

Colossians 1:28–29 — Devotional

Day 1 — Christ Must Be the Center

Scripture to Read: Colossians 1:28–29, Colossians 1:15–20, 1 Corinthians 2:2, John 5:39, Luke 24:27

Paul says, “Him we proclaim.” That little phrase gets right to the heart of Christian ministry and the heart of the Christian life. The message is not us. It is not our opinions, our preferences, our personality, or our story. The message is Christ. That sounds obvious until you remember how easily we drift.

We are all tempted to make Christianity about something smaller. Sometimes we make it about behavior. Sometimes we make it about politics. Sometimes we make it about finding help for our stress, our marriage, or our parenting. Those things matter, of course, but if Christ is pushed to the side, we have lost the center. The church does not exist to offer a vaguely spiritual version of self-improvement. The church exists to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord.

That is why Paul’s words are so clear. He does not say, “We proclaim principles.” He says, “Him we proclaim.” The Christ who is the image of the invisible God. The Christ through whom all things were made. The Christ who shed his blood to reconcile sinners to God. The Christ who is enough. Paul knows that if people get Christ, they get the one thing they truly need. If they miss Christ, no amount of religious activity can make up for that loss.

This is not only true in the pulpit. It is true in the home, in friendship, in discipleship, and in our own hearts. We need Christ at the center of what we believe, what we love, what we say, and what we pass on to others. We do not move beyond Christ. We go deeper into him.

The real question is not whether Christ appears somewhere in our lives. The question is whether he is central. Is he the one we trust? Is he the one we talk about? Is he the one we are trying to know and make known? If he is not, then no matter how busy we are, we are drifting.

Reflection Questions:

1. In what ways are you tempted to make the Christian life about something other than Christ?
2. When you encourage or counsel others, do you naturally point them to Christ?
3. Is Christ central in your daily thinking, or merely present in the background?

Practical Application:

Take a few minutes today to examine what has been occupying your heart and mind. Write down one area where Christ has been assumed rather than actively cherished, and ask the Lord to bring you back to the center.

Prayer:

Father, forgive me for how easily I drift toward lesser things. Thank You for giving Your Son as the center of my salvation and the heart of my hope. Teach me to love Christ more, trust Christ more, and speak of Christ more naturally and boldly. Make him central in my thoughts, in my words, and in my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 2 — We Need Warning and Teaching

Scripture to Read: Colossians 1:28, Acts 20:31, 2 Timothy 3:16–17, Titus 1:13, Proverbs 27:6, Hebrews 3:12–13

Paul says he proclaimed Christ by “warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom.” That means faithful ministry does two things at once. It warns us where danger is, and it teaches us how to walk in truth. We need both.

Most of us prefer one over the other. Some want teaching without warning. They like truth as long as it stays general, abstract, and safely removed from their actual sin. Others lean hard into warning and correction but have little patience for careful instruction and tender shepherding. Paul gives us neither imbalance. He shows us a ministry that is loving enough to warn and patient enough to teach.

Warning matters because sin is real, false teaching is real, and self-deception is real. Left to ourselves, we do not drift toward holiness. We drift toward compromise, pride, laziness, fear, and worldliness. A loving Christian will not stand by quietly while someone walks toward spiritual danger. He warns. A faithful church warns. A godly parent warns. A wise friend warns.

But warning is not the whole task. Teaching matters because people need truth explained and applied. We need help learning how to think biblically, how to live faithfully, and how to understand the ways of God. Correction without instruction can leave people discouraged. Instruction without correction can leave people comfortable in sin. The Lord uses both to shape us.

And Paul says this must be done “with all wisdom.” That means truth must be applied carefully, lovingly, and fittingly. Not everyone needs the same tone in the same moment. Some need a firm word. Some need patient guidance. Some need both at the same time. Wisdom knows how to bring God’s Word to bear in a way that is faithful and fruitful.

We should thank God when he puts people in our lives who will both warn us and teach us. It is one of his mercies. The wounds of a faithful friend really are better than the smooth words of someone who lets us stay foolish.

Reflection Questions:

1. Are you more comfortable receiving teaching or receiving correction? Why?
2. Has God used someone’s warning in your life to protect you from sin or error?
3. How can you grow in speaking truth with both courage and wisdom?

Practical Application:

Think of one person whose faithful correction or teaching has helped you grow. Reach out and thank them. Then ask the Lord to make you that kind of blessing to someone else.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for loving me enough not to leave me alone in my sin and immaturity. Thank

You for Your Word, which teaches, corrects, and trains me. Give me humility to receive warning and eagerness to learn truth. Make me wise, loving, and faithful in how I speak to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 3 — Maturity Is the Goal

Scripture to Read: Colossians 1:28, Matthew 28:19–20, Ephesians 4:11–15, Hebrews 5:12–14, 2 Peter 3:18, Philippians 3:12–14

Paul’s goal was not merely to see people make a profession of faith. His goal was “that we may present everyone mature in Christ.” That matters because it reminds us that the Christian life is not only about beginning well. It is about growing well.

There is a shallow version of Christianity that treats conversion as the finish line. A person responds to the gospel, and that is the end of the story. But in the New Testament, conversion is the beginning of a lifelong work of grace. Jesus told the church to make disciples, not simply decisions. Paul labored to see believers become mature, stable, and full-grown in Christ.

Maturity in Christ does not mean sinless perfection in this life. It does not mean you never struggle, never stumble, and never feel your weakness. It means you are growing. Your roots are deepening. Your judgment is steadier. Your love for Christ is stronger. Your repentance is more honest. Your obedience is more consistent. You are not who you once were, and by grace you are not staying where you are.

This matters because it changes how we measure spiritual health. Busyness is not maturity. Bible knowledge by itself is not maturity. Strong opinions are not maturity. Even ministry involvement is not necessarily maturity. A person can be active, vocal, and informed while still being spiritually shallow. Maturity shows up in humility, perseverance, discernment, holiness, patience, and love.

It also means we should not make peace with spiritual immaturity. Too many Christians settle into a pattern of low expectations. They stay prayerless, easily offended, thin-skinned, spiritually undisciplined, and biblically undernourished, and then assume that is normal. Paul would not let us settle there. He aims higher because Christ aims higher.

The good news is that maturity is not reserved for a spiritual elite. Paul says “everyone.” Growth in Christ is not just for pastors, theologians, or naturally disciplined people. It is God’s will for every believer. Slow growth is still growth. Weak saints can grow. Struggling saints can grow. Ordinary believers can grow. And by God’s grace, they do.

Reflection Questions:

1. In what areas do you see evidence of growth in your life?
2. Where have you grown complacent about spiritual immaturity?
3. What would it look like to pursue maturity more intentionally this season?

Practical Application:

Choose one specific area where you know the Lord is calling you to grow—prayer, repentance, Scripture intake, patience, or obedience—and make one concrete plan for this week.

Prayer:

Father, thank You that You do not leave Your children where You find them. Thank You for patiently growing us in Christ. Keep me from settling for shallow Christianity. Strengthen my faith, deepen my love, and mature me through Your Word and Spirit. Make me more like Your Son. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 4 — Ministry Is Hard Work

Scripture to Read: Colossians 1:29, 1 Thessalonians 2:9, 2 Corinthians 11:23–28, 1 Corinthians 15:10, Galatians 6:9, Hebrews 6:10

Paul says, “For this I toil, struggling.” Those are not polished, comfortable words. They are the language of sweat, strain, and costly effort. Paul is honest about the work of ministry. It is not casual. It is not easy. It is not something we drift through half-asleep. It is labor.

That truth is important because many of us still carry foolish assumptions about Christian service. We want usefulness without inconvenience. We want fruit without sacrifice. We want influence without perseverance. We want God to do meaningful things through us while demanding very little from us. But Paul will not let us believe that fairy tale. Faithful ministry is hard work.

That applies first to pastors and teachers, of course. Preaching, shepherding, counseling, praying, studying, and caring for souls is not light work. But the principle reaches farther than the pulpit. Parenting is hard work. Discipling others is hard work. Bearing the burdens of fellow believers is hard work. Evangelism is hard work. Prayer is hard work. Serving faithfully in unseen ways is hard work. Anyone who has tried to help people spiritually knows this.

And yet there is something good and right about that. Love labors. Shepherding costs. Real ministry takes time, thought, patience, tears, and endurance. It means speaking when silence would be easier. It means staying when quitting would be simpler. It means giving yourself for the good of others.

We should not be surprised by that cost, and we should not resent it as though something strange is happening. The Lord has never promised that serving him would be effortless. But he has promised that it is not in vain. He sees every hidden act of service. He does not forget the labor done in his name.

That means the weariness you feel in faithful service is not proof that something is wrong. Often it is proof that something real is happening. It is one thing to be tired because of foolish busyness. It is another thing to be tired because you have spent yourself in love for Christ and his people. The second kind of weariness is not wasted.

Reflection Questions:

1. Where are you most tempted to seek usefulness without sacrifice?
2. In what area of service have you grown tired or discouraged?
3. How does Paul’s honesty about toil help steady your expectations?

Practical Application:

Identify one area of faithful service you have been tempted to neglect because it is costly. Ask the Lord for strength, then take one step to re-engage instead of pulling back.

Prayer:

Father, thank You that You see the hidden and wearying work of serving others in Your name. Forgive me for wanting fruit without sacrifice and usefulness without cost. Strengthen me to labor faithfully, love sacrificially, and endure patiently wherever You have called me to serve. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 5 — Christ’s Power Is the Strength

Scripture to Read: Colossians 1:29, Philippians 2:12–13, 2 Corinthians 4:7, John 15:4–5, Isaiah 40:29–31, Ephesians 3:16–21

Paul says he toils and struggles “with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.” That is one of the most balanced statements about ministry and the Christian life in all of Scripture. Paul works hard—really hard—but the power is not his own. Christ supplies it.

We tend to fall into one of two ditches. One is laziness dressed up as trust. “If God wants to do something, he’ll do it,” we say, while doing very little ourselves. The other is self-reliance dressed up as diligence. We work and plan and strive as though everything depends on us. One ditch produces passivity. The other produces pride or burnout. Paul gives us a better way: real effort joined to real dependence.

That is how the Christian life works. We act because God is at work in us. We labor because Christ supplies strength. We pray, serve, teach, endure, and obey not because we are naturally sufficient, but because Christ powerfully works in weak people. He does not usually bypass the means he has appointed. He works through them. He works through preaching, prayer, teaching, discipline, service, and patient endurance.

This is deeply comforting because it means your weakness does not disqualify you from usefulness. Your natural limitations are not the final word. If anything, they teach you where true strength comes from. The issue is not whether you are enough. You are not. The issue is whether Christ is enough. He is.

It is also humbling. If God has used you in any way, you cannot take the credit. You did not produce life in anyone. You did not sanctify anyone by your cleverness. You did not keep yourself by your own power. The fruit belongs to Christ.

So the Christian life is neither lazy passivity nor frantic striving. It is laboring hard while leaning hard on Christ. It is serving with your face turned toward him. It is moving forward with confidence, not in yourself, but in the one who powerfully works within his people.

Reflection Questions:

1. Which are you more prone to: lazy passivity or self-reliant striving?
2. Where do you most need to lean on Christ’s strength right now?
3. How does this passage both humble you and encourage you?

Practical Application:

Before you begin your work or responsibilities today, pause and deliberately pray through Colossians 1:29. Ask Christ to strengthen you to labor faithfully in his power, not your own.

Prayer:

Father, thank You that You do not call me to serve You in my own strength. Thank You for the

power of Christ at work in weak people. Keep me from laziness and self-reliance. Teach me to labor hard, pray deeply, and depend fully on the strength You supply. In Jesus' name, Amen.