what’s going on in our nation and ask maybe this question: “If we keep doing what we’re doing without any changes as a group of churches, Baptist Together churches in the UK, what will the picture be in 10 years if the Lord doesn’t return, or 20 years?” There’ll be some churches that experience some growth, no doubt, but the overall picture will be one of decline, and surely, we can’t be OK with that. Surely we have to recognise that on our watch this is happening and therefore that calls for us to reach out imaginatively and creatively. One of the ways that we can all do that, whether we are leaders or not, is to accept the fact that when we gather together on a Sunday or in small groups we are the coach. We may not feel equipped to, like I didn’t, but what we can do is we can ask open questions to help us to find out enough of what’s going on in other people’s frontline situations to give them pointers and advice and prompts and at the very least, prayer.

So then, what are the questions that you could regularly be asking of each other that enable you to do that very important thing?

### *Feedback video*

There is no feedback video for this session.