

Colossians 1:28-29

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/col/col-1/colossians-128-29/>

Paul describes his reason for writing the letter to the Colossians, revealing his desire for both his life/ministry and all of God's people.

Paul uses the plural here with great intention, saying *We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom*. By using *We* here, Paul is not only alluding to Timothy, attributed as a co-author in verse 1 of Chapter 1. He likely means to include Epaphras, mentioned in the middle of the chapter, as well as others who are with Paul, whom he will name at the end of the book.

Perhaps Paul also means to include the Colossians themselves in this plural. *We*, who *proclaim Him*. This would make sense, since Chapter 1 establishes Christ as the shared vision between Paul and the Colossians, to unify them under the banner of Christ.

So, it is not just Paul, but *we* who *proclaim Him*. The Greek word translated *proclaim*, “katangelo,” means “to announce” or “proclaim” It is sometimes translated “preach.” It is a vocal expression of purposeful communication. To *proclaim Him*, means in essence to communicate all that Jesus is. God Himself is the gospel, the good news for humanity.

In proclaiming *Him*, Paul describes two avenues used to get the message across. These avenues are also clearly of practical use to the recipients.

The first is: *admonishing every man*. The Greek word for *admonishing*, “noutheteo,” means “warning.” Here Paul is getting to the heart of the purpose of The Book of Colossians. He is going to warn the saints in Colossae of the temptations and perils of choosing to depart from God and His Kingdom. The word *admonishing* has the feel of an appeal, as if the messenger is pleading with the recipient to hear the message (for their own benefit as well as the collective good).

This warning goes out to *every man*. This might be a way of letting the Colossian believers know they are not unique, and therefore should not be overly ashamed in their struggles. The *warning* is for all. Every man is tempted, seduced by false teaching, etc. Paul is proclaiming no more and no less than what needs to be shared to *every man*. The word translated *man* is the Greek word “anthropos” (from which we get the term “anthropology”). Paul might be addressing his message primarily to males, but given the context here, this should likely be understood as something shared by all of humanity.

The second avenue of proclamation is this: *and teaching every man with all wisdom*. Paul is not just *warning* against falsity but informing in truth. This nicely correlates with the threads Paul will use to weave the rest of the letter to the Colossians. By *wisdom*, Paul means knowledge applied in a manner fitting with how God made the world, such that we gain true and lasting

benefit. Paul's aim here is to equip the Colossians such that they live in such a manner as to gain as much as possible from living life in this world.

The aim, or purpose, of all of this proclaiming is *so that we may present every man complete in Christ*. It takes learning, choosing, and guidance in order to be *complete*. *Wisdom* is a skill; a mixture of discernment and proper action. Only by refining this skill (through *teaching* and *admonition*) can we develop habits toward a more *complete* life in Christ. This is a transcendent goal, meaning the idea of being *complete* is not about accomplishing a tactical objective and moving on. This completion will take place when we are presented before Christ and are found to be faithful.

The phrase *we may present* in the phrase *so that we may present every man complete in Christ* is a translation of the Greek word "paristemi." This is the second time the Greek word "paristemi" has occurred in this chapter. The two occurrences are set forth below for comparison:

"yet He (Jesus) has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present ("paristemi") you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach..."
(Colossians 1:22)

"We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present ("paristemi") every man complete in Christ."
(Colossians 1:28)

It is interesting to note that in the first occurrence, it is Christ who has reconciled us in His body, that He might present us before God as holy and blameless. In the second occurrence, it is Paul and his team (*we*) who are *admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ*. This brings together all parts of the Body of Christ. Jesus redeems believers through His blood, and indwells them through His Spirit with His resurrection power. In doing so He presents them blameless before God.

But Jesus's resurrection power is not fully released until we gain understanding, choose a true perspective rooted in trusting God and His ways, and choose to walk in obedience, unleashing God's resurrection power to flow through us. Paul is doing this with the Colossians, and in doing so, endeavoring to *present every man complete in Christ*, that they might gain the greatest of rewards for their faithfulness.

It is a team effort to reach the Judgement Seat of Christ at a stage of *completion*, that we might have deeds of gold, silver, and precious stones rather than wood, hay, and straw (1 Corinthians 3:10-17).

Paul then singles himself out: *for this purpose also I labor*. Paul's purpose is to *present every man complete in Christ*. Colossians 1:28-29 are Paul's life mission statement. He was not merely a traveling evangelist (in the modern sense of this word) who told people about how to join God's family then left town. His vision of the gospel is wholistic. He strove to help everyone entrust and dedicate themselves to lives of faithful obedience to God, so that they would be *complete* by the end, ready for their place within His kingdom.

The Greek word translated *completion* is “teleios.” It is the idea of wholeness, completion, perfection, or fulfillment of purpose. It is similar to what Jesus said on the cross when He said of His earthly mission, “It is finished.” Paul’s mission therefore is for every man to be perfected in God’s kingdom, such that he is presented before Christ as having completed the work God assigned for him while living on earth. It is for this *purpose* Paul labors.

Paul is *striving according to His power, which mightily works within* him. It is not a purely Pauline effort that achieves this. It is about awakening the Spirit of God inside of Paul. The thing that he wishes for the Colossians Paul is experiencing within himself: the resurrection power of Jesus is flowing through him, and allowing him the strength to walk in obedience. In doing so, he is both filling up the afflictions of Christ, laying up a firm foundation for himself in heaven, as well as doing all he can to bring as many with him as possible, and present them also as complete in Christ.

The same is true for us all. His *power* is at *work* within us, if we will but choose to recognize and submit to it.

Biblical Text

We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.

²⁹ For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.