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Translation Notes (unfoldinWord)

Colossians 1:1 (#1)

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General Information:\n\nThroughout this letter the words "we," "us," "our," and "ours" include the Colossian believers unless noted otherwise.

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Colossians 1:1 (#2)

General Information: The words "you," "your," and "yours" refer to the Colossian believers, and so they are plural unless noted otherwise.

See: Forms of 'You' — Plural

Colossians 1:1 (#3)

"Paul"

In this culture, letter writers would give their own names first, referring to themselves in the third person. If that is confusing in your language, you could use the first person here. If your language has a particular way of introducing the author of a letter, and if it would be helpful to your readers, you could use it here. Alternate translation: "From Paul"

See: First, Second or Third Person

Colossians 1:1 (#4)

"and Timothy our brother"

This phrase does not mean that **Timothy** helped Paul write this letter. Paul was the author of this letter, as he shows by using the first person singular throughout the letter. What this does mean is that Timothy is with Paul and that Timothy is in agreement with what Paul writes. If it sounds in your language like Timothy is writing the letter with Paul, you could make Timothy's supporting role more clear. Alternate translation: "with the support of Timothy, our fellow believer"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 1:2 (#1)

"to the saints and faithful brothers in Christ in Colossae"

In this culture, after giving their own names, letter writers would name those to whom they sent the letter, referring to them in the third person. If that is confusing in your language, you could use the second person here. Or if your language has a particular way of introducing the recipient of a letter, and if it would be helpful to your readers, you could use it here. Alternate translation: "to you who live in the city of Colossae and who are God's people and faithful fellow believers who are united to the Messiah"

See: First, Second or Third Person

Colossians 1:2 (#2)

"to the saints and faithful brothers in Christ"

The words **saints**, **faithful brothers**, and **in Christ** all describe people who are followers of Jesus. Paul is using all of these to describe one group of people. For example, he is not implying that **saints** and **faithful brothers in Christ** are two different groups. If it would be helpful in your language, you could join these words together in a different way. Alternate translation: "to God's faithful people, joined together as a family in Christ"

See: Doublet

Colossians 1:2 (#3)

"Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"

After stating his name and the name of the person to whom he is writing, Paul adds a blessing for the Colossians. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. Alternate translation: "May you experience kindness and peace within you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus the Messiah" or "I pray that grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus the Messiah will always be with you"

See: Blessings

Colossians 1:2 (#4)

"Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"

The words **Grace** and **peace** are abstract nouns. Your language may have a particular way of expressing these concepts, such as with verbs or description words. If so, you could use them in your translation. Alternate translation: "We pray that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will treat you kindly and give you peaceful relationships"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:2 (#5)

"God our Father"

Here and throughout the chapter, **Father** is an important title for God. Alternate translation: "God, who is our Father,"

See: Translating Son and Father

Colossians 1:3 (#1)

"We give thanks" - "our"

The word **We** here does not include the Colossians, but the word **our** here does include the Colossians

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Colossians 1:3 (#2)

"always"

Here, **always** is an exaggeration that the Colossians understood to mean that Paul and Timothy prayed for them often. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word that indicates frequency. Alternate translation: "consistently" or "frequently"

See: Hyperbole

Colossians 1:4 (#1)

"having heard of your faith"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **faith**, you could express the idea behind this abstract noun in another way. Alternate translation: "having heard that you are trusting"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:4 (#2)

"the love that you have for all the saints"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **love**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form. Alternate translation: "how much you love all the saints"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:5 (#1)

"the hope"

Here, **hope** refers not only to the attitude of hopefulness but also to what the believer hopes for, that is, what God has promised to give to all believers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea by using a relative clause. Alternate translation: "what you hope for"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 1:5 (#2)

"that is being reserved for"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this with an active form, and you could state who did the action. Alternate translation: "that God is reserving for" or "that God has prepared for" or "that God has ready for"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 1:5 (#3)

"the word of truth"

Paul uses the possessive form to describe a **word** that is characterized by **truth**. This could refer to: (1) a message that is truth. Alternate translation: "the message that is true" (2) a message concerning the truth. Alternate translation: "the message about the truth"

See: Possession

Colossians 1:5 (#4)

"the word"

Here, **word** represents a message that is made up of words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "the announcement"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 1:6 (#1)

"which being present among you"

Here, the good news is spoken of as though it were a person who could be **present** with the Colossians. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "which was told to you in Colossae"

See: Personification

Colossians 1:6 (#2)

"in all the world"

Here, **in all the world** is a generalization referring to the part of the **world** that Paul and the Colossians knew about. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that **world** refers to the known world at that time. Alternate translation: "in every place that we know about"

See: Hyperbole

Colossians 1:6 (#3)

"is bearing fruit and growing"

Here, Paul speaks of the gospel as if it were a plant that could grow and produce fruit. He means that the gospel reaches more people and that it changes how people think and behave. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express Paul's meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "is reaching more people so that they do what is pleasing to God"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:6 (#4)

"just as also in you"

Paul leaves out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If your language needs these words, you could supply them from the context. Alternate translation: "just as this good news has reached you so that you do what is pleasing to God" or "just as it has done among you"

See: Ellipsis

Colossians 1:6 (#5)

"learned about the grace of God in truth"

Here, **in truth** could describe: (1) the way in which the Colossians learned about the grace of God. Alternate translation: "accurately grasped how God acts kindly" (2) the way God is gracious to the Colossians. Alternate translation: "learned about the true grace of God" or "understood how God truly acts kindly"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:7 (#1)

"Epaphras"

Epaphras is the name of a man. He is the one who preached the good news to the people in Colossae.

See: How to Translate Names

Colossians 1:7 (#2)

"our" - "our"

Here, **our** does not include the Colossians.

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Colossians 1:8 (#1)

"to us"

The word **us** here does not include the Colossians.

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Colossians 1:8 (#2)**"your love"**

Here Paul is primarily talking about the **love** that the Colossians are showing to other believers. Of course they also love God. If you must specify the object of their love, and people might think that the Colossians do not love God if he is not mentioned, then you could include both. Alternate translation: "that you love God and all his people"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:8 (#3)**"in the Spirit"**

Alternate translation: "which is by the power of the Holy Spirit" or "which you do through the power of the Holy Spirit"

Colossians 1:9 (#1)**"we heard this, we" - "have not stopped"**

The word **we** here does not include the Colossians.

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Colossians 1:9 (#2)**"from the day we heard this"**

Alternate translation: "from the day Epaphras told us these things"

Colossians 1:9 (#3)**"have not stopped"**

Here, **have not stopped** is an exaggeration that the Colossians would have understood to mean that Paul and Timothy pray often for the Colossians. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that indicates frequency. Alternate translation: "have been frequently" or "have made a habit of"

See: Hyperbole

Colossians 1:9 (#4)**"have not stopped"**

Here Paul uses a figure of speech that expresses a strong positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that is the opposite of the intended meaning. If this is confusing in your language, you could express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: "have kept" or "are continually"

See: Litotes

Colossians 1:9 (#5)**"that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will"**

Here Paul speaks of the Colossian believers as though they were containers that could **be filled** up. By speaking this way, he emphasizes that the Colossians should know God's **will** in every area of their lives. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this plainly. Alternate translation: "that God would enable you to understand fully what he wants you to do"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:9 (#6)**"you might be filled with"**

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in an active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: "God would fill you with"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 1:9 (#7)**"you might be filled with the knowledge of his will"**

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind the words **knowledge** and **will**, you could express those ideas in another way, such as with verbs. Alternate translation: "you might fully know what he has planned for you"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:9 (#8)

"you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding"

Here, **in all wisdom and spiritual understanding** identifies how the Colossians are **filled**. The phrase does not describe God's **will**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could move the phrase so that it appears immediately after **filled**. Alternate translation: "you might be filled in all wisdom and spiritual understanding with the knowledge of his will"

See: Information Structure

Colossians 1:9 (#9)

"in all wisdom and spiritual understanding"

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **wisdom** and **understanding**, you could express the ideas with adjectives or verbs. If you use the following alternate translation, you may need to add a comma before it. Alternate translation: "which includes being spiritually very wise and intelligent"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:9 (#10)

"wisdom and spiritual understanding"

Here, **wisdom and spiritual understanding** could refer to: (1) wisdom and understanding that comes from the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "wisdom and understanding given by the Holy Spirit" (2) wisdom and understanding in spiritual matters. Alternate translation: "wisdom and understanding about spiritual things"

Colossians 1:9 (#11)

"wisdom and spiritual understanding"

The words **wisdom** and **understanding** mean very similar things. The repetition is used to emphasize the breadth of spiritual wisdom. If your language does not use repetition in this way or has only one word for this concept, you could use just one word. Alternate translation: "spiritual comprehension" or "spiritual insight"

See: Doublet

Colossians 1:10 (#1)

"to walk worthily of the Lord"

Here, the word **walk** is a figurative way to refer to behavior in life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "to behave in the way that the Lord expects you to behave"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:10 (#2)

"in every pleasing {way}"

If your language does not use abstract nouns, you could express the idea behind the phrase **pleasing {way}** with a verb. If you use the following alternate translation, you may need to add a comma before it. Alternate translation: "doing everything that pleases him"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:10 (#3)

"bearing fruit in every good deed"

Paul is speaking of the Colossian believers as if they were trees or plants and of the things that they do as if it were their **fruit**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a different figure or plainly. Alternate translation: "performing many good deeds"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:10 (#4)

"growing in the knowledge of God"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **knowledge**, you could express the idea with a verb. Alternate translation: "knowing God better and better"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:11 (#1)**"being strengthened"**

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea with an active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: "God strengthening you"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 1:11 (#2)**"the power of his glory"**

Paul uses the possessive form to describe **power** that is characterized by God's **glory**. If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could use an adjective such as "glorious" or "great" instead of the noun **glory**. Alternate translation: "his glorious power" or "his great power"

See: Possession

Colossians 1:11 (#3)**"to all endurance and patience with joy"**

This is a purpose phrase. Paul is stating the purpose for which the Colossians have been **strengthened with all power**. In your translation, follow the conventions of your language for purpose phrases. Alternate translation: "so that you have all endurance and patience with joy"

See: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Colossians 1:11 (#4)**"endurance and patience"**

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **patience** tells what kind of **endurance** the Colossians can have. If your language does not use this form, you could express the meaning differently. Alternate translation: "patient endurance."

See: Hendiadys

Colossians 1:11 (#5)**"all endurance and patience"**

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind **endurance** and **patience**, you could express the ideas with verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "endure always and wait patiently"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:11 (#6)**"all endurance and patience with joy"**

Here, **with joy** could describe: (1) the way that the Colossians are to have endurance and patience (2) the way that the Colossians are to give thanks in verse 12. Alternate translation: "all endurance and patience"

Colossians 1:12 (#1)**"giving thanks"**

Some Bible versions connect the phrase "with joy" at the end of verse 11 to the phrase at the beginning of verse 12, instead of connecting it to verse 11. Alternate translation: "with joy giving thanks"

Colossians 1:12 (#2)**"to the Father"**

Father is an important title that describes the relationship between God and Jesus, and it also describes the relationship between God and believers, who are adopted children. Alternate translation: "God the Father"

See: Translating Son and Father

Colossians 1:12 (#3)**"having made you able"**

Alternate translation: "who has qualified you"

Colossians 1:12 (#4)**"to share the inheritance of the saints"**

This is a purpose clause. Paul is stating the purpose for which God made the Colossians **able**. In your translation, follow the conventions of your language for purpose clauses. Alternate translation

(without a comma preceding): “so that you could share the inheritance of the saints”

See: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Colossians 1:12 (#5)

"to share the inheritance"

Paul is using the possessive form to describe a **share** that is characterized by **inheritance**. If your language does not use this form to express that meaning, you could use a verbal phrase like “receive your portion of” or “take part in.” Alternate translation: “to take part in the inheritance”

See: Possession

Colossians 1:12 (#6)

"the inheritance of the saints"

Here, Paul uses the possessive form to indicate that the **inheritance** is for the **saints**. If your language does not use this form to express that meaning, you could use a descriptive phrase such as “that God is keeping for” or “that belongs to” instead. Alternate translation: “the inheritance that belongs to the saints”

See: Possession

Colossians 1:12 (#7)

"in the light"

Here, **in the light** is the opposite of the “authority of the darkness” in the next verse ([1:13](#)) and refers to belonging to God and being part of his kingdom. The metaphor of light representing God, goodness, and heaven is very common in the Bible, and it would be useful to retain it if it communicates well. However, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: “in the spiritual kingdom of God” or “in God’s glorious presence”

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:13 (#1)

"the authority of the darkness"

Here, **darkness** is a metaphor for evil. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the

idea plainly. Alternate translation: “the authority of evil powers”

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:13 (#2)

"the authority of the darkness"

Here Paul uses the possessive form to describe an **authority** that is characterized by **darkness** (a metaphor for evil). If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could use a verb such as “rule” or “control” for the noun **authority**. Alternate translation: “the evil that ruled us”

See: Possession

Colossians 1:13 (#3)

"the authority of the darkness"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **authority**, you could express that idea in another way, such as with a verb. Alternate translation: “the dark things that controlled us”

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:13 (#4)

"transferred {us}"

Here Paul speaks about a change in who rules over believers as if they were moving from one location to another. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea plainly. Alternate translation: “made us subject instead”

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:13 (#5)

"to the kingdom of his beloved Son"

Paul speaks of the people who belong to God’s Son as if they were citizens of a **kingdom**. He means that they are members of a community that obeys God’s Son Jesus and belongs to him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express Paul’s meaning

plainly. Alternative translation, "so that his beloved Son reigns over us"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:13 (#6)

"of his beloved Son"

Paul uses the possessive form to characterize the **Son as his beloved**. If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could express the idea behind **his beloved** with a relative clause. Alternate translation: "of the Son he loves"

See: Possession

Colossians 1:13 (#7)

"of his beloved Son"

Son is an important title that describes the relationship between God the Father (who is mentioned in the previous verse (1:12)) and Jesus. Alternate translation: "of Jesus, God the Father's beloved Son"

See: Translating Son and Father

Colossians 1:14 (#1)

"redemption"

Some later manuscripts add "through his blood" after **redemption**. Most likely, "through his blood" was accidentally added because of how similar this verse is to 1:7, which does include "through his blood." Most likely, you should not include "through his blood" in your translation.

See: Textual Variants

Colossians 1:14 (#2)

"we have redemption"

Here, the word **redemption** does not refer to a payment or to the act of redeeming. Instead, it refers to the result of the act of redeeming. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word such as "freedom" to express this idea. Alternate translation: "we have freedom"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 1:14 (#3)

"we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins"

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind **redemption** and **forgiveness**, you could express the idea by using verbs. Alternate translation: "God has redeemed us; that is, he has forgiven our sins"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:14 (#4)

"the forgiveness of sins"

Here, Paul uses the possessive form to indicate that the **forgiveness** concerns **sins**. If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could use a verb for **forgiveness** and make **sins** its object or complement. If you use the following alternate translation, you may need to replace the comma before it with a semicolon. Alternate translation: "that is, God has forgiven us for our sins"

See: Possession

Colossians 1:15 (#1)

"He is the image of the invisible God"

Here, **image** does not mean a representation of something that is visible, like a photo or a reflection. Instead, **image** refers to how the Son perfectly reveals the Father. If it would be helpful in your language, you could replace **image** with an expression that emphasizes how the Son reveals the Father. Alternate translation: "What the invisible God is like can be seen in his Son"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:15 (#2)

"of the invisible God"

The word **invisible** does not mean that God the Father could be seen by people but hides himself. Instead, it means that human sight is unable to perceive God the Father, since he is not part of the created world. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase to clarify the idea.

Alternate translation: "of God, whom humans are unable to see"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 1:15 (#3)

"the firstborn of all creation"

The word **firstborn** does not refer to when Jesus was born. Instead, it refers to his position as the eternal Son of God the Father. In this sense, **firstborn** is a metaphor that means that he existed as God before God created anything and that he is most important. You could emphasize either or both of these ideas in your translation. Alternate translation: "God's Son, the most important one over all creation" or "God's Son, who existed as God before all creation"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:15 (#4)

"of all creation"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **creation**, you could express the idea by using a verb such as "create." Alternate translation: "of all that God created"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:16 (#1)

"For in him all things were created"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: "For in him God created all things"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 1:16 (#2)

"in him all things were created"

Paul here seems to speak as if God created everything inside the Son. This is a metaphor that describes the involvement of the Son when God created all things, which you could clarify by making both the Son and the Father the subjects of **created**. If your language can clearly indicate

different types of agency, you could identify God the Father as the primary agent and God the Son as the secondary agent. Alternate translation: "God the Father created all things through the work of God the Son"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:16 (#3)

"in the heavens and on the earth"

Paul refers to two opposite things, the **heavens** and the **earth**, as a way to include not only them but also everything else in what God and his Son created. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "in every part of the universe"

See: Merism

Colossians 1:16 (#4)

"the visible and the invisible"

Paul refers to two opposite things, the **visible** and the **invisible**, as another way to refer to everything that God and his Son created. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "whether people can see them or not"

See: Merism

Colossians 1:16 (#5)

"Whether thrones or dominions or governments or authorities"

The words **thrones**, **dominions**, **governments**, and **authorities** here refer to different kinds of angels or other spiritual beings that are not specified as being good or evil. They are examples of what is **invisible**. It may be that the false teachers were teaching that these beings should be worshiped. But Paul is emphasizing here that God the Father created all of these spiritual beings through his Son, and so the Son is much greater than these. If it would be helpful in your language, you could: (1) identify that these are spiritual beings and translate as many of these names as you have different words for. Alternate translation: "Including all spiritual beings, which can be called

thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities" (2) use names from your culture that identify different classes of angels or spiritual beings. Alternate translation: "Whether angels or archangels or spirit rulers" (3) summarize without using specific names. Alternate translation: "Including all types of powerful spiritual beings"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 1:16 (#6)

"all things have been created though him and for him"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: "through him and for him God created all things"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 1:16 (#7)

"have been created though him"

The phrase **through him** shows God the Son's involvement in creating the world with the Father. Alternate translation: "God the Father created by working through the Son"

Colossians 1:16 (#8)

"and for him"

Here, **for him** refers to the Son as the purpose or goal of all creation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that creation's purpose is to honor and glorify the Son. Alternate translation: "and everything exists to glorify him"

See: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Colossians 1:17 (#1)

"he is before all things"

The word **before** refers to time, not location. It means that the Son did not come into being when God created everything, but rather he existed as God before anything was created. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that refers to prior time. Alternate

translation: "before God created anything, the Son existed as God"

See: Connect — Sequential Time Relationship

Colossians 1:17 (#2)

"in him all things hold together"

Paul is speaking here as if all created things **hold together** because they are inside the Son. By speaking in this way, Paul means that everything that God created continues to exist because the Son actively works to preserve everything. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "he controls everything so that it works the way it should" or "he is the one who makes sure everything has its proper place"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:18 (#1)

"he is the head of the body, the church"

Paul speaks of Jesus' position over the **church** as if he were the **head** on the human **body**. As the head rules and directs the body, so Jesus rules and directs the church. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or express the idea with a simile or in plain language. Alternate translation: "he rules and directs the church"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:18 (#2)

"the beginning"

The word **beginning** could refer to: (1) the origin of something; here, the origin of the church. Alternate translation: "the origin of the church" or "the one who started the church" (2) a position of power or authority. Alternate translation: "the ruler" or "the one with authority"

Colossians 1:18 (#3)

"the firstborn from among the dead"

Paul describes Jesus' resurrection **from among the dead** as if someone gave birth to him as her first child. This figure helps us to see that this new life was not like his old life, because he can never die again. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "the first one to come back to new life" or "the first person to permanently rise from the dead"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:18 (#4)

"the dead"

Paul is using the adjective **dead** as a noun in order to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "the dead people"

See: Nominal Adjectives

Colossians 1:18 (#5)

"so that he himself might become first among all things"

This clause could identify: (1) the result of Jesus starting the church and coming back from the dead. Alternate translation: "with the result that he is first among all things" (2) the purpose of Jesus starting the church and coming back from the dead. Alternate translation: "in order that he might be first among all things"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Colossians 1:18 (#6)

"he himself might become first among all things"

Paul here describes Jesus as if he were **first** to do or be something. This does not refer to time or sequence, but rather it refers to importance. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable expression or plainly. Alternate translation: "he himself might become the most important person in all creation" or "he himself might be greater than everything and anybody else"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:19 (#1)

"For"

The word **For** provides a reason for previous statements. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify for which statements this verse gives a reason. These statements could be: (1) everything in the previous verse, including the Son's headship over the church, his founding of the church, his resurrection, and his status as most important. Alternate translation: "He is all these things because" (2) why the Son is first among all things. Alternate translation: "He is first among all things because"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Colossians 1:19 (#2)

"in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell"

The verb **was pleased** implies a personal subject, which must be God the Father. By using the phrase **all the fullness**, Paul is speaking of everything that God the Father is, either by ellipsis or metonymy. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this explicit. Alternate translation: "God the Father was pleased to make all of his fullness dwell in the Son" or "all the fullness of God the Father was pleased to dwell in the Son"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 1:19 (#3)

"in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell"

Here, Paul speaks of the Son as though he were a house in which God's **fullness** could **dwell**. This does not mean that God lives inside of the Son or that the Son is part of God. This means that the Son has all the divinity of God. It means that the Son is fully God just as the Father is fully God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state it more plainly. Alternate translation: "the Son is fully God in every way"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:19 (#4)**"all the fullness"**

In the context, **fullness** stands for the **fullness** of divinity, or everything that characterizes God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make it clear that **fullness** refers to the **fullness** of God. Alternate translation: "the full divinity of God"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 1:20 (#1)**"to reconcile"**

This verse continues the sentence from the previous verse, so **to reconcile** continues the same verb from there, "was pleased," along with its implied subject, God the Father. If it would be helpful in your language, you could repeat that subject and verb here. Alternate translation: "God the Father was pleased to reconcile"

Colossians 1:20 (#2)**"all things"**

Here, **all things** includes everything that God created, including people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could be more specific. Alternate translation: "all things and all people"

Colossians 1:20 (#3)**"having made peace"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **peace**, you could express this idea in another way. Alternate translation: "having made things right"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:20 (#4)**"the blood of his cross"**

Paul uses the possessive form to describe **blood** characterized by **his cross**, which is the location where the blood was shed. If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could make the relationship between the two words

clearer with a short phrase such as "shed on." Alternate translation: "the blood shed on his cross."

See: Possession

Colossians 1:20 (#5)**"the blood of his cross"**

Here, **blood** stands for the death of Christ on the cross. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable word that stands for death or express the idea in plain language. Alternate translation: "his death on the cross"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 1:20 (#6)**"all things to himself" - "whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens"**

The last part of this verse (**whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens**) describes **all things**, found near the beginning of the verse. If your language does not separate a description from the thing it describes, you could move the description next to **all things**. Alternate translation: "all things, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens, to himself"

See: Information Structure

Colossians 1:20 (#7)**"whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens"**

Paul refers to the **things on the earth** and the **things in the heavens** to include them and everything in between, that is, everything in all of creation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "everything in the whole creation"

See: Merism

Colossians 1:21 (#1)**"At one time"**

Connecting Statement:\n\nThe phrase **At one time** does not refer to one specific instance in time when the Colossians were alienated from God.

Instead, it refers to all the time before they believed in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify what **time** Paul is referring to. Alternate translation: "During the time before you believed"

See: Connect — Sequential Time Relationship

Colossians 1:21 (#2)

"were alienated"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could describe the Colossians' state with an active form. Alternate translation: "did not want a relationship with God" or "were people who did not want to be near God"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 1:21 (#3)

"alienated and enemies"

Paul assumes that the Colossians will know from whom they were **alienated** and with whom they were **enemies**: God. If your language would include this implied information, you could include a reference to "God" in this sentence. Alternate translation: "alienated from God and were his enemies"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 1:21 (#4)

"in thought, in evil deeds"

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **thought** and **deeds**, you could express the ideas with relative clauses. Alternate translation: "in what you thought, in what you did that was evil"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:22 (#1)

"But"

The word **But** here introduces a strong contrast from the previous sentence. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a strong contrast

from what was just said. Alternate translation: "Instead of that,"

See: Connect — Contrast Relationship

Colossians 1:22 (#2)

"now"

The word **now** does not refer to the moment at which Paul writes this letter or the moment at which it is read to the Colossians. Instead, it refers to the time since they believed, including the present moment. This follows as a sequence to the previous verse, which referred to the time when they had not yet believed. If the meaning of **now** would be misunderstood your language, you could add a phrase such as "that you have believed." Alternate translation: "now that you have faith in Jesus,"

See: Connect — Sequential Time Relationship

Colossians 1:22 (#3)

"by the body of his flesh"

Here Paul uses the phrase **the body of his flesh** to refer to Jesus and everything that he did while in a human body. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "by Jesus in his physical body"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 1:22 (#4)

"the body of his flesh"

Here Paul describes Jesus' **body** that is characterized by **flesh**. This refers to Jesus' body during his earthly life, not his glorified body after the resurrection. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an expression that makes this idea clear. Alternate translation: "his physical body" or "his body before the resurrection"

See: Possession

Colossians 1:22 (#5)

"through death"

Here, Paul has not stated whose **death** this is. This **death** is not that of the Colossians but that of Jesus on the cross. If your language would state who died, you could add a possessive word to clarify. Alternate translation: "through his death" or "through Jesus' death"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 1:22 (#6)

"to present you"

Here, **to present you** gives the purpose for which God reconciled the Colossians by the death of his Son. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a purpose phrase such as "so that" or "in order to." Alternate translation: "so that he might present you"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Colossians 1:22 (#7)

"to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him"

Here Paul is describing the Colossians as though Jesus had brought them to stand before God the Father, by which he means that Jesus has made them acceptable to God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea in plain language. Alternate translation: "to make you acceptable before him, holy and blameless and above reproach"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:22 (#8)

"holy and blameless and above reproach"

The words **blameless** and **above reproach** are adjectives that describe a person or thing that is free from blemishes and that cannot be blamed for doing anything wrong. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use relative clauses instead. Alternate translation: "as people who are holy and who have no faults and who cannot be blamed for doing anything wrong"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 1:22 (#9)

"holy and blameless and above reproach"

These words, **holy**, **blameless**, and **above reproach**, mean basically the same thing here. The repetition is used to emphasize the completeness of what the Son did to take away the Colossians' sin. After trusting in Jesus, they are now completely morally pure. If your language does not use repetition in this way or you do not have three words that mean this, you could use fewer words and express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "completely pure" or "without any sin at all"

See: Doublet

Colossians 1:23 (#1)

"if indeed you continue"

Here Paul explains that the Colossians need to continue in their faith for what he said in the previous verse to be true about them. In other words, in order for them to be reconciled to God, blameless and without reproach, they need to continue in the faith. However, he does not think that this is a hypothetical situation or something that is likely not true. Instead, Paul thinks that they are continuing in their faith, and he uses this statement with **if** to encourage them to keep doing so. If your language does not use **if** in this context, you could rephrase the condition into a circumstance or an assumption. Alternate translation: "provided that you continue" or "presuming that you continue"

See: Connect — Factual Conditions

Colossians 1:23 (#2)

"in the faith"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **faith**, you could express the idea behind this abstract noun in another way. Alternate translation: "to trust God" or "to believe God's message"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:23 (#3)**"founded and firm"**

The words **founded** and **firm** mean basically the same thing. The words **not being moved** repeat the idea again in a negative way. The repetition is used to emphasize that it is important for the Colossians to continue strong in their faith. If your language does not use repetition in this way, you could use one word for this idea and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "very firm" or "like a rock"

See: Doublet

Colossians 1:23 (#4)**"founded and firm and not being moved from"**

Here Paul speaks of the Colossians as if they were a building that was **founded** and sits on a **firm** foundation so that it cannot be **moved** from its place, which means that they have good basis for their faith and will keep believing in all situations. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with an equivalent metaphor in your culture or express it plainly. Alternate translation: "holding onto it and grasping it tightly and not letting go of"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:23 (#5)**"the hope of the gospel"**

Here Paul uses possessive to explain that **hope** comes from the **gospel**. If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could express the idea by using a phrase such as "that comes from" or "gained from." Alternate translation: "the hope that comes from the gospel" or "how you hope, which you gained from the gospel"

See: Possession

Colossians 1:23 (#6)**"the hope of the gospel"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **hope**, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation:

"expecting God to fulfill the gospel" or "waiting for God to complete the good news"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:23 (#7)**"the one having been proclaimed to every creature {that is} under heaven"**

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form. You could: (1) change **proclaimed** to "heard" and make **every creature** the subject. Alternate translation: "which every creature that is under heaven has heard" (2) specify that "fellow believers" is the subject of **proclaimed**. Alternate translation: "which fellow believers have proclaimed to every creature that is under heaven"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 1:23 (#8)**"to every creature {that is} under heaven"**

Here Paul uses an exaggeration that the Colossians would have understood to emphasize how far the good news has spread. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or qualify the claim. Alternate translation: "to people in many different places" or "to people in every place we know about"

See: Hyperbole

Colossians 1:23 (#9)**"{that is} under heaven"**

In Paul's culture, **under heaven** refers to the visible part of creation that humans regularly interact with. It excludes spiritual beings, the stars, and anything else in **heaven**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate **under heaven** with a comparable expression. Alternate translation: "that is on the earth"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 1:23 (#10)**"of which I, Paul, became a servant"**

Here **Paul** speaks as if the good news were a person of whom he could become **a servant**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could explain that Paul is **a servant** of God, but his task from God is to proclaim the good news. Alternate translation: "which I, Paul, proclaim as God has commanded me, his servant, to do"

See: Personification

Colossians 1:24 (#1)

"Now"

The word **Now** indicates that Paul wishes to tell the Colossians how he is currently serving the gospel. It does not indicate a change of topic, as it sometimes does in English. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a longer phrase to express this idea. Alternate translation: "While I write this letter,"

See: Connecting Words and Phrases

Colossians 1:24 (#2)

"in my sufferings for you"

Alternate translation: "while I suffer for your sake"

Colossians 1:24 (#3)

"I fill up in my flesh the lack of the afflictions of Christ"

Paul speaks of his **flesh** as if it were a container that could **fill up** with **afflictions**. By this, he means that his bodily sufferings function to satisfy a specific purpose, which here is to finish what **Christ** started with his **afflictions**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "with my bodily suffering, I finish what the Messiah started when he suffered. I do this"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:24 (#4)

"the lack of the afflictions of Christ"

Here Paul is not saying that there is a **lack** in Christ's **afflictions** because those **afflictions** did

not succeed in doing what they were supposed to do. Instead, the **lack** refers to what Christ wished for his disciples to do as his servants. The **lack**, then, is something that Christ intentionally did not accomplish, because he wanted Paul to do it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could rephrase **lack** so that it is clearer that Christ intentionally left something for Paul to do. Alternate translation: "the afflictions that Christ has called me to suffer to complete his work"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 1:24 (#5)

"the lack of the afflictions of Christ"

Paul uses two possessive forms to speak about the **lack** that characterizes the **afflictions** that **Christ** suffered. If your language would not use possessive forms to express that idea, you could express the idea with a relative clause or two clauses. Alternate translation: "what Christ, when he suffered, left for me to suffer"

See: Possession

Colossians 1:24 (#6)

"his body, which is the church"

Here Paul speaks of the **church** as if it were Christ's **body**, and he provides the explanation of what **body** means. If it would be helpful in your language, you could refer to the **church** first and then identify it as his **body**. Alternate translation: "the church, which is his body"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:25 (#1)

"of which I became a servant"

If your language would specify who called Paul to be **a servant** of the church, you could rephrase this clause so that God is the subject and Paul is the object. Alternate translation: "God appointed me to be a servant of the church"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 1:25 (#2)**"the stewardship"**

The word **stewardship** refers to managing a household or, more generally, to directing any group or process. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **stewardship**, you could replace the word with a descriptive phrase. Alternate translation: "authoritative oversight" or "superintending authority"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:25 (#3)**"the stewardship of God"**

Paul uses the possessive form to describe a **stewardship** that could: (1) come from God. Alternate translation: "the stewardship from God" (2) belong to God and be **given** to Paul. Alternate translation: "God's own stewardship" or "God's own oversight"

See: Possession

Colossians 1:25 (#4)**"the one having been given to me"**

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: "that God gave to me" or "that he gave me"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 1:25 (#5)**"the word of God"**

Paul uses the possessive form to describe **the word** that is: (1) from God. Alternate translation: "the word that came from God" (2) about God. Alternate translation: "the word about God"

See: Possession

Colossians 1:25 (#6)**"the word of God"**

Here, **word** represents a message that is made up of words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "the message from God" or "God's message"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 1:26 (#1)**"the mystery that had been hidden"**

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: "the mystery that God had hidden"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 1:26 (#2)**"the mystery"**

Here Paul calls "the word of God," from [1:25](#), **the mystery**. This does not mean that it is hard to understand, but rather, it had not yet been revealed. Now, however, Paul says that it "has been revealed." If your language would not use **mystery** to refer to something that has been revealed, you could replace **mystery** with a short descriptive phrase. Alternate translation: "the concealed message"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 1:26 (#3)**"that had been hidden from the ages and from the generations"**

This clause does not mean that the **ages** and the **generations** were unable to understand the "mystery." Instead, **from the ages** and **from the generations** refer to the time during which the mystery was hidden. Those from whom the mystery was hidden are not expressed explicitly, but it is clear that they are those who were alive during those times. If your language would express explicitly those from whom the mystery was hidden, you could insert it into the sentence. Alternate translation: "that has been hidden from the people who lived during the ages and in the generations"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 1:26 (#4)

"from the ages and from the generations"

These phrases speak about the passage of time. The word **ages** refers to periods of time that are marked off by specific boundaries (often major events), while the word **generations** refers to time periods marked off by human birth and death. The **mystery** has been **hidden** during all these time periods up until the present time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use equivalent expressions or short phrases. Alternate translation: "during all time periods, while people were born and died"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 1:26 (#5)

"now"

The word **now** does not refer to the time during which Paul wrote this letter. Instead, it contrasts with the **ages** and **generations** and refers to the time or "age" after the work of Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could further identify what time **now** refers to. Alternate translation: "now that Jesus has come, it"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 1:26 (#6)

"having been revealed"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: "God has revealed it"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 1:27 (#1)

"the riches of the glory of this mystery"

Paul emphasizes the scope of **the glory** by speaking as if it had wealth or **riches**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable statement or express the idea with an

adverb such as "very" or an adjective such as "abundant." Alternate translation: "the abundant glory of this mystery"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:27 (#2)

"the riches of the glory of this mystery"

Here Paul uses the possessive form to connect **riches** to **glory**, which then characterizes the **mystery**. If your language would not use the possessive form to express that idea, you could translate both **riches** and **glory** as adjectives or adverbs describing the **mystery**. Alternate translation: "this richly glorious mystery"

See: Possession

Colossians 1:27 (#3)

"the riches of the glory of this mystery"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **glory**, you could express that idea in another way, such as with a description word. Alternate translation: "this richly glorious mystery" or "this abundantly wonderful mystery"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:27 (#4)

"among the Gentiles"

This phrase could refer to: (1) how the mystery applies to all people, including **Gentiles**. Alternate translation: "that applies to every person, including the Gentiles" (2) where God makes the mystery known. Alternate translation: "to the Gentiles"

Colossians 1:27 (#5)

"Christ in you"

Paul speaks of the believers as if they were containers in which **Christ** is present. The expression means basically the same thing as "you in Christ." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the same translation you have used for being "in Christ." Alternate translation: "your union with Christ"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 1:27 (#6)

"the hope of glory"

Here Paul speaks of a **hope** that relates to **glory**. This could refer to: (1) hoping for, or expecting, glory. Alternate translation: "the expectation of becoming glorious" (2) a hope that is glorious. Alternate translation: "the glorious hope"

See: Possession

Colossians 1:27 (#7)

"the hope of glory"

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind the words **hope** and **glory**, you could express those ideas in another way. Alternate translation: "with whom we can expect to share his glorious life" or "who makes us confidently hope for living with him in heaven"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:28 (#1)

"We proclaim" - "we may present"

The pronoun **We** in this verse does not include the Colossians.

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Colossians 1:28 (#2)

"every man" - "every man" - "every man"

Here, **every man** refers to every person whom Paul has told about Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could include this information. Alternate translation: "every man whom we talk to ... each of them ... each of them"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 1:28 (#3)

"man" - "man" - "man"

Here, the word **man** does not refer to only male people but to any human being. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a term that refers to humans in general. Alternate translation: "human"

See: When Masculine Words Include Women

Colossians 1:28 (#4)

"all wisdom"

Here Paul speaks when he says that he uses **all wisdom**, by which he means that he uses all of the wisdom that he possesses. He does not mean that he possesses all the wisdom that exists. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this more plainly. Alternate translation: "all of the wisdom that we have" or "all of the wisdom that God has given us"

See: Hyperbole

Colossians 1:28 (#5)

"so that we may present"

Paul here explains the goal or purpose for which he and those with him "admonish" and "teach" people. In your translation, use a phrase that designates goal or purpose. Alternate translation: "in order that we may present"

See: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Colossians 1:28 (#6)

"we may present every man complete in Christ"

In this context, when Paul says that he intends to **present** people, he does not say to whom or where he will **present** them. If your language would include this information, you could explain what the situation is. Paul could be referring to: (1) when people appear before God on the judgment day. Alternate translation: "we may present every man complete in Christ to God the Father on the judgment day" (2) when people worship God. Alternate translation: "we may present every man complete in Christ when they come before God in worship"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 1:28 (#7)**"complete"**

The word **complete** in this context means that a person is what he or she is supposed to be and is able to do what he or she is called to do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word that has this meaning, such as "perfect" or "excellent," or you could translate **complete** with a short phrase. Alternate translation: "fit for what God has called him to be"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 1:29 (#1)**"I labor, striving"**

The words **labor** and **striving** mean very similar things. The repetition emphasizes how hard Paul works. If your language does not use repetition in this way or has only one word for this concept, you could use just one word and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "work hard" or "labor greatly"

See: Doublet

Colossians 1:29 (#2)**"his working, the one working in me"**

The word **working** is repeated here to emphasize God's activity in Paul that enables him to do what he does. If your language does not use repetition in this way, you could just use the word once and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "his constant working in me" or "how he greatly enables me"

See: Doublet

Colossians 1:29 (#3)**"according to his working, the one working"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **working**, you could express the idea with a verb. Alternate translation: "according to how God works, who works"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 1:29 (#4)**"in power"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **power**, you could express the idea with an adjective or adverb. Alternate translation: "in powerful ways"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:1 (#1)**"For"**

The word **For** introduces the reason why Paul told them in [1:29](#) about how hard he works. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make the transition more explicit. Alternate translation: "I tell you about my hard work because"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Colossians 2:1 (#2)**"how great a struggle I have for you"**

Here, the word **struggle** is directly related to the word "striving" in [1:29](#). Just as in that verse, it is usually used for striving to win a contest, whether athletic, legal, or military. Paul uses the word here to indicate how much he cares for the Colossians and how hard he works for their benefit. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "how much care I have in your behalf"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:1 (#3)**"how great a struggle I have"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **struggle**, you could express the idea behind this abstract noun by combining it with the verb **have** and using a verb such as "struggle." Alternate translation: "how much I struggle"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:1 (#4)

"for you and the ones at Laodicea and as many as have not seen my face in the flesh"

This list includes the Colossians and the Laodiceans among those who have not seen Paul's **face in the flesh**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of the list and include **you and the ones at Laodicea** among those who **have not seen** Paul's face. Alternate translation: "for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, including you and those at Laodicea"

See: Information Structure

Colossians 2:1 (#5)

"for you"

Here Paul implies that he has a great **struggle** in order to help **you** and the believers in other places. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this idea more explicit. Alternate translation: "in order to help you"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 2:1 (#6)

"the ones"

Here Paul implies that these are believers, not just anyone who lives in **Laodicea**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this idea more explicit. Alternate translation: "the believers"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 2:1 (#7)

"have not seen my face in the flesh"

In Paul's culture, seeing a **face in the flesh** refers to meeting someone in person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or express the idea in plain language. Alternate translation: "I have not visited" or "have not seen me"

See: Idiom

Colossians 2:2 (#1)

"so that"

Here, **so that** marks the encouragement of the believers as the goal or purpose of Paul's struggle. Use a connector in your language that makes it clear that this is the purpose. If it would be helpful, you could start a new sentence here and repeat some of the previous verse. Alternate translation: "The reason that I struggle so much is so that" or "I do this in order that"

See: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Colossians 2:2 (#2)

"their"

Paul here switches from the second person to the third person because he wishes to include everyone he has not met in person, including the Colossians. If it would be helpful in your language, you could: (1) use the second person from the previous verse but make it clear that this includes everyone Paul has not met in person. Alternate translation "your hearts and their" (2) retain the third person here and reverse the list in the previous verse as suggested by the note there

See: First, Second or Third Person

Colossians 2:2 (#3)

"their hearts might be encouraged, having been brought together"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express these verbs in their active forms, with Paul as the subject of the "encouraging" and God as the subject of the "bringing together." Alternate translation: "I might encourage their hearts, with God bringing them together"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 2:2 (#4)

"their hearts"

Here when Paul refers to **their hearts**, the Colossians would have understood him to mean the entire person. Paul uses **hearts** because his culture identified **hearts** as the body part where people experienced encouragement. If it would be

helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that identifies the location where people experience encouragement in your culture, or you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "they"

See: Synecdoche

Colossians 2:2 (#5)

"all the riches of the full assurance"

Paul here speaks as if **full assurance** could be characterized as having **all the riches**. He uses this metaphor to describe **the full assurance** as complete and valuable. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "all the benefits of having complete assurance" or "all the blessings of the full assurance"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:2 (#6)

"of the full assurance of understanding"

Here Paul uses the possessive form to speak of **understanding** that is the source of **full assurance**. If your language would not use the possessive form for this, you could use a relative clause to translate **of understanding**. (From the rest of the verse, it is clear that what is understood is **the mystery of God**.) Alternate translation: "of the full assurance that comes from understanding" or "of understanding the truth that brings full assurance"

See: Possession

Colossians 2:2 (#7)

"into all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, into knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ"

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind **full assurance**, **understanding**, and **knowledge**, you could express the ideas with verbs. Alternate translation: "into all the riches that come from being confident that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ" or "having all the riches that come when they completely trust

God because they understand, that is, they know the mystery of God, Christ"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:2 (#8)

"of understanding, into knowledge"

Here, the words **understanding** and **knowledge** mean basically the same thing. Paul uses both words to emphasize the breadth of spiritual knowledge he speaks about. If your language does not use repetition in this way or has only one word for this concept, you could use just one word or translate **understanding** with an adjective such as "full" or "true." Alternate translation: "of true knowledge" or "of full knowledge"

See: Doublet

Colossians 2:2 (#9)

"knowledge of the mystery"

Here, Paul uses the possessive form to speak of **knowledge** about the **mystery**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate **knowledge** with a verb such as "knowing" or use different prepositions, such as "about." Alternate translation: "knowing about the mystery"

See: Possession

Colossians 2:2 (#10)

"of the mystery of God"

Paul here uses the possessive form to speak about **the mystery** that comes from **God**. Only **God** can reveal the content of this **mystery**. If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could express the idea by using a relative clause. Alternate translation: "of the mystery that God reveals" or "of the mystery known by God"

See: Possession

Colossians 2:3 (#1)

"all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden"

If your language does not use this form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: "God has hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 2:3 (#2)

"in whom all the treasures" - "are hidden"

Paul here speaks of the Messiah as if he were a container that could "hide" **treasures**. He speaks this way to emphasize the value of what Christians receive from God when they are united to the Messiah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "from whom all the blessings ... can be received"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:3 (#3)

"all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden"

Paul here uses the possessive form to explain what the **treasures** are: **wisdom** and **knowledge**. If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could clarify that **wisdom** and **knowledge** are the **treasures**. Alternate translation: "are hidden all the treasures, which are wisdom and knowledge," or "are all God's wisdom and knowledge, which are like a treasure that has been hidden"

See: Possession

Colossians 2:3 (#4)

"of wisdom and knowledge"

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind **wisdom** and **knowledge**, you could express the ideas behind these abstract nouns with adjectives such as "wise" and "knowledgeable." Alternate translation: "of wise and knowledgeable thinking"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:3 (#5)

"of wisdom and knowledge"

The words **wisdom** and **knowledge** mean very similar things. The repetition is used to emphasize the breadth of spiritual wisdom. If your language does not use repetition in this way or has only one word for this concept, you could use just one word or translate **wisdom** as an adjective such as "wise." Alternate translation: "of wisdom" or "of knowledge" or "of wise knowledge"

See: Doublet

Colossians 2:4 (#1)

"this"

The word **this** refers to what Paul has said in [2:2-3](#) about the Messiah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could summarize what Paul has said instead of using **this**. Alternate translation: "these things about the Messiah"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 2:4 (#2)

"no one might deceive you"

Alternate translation: "people cannot deceive you" or "no one will mislead you"

Colossians 2:4 (#3)

"persuasive speech"

The phrase **persuasive speech** refers to arguments that appear plausible. The phrase itself does not suggest that the arguments are true or false, but the context here suggests that the arguments are false even though they sound believable. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or a short phrase that expresses this idea. Alternate translation: "plausible arguments" or "fine-sounding arguments"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 2:5 (#1)

"For"

The word **For** introduces further support for why the Colossians should not be “deceived” ([2:4](#)). Even if Paul is physically absent, he is thinking about them and caring for them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could specify what the word **For** is supporting. Alternate translation: “Do not let yourselves be deceived, because”

See: Connecting Words and Phrases

Colossians 2:5 (#2)

“even if”

Paul speaks as if being **absent** were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language would not use a conditional statement for something that is a current fact, you could translate these words as an affirmation. Alternate translation: “while” or “although”

See: Connect — Factual Conditions

Colossians 2:5 (#3)

“I am absent in the flesh”

In Paul’s culture, being **absent in the flesh** is a figurative way to speak about not being present in person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or translate the idea plainly. Alternate translation: “I am not there with you” or “I am not present with you”

See: Idiom

Colossians 2:5 (#4)

“yet”

The word **yet** introduces a contrast with **absent in the flesh**. While the Colossians might expect that, since Paul is **absent in the flesh**, he is also absent “in the spirit,” Paul says the opposite: he is with them **in the spirit**. Use a word that indicates contrast or contraexpectation in your language. Alternate translation: “despite this” or “you may be sure”

See: Connect — Contrast Relationship

Colossians 2:5 (#5)

“I am with you in the spirit”

In Paul’s culture, being with someone **in the spirit** is a figurative way to speak of thinking about and caring about that person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable metaphor or plainly. Alternate translation: “I am still connected to you” or “it is as though I were present”

See: Idiom

Colossians 2:5 (#6)

“in the spirit”

Here, **the spirit** could refer to: (1) Paul’s spirit, which would be the part of him that rejoices over the Colossians from a distance. Alternate translation: “in my spirit” (2) the Holy Spirit, which connects Paul with the Colossians, even though they are not physically together. Alternate translation: “in God’s Spirit” or “by the power of God’s Spirit”

Colossians 2:5 (#7)

“rejoicing and seeing”

Here, **rejoicing and seeing** are what Paul does while he is with them **in the spirit**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make the relationship between the ideas more explicit. Alternate translation: (adding a period after “spirit”) “When I think about you, I rejoice and see”

See: Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

Colossians 2:5 (#8)

“rejoicing and seeing”

Paul here expresses a single idea with the two words **rejoicing** and **seeing**. He means that he “rejoices” when he “sees.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea by translating **rejoicing** as an adverb or prepositional phrase. Alternate translation: “joyfully seeing” or “delighting to witness”

See: Hendiadys

Colossians 2:5 (#9)**"your good order"**

The phrase **good order** refers to behavior that properly fits into a larger pattern or arrangement. In the context, that larger pattern is what God expects of his people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable term or translate the idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: "the fact that you behave according to God's standards"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 2:5 (#10)**"the strength of your faith"**

Paul uses the possessive form to describe the Colossians' **faith** as something that has **strength**. If your language does not use the possessive form to express this idea, you could express the idea by translating **strength** with an adjective such as "strong." Alternate translation: "your strong faith"

See: Possession

Colossians 2:5 (#11)**"the strength of your faith"**

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind the words **strength** and **faith**, you could express the ideas behind these abstract nouns in another way. Alternate translation: "how strongly you believe" or "the fact that you firmly believe"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:6 (#1)**"Therefore"**

The word **Therefore** draws an inference or conclusion from what Paul has said in [2:1-5](#), particularly what he has said about Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could specify more explicitly what Paul is basing his inference on. Alternate translation: "Since these things about the Messiah are true"

See: Connecting Words and Phrases

Colossians 2:6 (#2)**"as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him"**

Paul here draws a comparison between the way in which the Colossians **received** the Messiah and the way in which he wishes them to behave now. If your language would put the comparison second, you could reverse the two clauses. Alternate translation: "walk in Christ Jesus the Lord just as you received him"

See: Information Structure

Colossians 2:6 (#3)**"you received Christ"**

Paul says that the Colossians **received Christ** as if they had welcomed him into their homes or received him as a gift. What this means is that they believed in Jesus and the teachings about him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that refers to coming to believe in Jesus, or you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "you first believed in Christ"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:6 (#4)**"walk in him"**

In Paul's culture, to **walk** is a common metaphor for how people live their lives, and the words **in him** refer to being united to Christ. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different verb that refers to behavior in life and connect it with how you have translated "in Christ" elsewhere. Alternate translation: "act as those who are united to the Messiah" or "conduct yourselves as those who are in union with him"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:7 (#1)**"being rooted" - "built up" - "confirmed" - "abounding"**

Paul uses these four verbs to give examples of how the Colossians should "walk in" the Messiah ([2:6](#)). If it would be helpful in your language, you could add a phrase that makes this relationship clear.

Alternate translation: (starting a new sentence)
 "Walking in him entails being rooted ... built up ... confirmed ... abounding"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 2:7 (#2)

"being rooted" - "built up" - "confirmed"

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could translate all three of these words in their active forms with the Colossians as the subject. Alternate translation: "rooting yourselves ... building yourselves up ... having confidence"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 2:7 (#3)

"being rooted" - "in him"

Paul wants the Colossians to be united so closely to Christ that he speaks of this union as if the Colossians were a plant with roots growing into Christ. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable metaphor, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: "being closely connected with ... in him" or "being more dependent on ... in him"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:7 (#4)

"and built up in him"

Paul wants the Colossians to base everything they think and do on Christ as if they were a house built on Christ, who is the foundation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable metaphor, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: "in him, and basing everything you think and do on him," or "in Christ, and believing more and more firmly in him,"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:7 (#5)

"confirmed in the faith"

The word **confirmed** refers to something being sure or valid. If it would be helpful in your

language, you could use a comparable expression or a short phrase. Alternate translation: "sure about the faith" or "strong in your faith"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 2:7 (#6)

"in the faith"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **faith**, you could express the idea in a different way, such as with a relative clause. Alternate translation: "in what you believe"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:7 (#7)

"you were taught"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could translate this verb: (1) in its active form with Epaphras as the subject (we know he was their teacher from [1:7](#)). See the UST. (2) with a verb such as "learned." Alternate translation: "you learned"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 2:7 (#8)

"abounding in thanksgiving"

If your language does not use an abstract for the idea behind **thanksgiving**, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: "being very thankful"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:8 (#1)

"Beware lest someone will be the one taking you captive"

Connecting Statement:
 Paul uses this clause to warn the Colossians against any person who wishes to take them captive. If your language does not use this form, you could simplify or restructure the clause so that it does not include both **someone** and **the one**. Alternate translation: "Beware lest anyone take you captive" or "Make sure that no one takes you captive"

See: Idiom

Colossians 2:8 (#2)**"the one taking you captive"**

Paul speaks of those who are trying to deceive the Colossians as if they were capturing the Colossians as prisoners. He uses this language to portray the false teachers as enemies who do not care about the Colossians but only want to use them for their own benefit. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea in plain language. Alternate translation: "the one who convinces you to believe a lie"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:8 (#3)**"philosophy and empty deceit"**

The words **philosophy** and **empty deceit** work together to express one idea: human **philosophy** that is **empty** of useful content and deceitful. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea in one phrase. Alternate translation: "empty, deceitful philosophy"

See: Hendiadys

Colossians 2:8 (#4)**"philosophy and empty deceit"**

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **philosophy** and **deceit**, you could express these ideas in another way. Alternate translation: "the empty and false way that godless people understand the world"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:8 (#5)**"empty deceit"**

Paul speaks of deceitful **philosophy** as if it were a container that had nothing in it. He means that the deceitful **philosophy** has nothing important or meaningful to contribute. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea in plain language.

Alternate translation: "valueless deceit" or "deceit with no content"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:8 (#6)**"the tradition of men"**

The **tradition of men** refers to the ways in which humans behave that they learned from their families and pass on to their children. If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea of **tradition**, you could a phrase that refers to traditions that are passed on from parents to children. Alternate translation: "customary human thinking and behavior"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:8 (#7)**"of men"**

Although the word **men** is masculine, Paul is using it to refer to anyone, whether man or woman. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a non-gendered word or refer to both genders. Alternate translation: "of people" or "of humans"

See: When Masculine Words Include Women

Colossians 2:8 (#8)**"the elemental teaching of the world"**

The phrase **elemental teaching** could refer to: (1) basic human opinions about how the world works. Alternate translation: "human worldviews" (2) the spiritual powers of this world. Alternate translation: "spiritual beings that rule the world"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 2:9 (#1)**"For"**

Here, the word **For** introduces the reason why the Colossians need to watch out for any teaching that is "not according to Christ" ([2:8](#)): Christ is God and only he provides access to God. Use a connector that makes this clear in your language. Alternate

translation: "You must beware of any teaching that ignores Christ, because"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Colossians 2:9 (#2)

"in him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form"

Paul speaks as if Jesus were a place in which complete divinity (**fullness of deity**) lives (**dwells**). This metaphor indicates that Jesus, who is human (**in bodily form**), is truly and fully God. If this metaphor does not indicate Jesus' full divinity and full humanity in your language, you could express this idea with a metaphor that does indicate this or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "he is both fully God and fully man"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:9 (#3)

"all the fullness of deity"

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **fullness** and **deity**, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: "everything that it means to be God" or "everything that belongs fully to God"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:10 (#1)

"and"

The word **and** introduces another reason why the Colossians need to watch out for anyone who provides teaching that is "not according to Christ" (2:8): not only is Christ fully God (2:9), but he provides the way in which the Colossians are filled with everything they need. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this link more explicit. Alternate translation: "and furthermore,"

See: Connecting Words and Phrases

Colossians 2:10 (#2)

"you are filled in him"

Here Paul speaks as if people were containers that are filled when they are united to Christ, which means that people receive everything they need, including salvation, in their union with Christ. The word **filled** is very similar to the word Paul used in 2:9 for "fullness." If your language uses similar words in these two sentences, you could use a word like the one you used in 2:9. If not, you could express this idea in another way, use a comparable metaphor, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: "you lack nothing because of your union with the Messiah" or "there is nothing lacking in the way in which God has caused you to live by being joined closely to him"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:10 (#3)

"you are filled"

If in your language does not use this passive form, you could translate this verb in the active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: "God has filled you"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 2:10 (#4)

"the head of all rule and authority"

The expression **head of** here refers to supremacy and authority over something or somebody. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly with another noun, such as "sovereign" or "ruler," or a verb, such as "rule." Alternate translation: "the sovereign over all rule and authority" or "the one who rules over all rule and authority"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:10 (#5)

"of all rule and authority"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the abstract nouns **rule** and **authority** in other ways. These words could refer to: (1) powerful spiritual beings, as in 1:16. Alternate translation: "of all spirit beings who govern and rule" (2) anyone or anything with power and

authority. Alternate translation: "over anyone who rules and commands others"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:10 (#6)

"of all rule and authority"

The terms **rule** and **authority** mean similar things. Paul is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: "over anyone who governs others"

See: Doublet

Colossians 2:11 (#1)

"you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands in the removal of the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ"

Here Paul uses **circumcision** as an image to describe what happens to believers when they are united to the Messiah. In the metaphor, the **circumcision** is completed **without hands**, which means that God accomplishes it. What is "removed" or cut off is the **body of flesh**, which refers to the broken and sinful parts of the person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with the language of analogy or express it plainly. Alternate translation: "you were also marked off by God as his own when he took away your body of flesh by the work of the Messiah"

See: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

Colossians 2:11 (#2)

"in whom you were also circumcised"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could translate this verb in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: "in whom God also circumcised you"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 2:11 (#3)

"in the removal of the body of flesh"

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **removal**, you could express the idea with a verb such as "remove." Alternate translation: "when he removed the body of flesh"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:11 (#4)

"in the circumcision of Christ"

Here, Paul uses the possessive form to connect **circumcision** with **Christ**. This does not refer to when Christ himself was circumcised or how he himself circumcises believers. Instead, the possessive form connects the extended metaphor of circumcision with Christ's work: the circumcision that Paul speaks about is accomplished in what Christ has done. If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could make the relationship between **circumcision** and **Christ** more explicit. Alternate translation: "in the circumcision accomplished by Christ" or "in the circumcision caused by Christ"

See: Possession

Colossians 2:11 (#5)

"of Christ"

Here Paul uses the word **Christ** to refer primarily to what **Christ** has accomplished. If your language does not use a person's name to identify something that they have done, you could clarify that Paul is speaking of the "work" **of Christ**. Alternate translation: "that comes from what Christ did" or "that Christ's work accomplished"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 2:12 (#1)

"having been buried with him in baptism"

Paul here uses a metaphor that connects **baptism** to "burial" to further explain what happens to believers when they are united to Christ. This metaphor expresses how, when they are baptized, believers are united to Christ in his (death and) burial and are no longer who they once were. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with the language of analogy, or

express it plainly. Alternate translation: "having been united with the Messiah in his burial when you were baptized" or "having been baptized in him, as if you were buried with him,"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:12 (#2)

"having been buried with"

Here Paul refers only to being **buried**, but he also implies "dying." If **buried** would not include the idea of "dying" in your language, you could include "dying" in your translation. Alternate translation: "having died and been buried with"

See: Synecdoche

Colossians 2:12 (#3)

"having been buried with him"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could translate this phrase in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: "God burying you with him"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 2:12 (#4)

"in whom you were raised up"

Paul here explains that believers are not only united to Christ in his burial but also in his resurrection. It is by being united to him in his resurrection that believers receive new life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this idea plainly. Alternate translation: "in union with the Messiah in his resurrection you received new life"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:12 (#5)

"you were raised up"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could translate the idea in its active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: "God raised you up"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 2:12 (#6)

"you were raised up" - "the one having raised him from the dead"

Paul uses the words **raised up** and **raised him from the dead** to refer to someone who had died and then came back to life. If your language does not use these words to describe coming back to life, use a comparable idiom or a short phrase. Alternate translation: "you were restored to life ... who restored him to life"

See: Idiom

Colossians 2:12 (#7)

"through faith in the power of God"

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **faith** and **power**, you could express the ideas in another way. Alternate translation: "because you trusted in the powerful God" or "because you believe in the powerful working of God"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:12 (#8)

"the dead"

Paul is using the adjective **dead** as a noun in order to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "among the dead people" or "the dead ones"

See: Nominal Adjectives

Colossians 2:13 (#1)

"you, being dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive together"

Here Paul begins the sentence with **you**, and then he restates **you** when he identifies what God has done for **you**. If your language would not restate **you** or use this structure, you could separate the

two uses of **you** into separate sentences. Alternate translation: "you were dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh. Then, he made you alive together"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

Colossians 2:13 (#2)

"being dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh"

This clause does not refer to the current situation of the Colossians, but rather it describes their situation before God acted to make them alive, as expressed in the rest of the verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that this clause describes a time before **he made you alive**. Alternate translation: "who used to be dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh"

See: Connect — Background Information

Colossians 2:13 (#3)

"you, being dead"

Paul speaks of people who are without Christ as if they were dead. By this he means that those who lack any relationship with God and are not united to Christ are spiritually dead. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that Paul speaks of spiritual death or express the idea with a simile, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: "you, being like dead people" or "you, being totally separated from God"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:13 (#4)

"being dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh"

When Paul speaks of someone **being dead in** something, this identifies both why and in what state the person is dead. In other words, the Colossians were **dead** because of their **trespasses** and because of their **uncircumcision**, and these things also characterized them while they were dead. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a phrase like "because of," or you could translate **trespasses** and **uncircumcision** as descriptors of **dead**. Alternate

translation: "being dead because of your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh" or "being dead, that is, trespassing God's commands and being uncircumcised in your flesh"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:13 (#5)

"in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh"

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **trespasses** and **uncircumcision**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: "because you transgressed God's commands and were uncircumcised in your flesh"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:13 (#6)

"the uncircumcision of your flesh"

Here, **the uncircumcision** could refer: (1) to how the Colossians were not circumcised Jews and thus not part of God's people. Alternate translation: "among the non-Jews without God's promises" or "without circumcision, since you are Gentiles" (2) to the metaphor about circumcision in [2:11](#). Alternate translation: "apart from God's saving work"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 2:13 (#7)

"the uncircumcision of your flesh"

Here Paul uses the possessive form to describe **flesh** that has not been "circumcised." If your language does not express this idea with the possessive form, you could translate **uncircumcision** as an adjective. Alternate translation: "your uncircumcised flesh"

See: Possession

Colossians 2:13 (#8)

"he made you alive together with him"

Here Paul speaks of God's work in restoring people to himself as if he brought these people back to life physically. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that Paul speaks of spiritual life or express the idea with a simile or plainly. Alternate translation: "he did something like making you alive together with him" or "he restored you to proper relationship with him"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:13 (#9)

"he made you alive together with him"

The word **he** refers to God the Father, while the word translated **him** refers to God the Son. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify the antecedent of one or both of these pronouns. Alternate translation: "God made you alive together with the Messiah"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

Colossians 2:14 (#1)

"having canceled the written record of the decrees against us, which were opposed to us, and he has taken {it} out from our midst, having nailed it to the cross"

Paul speaks of the way God forgives our sins as if God **canceled** debts that we owed him. In the metaphor, God has crossed out or erased the **written record** of those debts and thus removed any impact these debts have on our relationship to him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "having taken away the guilt from our sins, he has kept those sins from impacting our relationship with him, having nailed them to the cross"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:14 (#2)

"against us, which were opposed to us"

The phrases **against us** and **opposed to us** might be considered redundant in your language. If this is the case, you could combine the two phrases into one. Alternate translation: "which were opposed to us"

See: Doublet

Colossians 2:14 (#3)

"he has taken {it} out from our midst"

Paul speaks as if the **written record** was within the community of believers, and God takes it away. What he means by this is that the **written record** of our sins no longer affects our relationship with God and each other. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "he has kept it from affecting our relationship with him and others"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:14 (#4)

"having nailed it to the cross"

Here Paul speaks as if God had nailed the "written record" to the cross. He means that Christ's death on the cross "canceled" the "written record" as surely as if it had been nailed to the cross and died with Christ. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea using a simile, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: "destroying it through the Messiah's death on the cross" or "having taken it out of the way through Christ's death"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:15 (#1)

"having stripped" - "he made a public spectacle of {them}, having triumphed over"

Here Paul speaks of God's victory over powerful spiritual beings in terms that fit with what a conqueror often did to his prisoners in Paul's culture. He would make a **public spectacle** or example of them, "stripping" them of their clothes and forcing them to parade behind him in his "triumph." If it would be helpful in your language, you could express these ideas with a comparable metaphor, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: "having defeated ... he showed everyone that he had conquered"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:15 (#2)**"the rulers and the authorities"**

Just as in [1:16](#) and [2:10](#), the **rulers** and **authorities** could refer to: (1) powerful spiritual beings that rule this world. Alternate translation: "the spiritual powers, including those known as rulers and authorities" (2) anybody or anything that rules and has authority. Alternate translation: "those who rule with authority"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 2:15 (#3)**"in it"**

Alternate translation: "by the cross" or "through the cross"

Colossians 2:16 (#1)**"Therefore"**

The word **Therefore** draws an inference or conclusion from what Paul has already said, which can be found in [2:9-15](#): in the work of Christ, the Colossians have received new life and the powers that rule this world have been defeated. Because of these things that have happened, the Colossians should not allow others to judge them in how they behave. Paul is continuing the warning against false teachers that he started in [2:8](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could refer to these ideas more explicitly or use a comparable transition word or phrase. Alternate translation: "In light of all these things" or "Given the Messiah's sufficient work on your behalf"

See: Connecting Words and Phrases

Colossians 2:16 (#2)**"do not let anyone judge you"**

This phrase translates a third-person imperative. If your language has third-person imperatives, you could use one here. If your language does not have third-person imperatives, you could use a comparable phrase or express the idea with a second-person imperative. Alternate translation: "you should not allow anyone to judge you" or "do not permit anyone to judge you"

See: Third-Person Imperatives

Colossians 2:16 (#3)**"in food or in drink or in regard to a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths"**

This list of areas in which someone might judge the Colossians refers to parts of the law of Moses. Some of these areas were also important for other religions in Paul's culture. If Paul's list of things that someone could **judge** the Colossians in would be misunderstood in your translation, you could clarify that these areas are covered by the law of Moses and sometimes by the traditions of other religions as well. Alternate translation: "for how you behave in relationship to the law of Moses and other religious traditions, including in the areas of food and drink and festivals and new moons and Sabbaths"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 2:16 (#4)**"a new moon"**

The word **new moon** refers to a festival or celebration that would take place when it was the time of the new moon. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or translate the idea with a longer phrase. Alternate translation: "a new moon celebration"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 2:17 (#1)**"which are a shadow of the things coming, but the body {is} of Christ"**

A **shadow** shows the shape and outline of a **body**, but it is not the **body** itself. In a similar way, the things listed in the previous verse show the shape and outline of the **things coming**, but the **body** that casts this **shadow** is **Christ**. He is the substance of the **things coming**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "which are a foretaste of the things coming, but the full experience is of Christ" or "which hint at the things that were to come, but Christ is the one who came"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:17 (#2)

"a shadow of the things coming"

Paul here uses the possession form to show that the **shadow** is cast by the **things coming**. If your language would not use the possessive form to express this idea, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: "a shadow cast by the things coming"

See: Possession

Colossians 2:17 (#3)

"of the things coming"

The **things coming** primarily refers to things that will happen or be experienced in the future. They can be connected with both the first and the second coming of Christ, which is why the **body** is of Christ in this verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that **coming** refers to what Christ has blessed believers with at his first coming and what he will bless them with at his second coming. Alternate translation: "blessings that Christ brings"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 2:17 (#4)

"the body {is} of Christ"

Here Paul uses the possessive form to identify **Christ** as the **body** that casts the "shadow." If your language would not use the possessive form to express this idea, you could express the idea with a simple "being" verb. Alternate translation: "the body is Christ"

See: Possession

Colossians 2:18 (#1)

"no one" - "he has seen," - "his"

The words **no one**, **he**, and **his** do not refer to one male person. Instead, they refer in a generic way to anyone who acts in these ways. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words with a comparable generic phrase in your

language or make them plural. Alternate translation: "no one ... they have seen ... their"

See: When Masculine Words Include Women

Colossians 2:18 (#2)

"Let no one" - "deprive you of your prize"

This phrase translates a third-person imperative. If your language has third-person imperatives, you could use one here. If your language does not, you could use a comparable phrase or express the idea with a second-person imperative. Alternate translation: "Do not allow anyone ... deprive you of your prize" or "Be on your guard against anyone ... so that he does not deprive you of your prize"

See: Third-Person Imperatives

Colossians 2:18 (#3)

"Let no one" - "deprive you of your prize"

Here Paul refers to the false teachers as if they were judges or umpires at a contest who could decide against the Colossians, thus keeping them from receiving the prize for winning the contest. This metaphor fits with the "judging" language in [2:16](#). These two verses together suggest that the Colossians are tempted to choose the false teachers as their judges instead of Christ. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "Let no one ... act instead of Christ as your judge"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:18 (#4)

"false humility"

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **humility**, you could express the idea in another way, such as with a verb. Alternate translation: "humbling themselves falsely"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:18 (#5)**"worship of the angels"**

Paul uses the possessive form to describe the act of worshiping angels, not the worship that angels present to God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify with a phrase such as "presented to." Alternate translation: "worship presented to the angels"

See: Possession

Colossians 2:18 (#6)**"standing on"**

Here Paul speaks as if the false teachers were **standing on things** they have seen. This metaphor means that they talk about what they have seen and base teachings on it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate **standing** with a verb that expresses this idea plainly. Alternate translation: "constantly talking about" or "basing his teaching on"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:18 (#7)**"things he has seen"**

In the context of angel worship, **things he has seen** refers to visions and dreams that reveal powerful beings, heaven, the future, or other secrets. If these implications would not be understood in your language, you could use a word or phrase that refers to these kinds of visions or dreams or use a phrase to express the idea. Alternate translation: "things he has seen in visions" or "secrets revealed to him in visions"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 2:18 (#8)**"becoming puffed up without cause by the mind of his flesh"**

If your language does not use this passive form, you could translate the phrase in its active form. Alternate translation: "the mind of his flesh puffing him up without cause"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 2:18 (#9)**"becoming puffed up"**

Here Paul describes people who boast as if they had made themselves larger by filling themselves with air. He means that they think of themselves as more important than they really are. If **becoming puffed up** would not mean "becoming prideful" in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "becoming self-important"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:18 (#10)**"by the mind of his flesh"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **mind**, you could express this idea by using a verb such as "think." Alternate translation: "by how he thinks in fleshly ways"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:18 (#11)**"the mind of his flesh"**

Here Paul uses the possessive form to speak of a **mind** that belongs to the **flesh**. This phrase refers to thinking that is characterized by the flesh in its weakness and sinfulness. If your language does not use the possessive form to express that idea, you could express the idea by translating **flesh** as an adjective. Alternate translation: "his fleshly mind" or "his unspiritual mind"

See: Possession

Colossians 2:19 (#1)**"not holding fast to the head"**

Paul describes the false teachers as if they had let go of the **head**, which is Christ. This means that they have stopped treating Christ as the source and authority behind their teaching. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or translate the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "not staying

connected to the head" or "ceasing to depend on Christ, who is the head"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:19 (#2)

"to the head, from which the whole body, being supplied and held together through the joints and ligaments, grows with the growth from God"

In this verse Paul uses an extended metaphor in which Christ is the **head** of the **body**, which is his church, which has **joints** and **ligaments**, and which **grows**. Paul uses this metaphor to describe how Christ leads, directs, nourishes, and unifies his church to help it become what he wants it to be. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea using the language of analogy, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: "to the Messiah, from whom the whole church receives nourishment and leadership and in whom the church is united as it grows with the growth from God"

See: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

Colossians 2:19 (#3)

"from which the whole body, being supplied and held together through the joints and ligaments"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the sentence in active form. Alternate translation: "which supplies and holds the whole body together throughout the joints and ligaments"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 2:19 (#4)

"and" - "the joints" - "ligaments"

The word **joints** refers to where parts of the body are connected together, while the word translated **ligaments** refers to what holds these parts together. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use technical terms that correspond to **joints** and **ligaments**, or you could use more general language for what holds the body together.

Alternate translation: "what holds it together" or "all its parts"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 2:19 (#5)

"grows with the growth"

The words **grows** and **growth** are directly related and may be redundant in your language. If your language does not use repetition in this way, you could use just one form of "grow." Alternate translation: "experiences the growth"

See: Doublet

Colossians 2:19 (#6)

"with the growth from God"

Paul here speaks of **growth** that is **from God** to show that the church's **growth** is given by **God** and fits with what **God** desires. If your language would not use this form to express that idea, you could express the idea with a relative clause. Alternate translation: "with the growth that God gives" or "with the growth that God enables"

See: Possession

Colossians 2:20 (#1)

"If you died with Christ"

Paul is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, then you could translate the clause as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "Since you died with Christ"

See: Connect — Factual Conditions

Colossians 2:20 (#2)

"you died with Christ"

Paul now returns to a metaphor he has used earlier: believers have died and "been buried with" Christ ([2:12](#)). This means that, in their union with Christ, believers share in his death so that they too have died. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the language of analogy, or express

the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "you participated in the Messiah's death"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:20 (#3)

"you died with Christ from"

To "die from" something does not identify what caused the death, but rather it indicates what the death separated the person from. Here, then, the Colossians were separated from the **elemental principles** by participating in Christ's death. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or express the idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: "you died with Christ, which separated you from" or "you died with Christ, which rescued you from"

See: Idiom

Colossians 2:20 (#4)

"the elemental principles of the world"

As in [2:8](#), the word **elemental principles** could refer to: (1) the spiritual powers of this world. Alternate translation: "the powerful spiritual beings that rule this world" (2) basic human opinions about how the world works. Alternate translation: "the basic things that humans teach about the world"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 2:20 (#5)

"why, as living in the world, are you being subjected to its decrees"

If this structure would be difficult to understand in your language, you could move the phrase **as living in the world** to the end of the sentence. Alternate translation: "why are you being subjected to the world's decrees as living in the world"

See: Information Structure

Colossians 2:20 (#6)

"living in the world"

Paul uses the verb **living** to describe the Colossian's way of life. They are indeed physically alive and in the world, but he wants them to behave in ways that do not match what people **in the world** normally do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a verbal phrase such as "belonging to" or "conforming to." Alternate translation: "belonging to the world" or "conforming to the world"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 2:20 (#7)

"as living in the world"

In this context, the word **as** introduces something that is not true: the Colossians do not actually live **in the world**. If **as** would be misunderstood your language, you could clarify that **living in the world** is not true of the Colossians, using a phrase such as "as if." Alternate translation: "as if living in the world"

See: Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions

Colossians 2:20 (#8)

"why, as living in the world, are you being subjected to its decrees"

Paul does not ask this question because he is looking for information. Rather, he asks it to involve the Corinthians in what he is arguing. Here, there is no answer to the question, since that is exactly Paul's point. There is no reason for them to be **subjected to its decrees**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea as an imperative or a "should" statement. Alternate translation: "do not, as living in the world, be subjected to its decrees" or "you should not, as living in the world, be subjected to its decrees"

See: Rhetorical Question

Colossians 2:20 (#9)

"are you being subjected to its decrees"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in its active form, perhaps by using a similar verb. Alternate translation: "do you submit to its decrees" or "do you subject yourselves to its decrees"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 2:20 (#10)

"are you being subjected to its decrees"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **decrees**, you could express the idea with a relative clause. Alternate translation: "are you being subjected to what people require" or "are you being subjected to what it commands"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:21 (#1)

"You may not handle, nor taste, nor touch"

This verse gives three commands that are not from Paul, but rather they are examples of the "decrees" from [2:20](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could introduce these commands with a phrase, such as "for example," that shows that they connect to the "decrees" in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "for example, 'You may not handle, nor taste, nor touch!'"

Colossians 2:21 (#2)

"You may not handle, nor taste, nor touch"

Paul does not express what these commands say not to **handle, taste, or touch**, but it is clear that only certain things would be included, not all things. If your language would make this information explicit, you could add a generic phrase such as "certain things" or use words that match each command. Alternate translation: "You may not handle certain objects, nor taste certain foods and drinks, nor touch certain people"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 2:21 (#3)

"You may" - "handle," - "taste," - "touch"

These commands are addressed to **You** in the singular. Most likely, Paul refers to specific commands given to one person in a specific situation. However, he does intend these to be taken as examples of commands that might be given to any person among the Colossians. If your

language can use a command in the singular as a generic example, you could do so here. If this does not make sense in your language, you could use plural commands here. Alternate translation: "You all may ... handle ... taste ... touch"

See: Forms of 'You' — Singular

Colossians 2:22 (#1)

"which"

This pronoun refers to the commands in the previous verse, especially focusing on the implied objects of the rules. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a noun or a short phrase. Alternate translation: "The things that these commands regulate"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

Colossians 2:22 (#2)

"are all for destruction with the use"

This phrase means that all the objects that the commands in the previous verse are about end up being destroyed when they are used. In other words, food and drink are destroyed when they are eaten, and tools eventually break when they are used. By describing the objects in this way, Paul shows that the rules about these objects are not very important. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind this phrase differently, such as with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "all end up in destruction because of their use"

See: Idiom

Colossians 2:22 (#3)

"for destruction with the use"

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **destruction** and **use**, you could express the idea by using verbs. Alternate translation: "destroyed when they are used"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:22 (#4)**"the commands and teachings of men"**

Paul here uses the possessive form to describe **commands and teachings** that come from **men**. If your language does not use the possessive form to express that idea, you could clarify that these teachings "come from" **men**. Alternate translation: "the commands and teachings that come from men" or "the commands and teachings that men make"

See: Possession

Colossians 2:22 (#5)**"the commands and teachings of men"**

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **commands** and **teachings**, you could express the idea by using verbs. Alternate translation: "what men command and teach"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:22 (#6)**"of men"**

Although the word **men** is masculine, Paul is using it to refer to anyone, whether men or women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a non-gendered word or refer to both genders. Alternate translation: "of men and women" or "of humans"

See: When Masculine Words Include Women

Colossians 2:23 (#1)**"having indeed a word of wisdom"**

Commands that have **a word of wisdom** are commands that come from wise thinking or require wise behavior. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this idiom with a comparable expression, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: "being indeed characterized by wisdom"

See: Idiom

Colossians 2:23 (#2)**"a word"**

Here, **a word** represents a message that is made up of words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "a message" or "a lesson"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 2:23 (#3)**"which, having indeed a word of wisdom in self-made religion and false humility {and} severity of the body"**

While there is no grammatical marker for a condition here, the word **in** functionally introduces a condition: these commands have **a word of wisdom** "if" one values **self-made religion and false humility and severity of the body**. It is only if one values these things that the commands have wisdom. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea by using a conditional expression, or use the word "seem." Alternate translation: "which, having indeed a word of wisdom if one values self-made religion and false humility and severity of the body" or "which, seeming to have a word of wisdom for those who practice self-made religion and false humility and severity of the body"

See: Hypothetical Situations

Colossians 2:23 (#4)**"having indeed a word of wisdom in self-made religion and false humility {and} severity of the body"**

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **wisdom, religion, humility, and severity**, you could rephrase this part of the verse so that you could express these ideas with verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "having indeed a word that seems wise according to people who serve God in their own way, who humble themselves for gain, and who act severely to their bodies"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:23 (#5)**"self-made religion"**

The phrase **self-made religion** could describe: (1) people who worship God however they want to. Alternate translation: "invented religion" (2) people who pretend to worship God but do not. Alternate translation: "mock worship" or "false worship"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 2:23 (#6)**"and} severity of the body"**

The phrase **severity of the body** refers to treating one's body harshly as part of one's religious practice. This could include beating oneself, not eating enough, or other ascetic practices. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an expression that refers to religious practice or translate the idea with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "and wounding one's body" or "and torturing one's body"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 2:23 (#7)**"are not of any value"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **value**, you could combine it with the verbal phrase **are not** to create a new phrase. Alternate translation: "do nothing" or "are ineffective"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 2:23 (#8)**"indulgence of the flesh"**

Paul uses the possessive form to speak of **indulgence** one gives to the **flesh**. If your language would not use the possessive form to express this idea, you could translate **indulgence** with a verb such as "indulging." Alternate translation: "indulging the flesh."

See: Possession

Colossians 2:23 (#9)**"indulgence of the flesh"**

If one "indulges" **the flesh**, this means that one has behaved in ways that match what one's weak and sinful parts wish. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea by using a word for "sin." Alternate translation: "sin" or "giving in to sin"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 2:23 (#10)**"indulgence of the flesh"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **indulgence**, you could use a verb, such as "indulge." Alternate translation: "indulging the flesh"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:1 (#1)**"therefore"**

The word **therefore** introduces an exhortation based on what Paul has already said about being "raised with Christ" in [2:12](#). Use a word or phrase that introduces an inference or concluding command based on what has already been said. Alternate translation: "then"

See: Connecting Words and Phrases

Colossians 3:1 (#2)**"If," - "you were raised with Christ"**

Paul is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "Since ... you were raised with Christ"

See: Connect — Factual Conditions

Colossians 3:1 (#3)**"you were raised with Christ"**

Paul again states that believers have been raised from the dead with Christ. By this, he means that believers are united to Christ in his resurrection and thus receive new life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this idea plainly. Alternate translation: "in union with the Messiah in his resurrection you received new life"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:1 (#4)

"you were raised with"

Paul uses the word **raised** to refer to someone who had died coming back to life. If this word does not refer to coming back to life in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or a short phrase. Alternate translation: "you were restored to life with"

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:1 (#5)

"you were raised with"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: "God the Father raised you with"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 3:1 (#6)

"seek the things above"

Here Paul speaks as if he wants the Colossians to look for or try to find **things above**. By using the word **seek**, Paul wants to tell the Colossians to focus on **the things above** as if they were something valuable that the Colossians had lost and needed to find. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable metaphor, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: "direct your attention to the things above" or "focus on the things above"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:1 (#7)

"the things above"

The **things above** is another term for heavenly things, which Paul makes clear in the next phrase. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that the phrase refers specifically to things in heaven. Alternate translation: "the heavenly things"

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:1 (#8)

"sitting at the right hand of God"

This phrase implies two things. First, what Christ sits on is the divine throne in heaven. Second, **sitting** on this throne means that Christ has assumed a position of authority over the universe with God the Father. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make either or both of these points explicit. Alternate translation: "sitting on the throne at the right hand of God" or "ruling at the right hand of God"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 3:2 (#1)

"Think about"

The phrase **Think about** refers not just to reasoning but also to focus and desire. Alternate translation: "Focus on"

Colossians 3:2 (#2)

"the things above"

Just as in 3:1, the **things above** is another term for heavenly things. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that the phrase refers specifically to things in heaven. Alternate translation: "the heavenly things"

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:2 (#3)

"the things on the earth"

The **things on the earth** describes those things in this world that are not connected to Christ, which are not **the things above**. Not thinking about **the things on the earth** does not mean that the Colossians are supposed to abandon all care for earthly things. Instead, Paul is urging them to focus on Christ and what he has promised for them, not on whatever they could gain on earth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify this contrast by further describing **the things on the earth**. Alternate translation: “the things that matter in this world”

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 3:3 (#1)

"For"

The word **For** introduces the reason why the Colossians should think about the things above ([3:1-2](#)): it is because they **died**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the transition more explicitly. Alternate translation: “You should think about the things above because”

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Colossians 3:3 (#2)

"you died"

Here Paul expresses in slightly different form the idea he already stated in [2:20](#): the Colossians have been united to Christ in his death. As Christ actually died, so God counts the Colossian believers as having **died** with Christ. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this idea as you did in [2:20](#), or express it plainly. Alternate translation: “you died in union with the Messiah” or “you participated in the Messiah’s death”

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:3 (#3)

"your life has been hidden with Christ in God"

Here Paul speaks as if the Colossians’ lives were objects that could be **hidden** where Christ is, and as if the place they were hidden was God. By using this metaphor, Paul wants the Colossians to know that they are safe (**with Christ in God**) but also that their new life is not yet fully revealed (**hidden**). If

it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: “God is protecting your new life with Christ and will reveal it when the time comes”

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:3 (#4)

"your life has been hidden with Christ in God"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form. Alternate translation: “God has hidden your life with Christ in himself”

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 3:3 (#5)

"your life has been hidden"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **life**, you could rephrase the sentence so that you could use a verb for “living.” Alternate translation: “you live in a hidden way”

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:4 (#1)

"Christ, your life, is revealed"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could translate the idea in active form with: (1) Christ as the subject. Alternate translation: “Christ, your life, reveals himself” or “Christ, your life, appears” (2) God the Father as the subject. Alternate translation: “God the Father reveals Christ, your life,”

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 3:4 (#2)

"your life"

Continuing the theme of the Colossians’ life being hidden with Christ, Paul now identifies Christ as the Colossians’ **life**. In other words, if the Colossians’ life is hidden with Christ, then Christ can be called their **life**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a comparable metaphor, or express it plainly.

Alternate translation: "who holds your life" or "with whom you have life"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:4 (#3)

"your life"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **life**, you could express the idea with a verb for "living." Alternate translation: "in whom you live"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:4 (#4)

"is revealed," - "will be revealed with him"

Paul uses the word **is revealed** to refer to Christ's second coming, when he is **revealed** to everyone as who he truly is. Paul uses the phrase **will be revealed with him** to refer to how the Colossians will participate with Christ in that second coming and also be **revealed** as who they truly are. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use words such as "coming" or "returning" instead of "revealing." Alternate translation: "comes again ... will come with him" or "returns ... will return with him"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:4 (#5)

"When" - "then"

The word **When** indicates a moment in time, and the word translated **then** refers back to that same time. Therefore, the events described in two parts of this sentence occur at the same time. Use a construction that indicates simultaneous time in your language. Alternate translation: "When ... at the same time"

See: Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

Colossians 3:4 (#6)

"in glory"

As a previous note pointed out, the "revealing" language suggests that something will be revealed

about Christ and the Colossians. Here, Paul describes it as **glory**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that this is one thing that **is revealed** about Christ and the Colossians: they are glorious. Alternate translation: "as glorious"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:4 (#7)

"in glory"

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **glory**, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: "as very great"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:5 (#1)

"therefore"

Here, the word **therefore** introduces an exhortation based on previous statements. In this case, Paul bases his exhortation on what he has said about the Colossians' union with Christ and its end goal: being revealed with him in glory. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable connecting word or express the idea with a phrase that refers back to what Paul has already said. Alternate translation: "because of your union with Christ"

See: Connecting Words and Phrases

Colossians 3:5 (#2)

"Put to death, therefore"

If your language would normally put a transition word like **therefore** at the beginning of the sentence, you could move it there in your translation. Alternate translation: "Therefore, put to death"

See: Information Structure

Colossians 3:5 (#3)

"Put to death," - "the members {that are} on the earth"

Here Paul speaks of the **members** as if they were people that one could kill or **Put to death**. By using this metaphor, he wants to show the Colossians that the evil desires he lists should be treated as enemies and dealt with as harshly as possible. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "Eliminate ... the members that are on the earth"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:5 (#4)

"the members {that are} on the earth"

Paul here speaks of sins as if they were **members** or limbs of the body that are part of the person **on the earth**. What this metaphor means is that these sins can be so much a part of a person while they are living on earth that getting rid of them is like cutting off an arm or leg. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "the sins that have become part of you while you live on earth"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:5 (#5)

"sexual immorality, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and envy, which is idolatry"

If your language would not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **immorality, uncleanness, passion, desire, envy**, and **idolatry**, you could rephrase this sentence and use adjectives or verbs to express the idea. Alternate translation: "behaving in ways that are sexually immoral, unclean, wrongly emotional, lustful, and envious, which is idolatrous"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:5 (#6)

"uncleanness"

The word **uncleanness** describes morally dirty or impure behavior. This is a general term that covers many sins that would make one unclean, that is, that would make other people avoid one. If you have a comparable expression in your language,

you could use it here, or you could express the idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: "unclean behavior" or "disgusting acts"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:5 (#7)

"passion"

The word **passion** refers to negative emotions that are triggered by outside events. Examples would include forms of anger and jealousy. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that these are improper emotions, since Paul is not saying that all emotions are wrong. Alternate translation: "improper emotions" or "evil passions"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:5 (#8)

"evil desire"

The word **desire** refers to longing after something, often in a sexual context. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable word or express the idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: "evil lust" or "evil longing"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:5 (#9)

"envy"

Here Paul uses the word **envy** to refer to wanting more than one needs, especially wanting more than what others have. If you have a comparable term, you could use it here, or you could express the idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: "desiring to have more than what others have"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:5 (#10)

"which"

Here, **which** refers back to **envy** only, not to other items in the list. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that **which** refers to **envy**. Alternate translation: "and envy"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

Colossians 3:6 (#1)

"is coming"

Many ancient manuscripts include "on the sons of disobedience" after **is coming**. Several early and reliable manuscripts do not include it, however. If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to include these words if that translation includes them. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to follow the example of the ULT and not include these words. The phrase "sons of disobedience" is an idiom that refers to people who disobey. Alternate translation: "is coming against people who disobey"

See: Textual Variants

Colossians 3:6 (#2)

"because of which"

With this phrase, Paul identifies the sins listed in the previous verse as the reason why God's "wrath" is coming. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify this idea by including a word such as "sins" in the phrase. Alternate translation: "because of which sins"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

Colossians 3:6 (#3)

"the wrath of God is coming"

Here Paul speaks of **the wrath of God** as if it were a person or package that can arrive somewhere. By this, he means that God has not yet acted upon his **wrath** but that he will act soon. The Colossians can expect **the wrath** to come soon, just like a package that is arriving soon. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "God will act upon his wrath soon" or "the wrath of God will be enacted soon"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:6 (#4)

"the wrath of God is coming"

When the **wrath of God** "is coming," it must arrive somewhere and be against certain people. If you would explicitly state these things in your language, you could clarify that the **wrath of God** comes on earth and against those who do the sins listed in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "the wrath of God is coming on earth against those who do these things"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 3:6 (#5)

"the wrath of God"

The **wrath of God** does not refer simply to an emotion. Rather, this phrase primarily refers to God acting against the sin he hates (examples of which appear in the previous verse). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that indicates action and not just emotion. Alternate translation: "punishment from God"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 3:7 (#1)

"in which"

The word **which** refers again back to the list of sins in [3:5](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could include the word "sins" to clarify this reference. Alternate translation: "in which sins"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

Colossians 3:7 (#2)

"in which you also formerly walked"

Paul speaks of behavior that is characteristic of one's life as if it were something that one could "walk in." By this, he means that the sinful behaviors were things that they normally did. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable metaphor or express it plainly. Alternate translation: "which formerly characterized your lives too"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:7 (#3)**"formerly walked"**

The word **formerly** is used to refer to some indefinite time in the past. Here Paul uses it to refer to the time before the Colossians believed in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify the specific time reference. Alternate translation: "walked before you believed"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 3:7 (#4)**"when"**

The word **when** introduces a clause that occurs simultaneously with the main clause. Here, the Colossians "lived" **in them** at the same time as they were "walking" in them. Use an expression that indicates simultaneous time in your language. Alternate translation: "at the time when"

See: Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

Colossians 3:7 (#5)**"you were living in them"**

The phrase **living in** something could mean: (1) that the Colossians practiced these sins in addition to having lives characterized by them ("walking in them"). Alternate translation: "you were doing these things" (2) that the Colossians were living among people who did these things. Alternate translation: "you were living among people who did these things"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:7 (#6)**"in which you also formerly walked when you were living in them"**

If **which** and **them** both refer to the sins mentioned in [3:5](#), then "walking" and **living in them** mean very similar things. Paul uses the repetition to emphasize how thoroughly the Colossians' lives were characterized by sins. If your language does not use repetition in this way or has only one phrase for this concept, you could use just one of these phrases. Alternate translation: "in which you also formerly walked" or "in which you used to live"

See: Doublet

Colossians 3:8 (#1)**"But now"**

The phrase **But now** introduces a contrast with the previous verse, a contrast that focuses on time. The word translated **now** refers to the time after the Colossians believed. It introduces how they should behave **now** in contrast to how they behaved "formerly" ([3:7](#)). If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify what **now** refers to. Alternate translation: "But now that you believe in Jesus,"

See: Connect — Contrast Relationship

Colossians 3:8 (#2)**"must" - "lay aside"**

Here Paul exhorts the Colossians to **lay aside** sins as if the sins were garments that they could take off or objects they could set down and stop using. By talking this way, Paul encourages the Colossians to no longer use or be associated with sins that are not part of who they are in their union with Christ, just as clothes and objects are not part of the person but can be removed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a comparable metaphor or plainly. Alternate translation: "must ... separate yourselves from" or "must ... no longer do"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:8 (#3)**"wrath, anger, evil desire, slander, {and} obscene speech from your mouth"**

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind these words, you could express the ideas by using verbs or adjectives. Alternate translation: "wrathful, angry, and lustful behavior, and slanderous and obscene words"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:8 (#4)**"wrath, anger"**

The words **wrath** and **anger** are almost synonymous, with **wrath** emphasizing angry actions and **anger** emphasizing angry emotions. If your language does not have two words for “anger” that work here, you could express the idea with one word. Alternate translation: “anger”

See: Doublet

Colossians 3:8 (#5)

“evil desire”

The phrase **evil desire** is a broad term that means “vice,” the opposite of “virtue.” If your language has a general term for “vice,” you could use it here. Alternate translation: “vice”

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:8 (#6)

“and} obscene speech”

The phrase **obscene speech** refers to “shameful words,” words that are not spoken in polite company. If your language has a word or phrase for these kinds of words, you could use it here. Alternate translation: “and obscenities” or “and cursing”

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:8 (#7)

“from your mouth”

Here, **from your mouth** is an idiom that refers to speaking, since speech comes out of the **mouth**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or express the idea with a word such as “talk.” Alternate translation: “in your talk”

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:9 (#1)

“having taken off”

The clause that begins with **having taken off** could: (1) give the reason why the Colossians should not lie to each other (and should put off the sins listed in the previous verse). Alternate

translation: “because you have taken off” (2) give another command. Alternate translation: “and take off”

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Colossians 3:9 (#2)

“having taken off the old man”

Here Paul uses a metaphor that is similar to one he used in [2:11](#), where he speaks of the “circumcision of Christ” that “puts off” the body of flesh. Here, he speaks of the **old man** as if it were a piece of clothing that the Colossians could “take off.” This does not mean that their true selves are found underneath the **old man**, since the next verse has them putting on the **new man**. Instead, Paul uses the metaphor to illustrate how they have changed identity from **old** to “new.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable metaphor or express it plainly. Alternate translation: “having forsaken your old identity”

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:9 (#3)

“the old man”

Paul uses the phrase **the old man** as part of his language about dying and rising with Christ. The **old man** is thus the person who died with Christ. It does not refer to a part of the person, but rather, it refers to what the whole person used to be before dying with Christ. This is why the ULT uses the neuter pronoun **its** to refer to **old man** later in the verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a term that refers to the whole person and who he or she used to be. Alternate translation: “the old ‘you’” or “your old identity”

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:9 (#4)

“man”

While the word **man** is grammatically masculine, it does not refer primarily to male people but to humans in general. If you have a general word for humans in your language, you could use it here. Alternate translation: “human” or “human being”

See: When Masculine Words Include Women

Colossians 3:9 (#5)

"with its practices"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **practices**, you could express the idea by using a relative clause that refers to what the **old man** "normally does." Alternate translation: "along with what it does" or "with how it acts"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:10 (#1)

"having put on"

The clause that begins with **having put on** is parallel to the clause beginning with "having taken off" in the previous verse (3:9). Translate this clause with the same structure you used in the previous verse. This clause could: (1) give the reason why the Colossians should not lie to each other (and should put off the sins listed in the 3:8). Alternate translation: "because you have put on" (2) give another command. Alternate translation: "put on"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Colossians 3:10 (#2)

"having put on the new man"

Here, Paul continues the metaphor of changing clothing, which he began in 3:9. Once the Colossians have "taken off" the "old man," they **put on the new man**. Translate this expression as an appropriate opposite to your translation of "take off" in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "having stepped into your new identity"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:10 (#3)

"the new man"

As in the previous verse (3:9), the phrase **new man** does not refer to a male person but to what one has become when one is raised with Christ. It does not

refer to a part of the person but rather to what the whole person has become after being raised with Christ. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a term that refers to the whole person and who they are. Alternate translation: "the new 'you'" or "your new identity"

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:10 (#4)

"being renewed"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: "whom God is renewing"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 3:10 (#5)

"in knowledge"

The first thing Paul says about the "renewing" is its purpose, which is **knowledge**. If **in knowledge** would not be understood as a purpose statement in your language, you could use an expression that indicates that gaining **knowledge** is one purpose of **being renewed**. Alternate translation: "to gain knowledge" or "so as to know more"

See: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Colossians 3:10 (#6)

"knowledge"

While Paul does not say here what this **knowledge** concerns, it probably refers to knowing both God (as in 1:10) and God's will (as in 1:9). If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify what this knowledge concerns. Alternate translation: "the knowledge of God and his will"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 3:10 (#7)

"knowledge"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **knowledge**, you could express the

idea in a different way, such as with a relative clause. Alternate translation: "what you know"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:10 (#8)

"according to the image of the one having created it"

The second thing Paul says about the "renewing" is the standard or pattern by which God renews his people: the **image of the one who created it**. Use a word or phrase in your language that indicates the standard or pattern according to which something is accomplished. Alternate translation: "so that it matches the image of the one who created it"

See: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Colossians 3:10 (#9)

"the image"

The word **image** could refer to: (1) the way humans show or reflect God's glory, just like he created them to do. Alternate translation: "the reflection of the glory" (2) Christ, who is the image of God, the way humans can see the invisible God. Alternate translation: "Christ, the image"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:10 (#10)

"according to the image of the one"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **image**, you could express the idea in a different way, such as with a relative clause. Make sure your translation fits with what **image** refers to, as discussed in the previous note. Alternate translation: "according to how you reflect the one" or "according to Christ, who reflects the one"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:10 (#11)

"of the one having created"

The **one having created it** refers to God. If the **one having created it** would be misunderstood, you could clarify that God is **the one**. Alternate translation: "of God, who created"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

Colossians 3:10 (#12)

"it"

The pronoun **it** refers to "the new man." If it would be helpful in your language, you could refer back to "the new man" more directly. Alternate translation: "this new man"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

Colossians 3:11 (#1)

"where"

Here Paul refers to the "new man" from the previous verse as if it were a place one could be in. This means that the word **where** refers to the new situation of those who have put on this "new man." If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea by identifying those who have put on the "new man" as the ones addressed by this verse. Alternate translation: (start a new sentence) "For those who have put on the new man,"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:11 (#2)

"there is no"

Here, Paul speaks as if none of the kinds of people he mentions exist in this new situation. The Colossians would have understood this as a way to emphasize how little the differences between all these kinds of people matter once they have died and risen with Christ. They all fit into the category of the "new man" now. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea without the hyperbole by emphasizing the new unity of people from all these categories. Alternate translation: "all people are the same,"

See: Hyperbole

Colossians 3:11 (#3)

"there is no Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman"

All these terms are nouns that refer to groups of people that are characterized by the trait that the noun names. These words do not refer to just one person. If your language has a way to categorize people by characteristics, you could use that form here. Alternate translation: "there are no Greek and Jewish people, circumcised and uncircumcised people, barbaric people, Scythian people, enslaved people, free people"

See: Generic Noun Phrases

Colossians 3:11 (#4)

"barbarian"

The word **barbarian** was used by people who spoke Greek to describe anyone who did not speak Greek. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a word such as "foreign." Alternate translation: "alien"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:11 (#5)

"Scythian"

The word **Scythian** was used to describe a nomadic group of people who were fierce warriors. It was also used to describe those who behaved in similar ways, who were often considered rough or rude. If it would be helpful in your language, you could add an adjective before **Scythian** to clarify its connotation, or you could use a comparable label. Alternate translation: "uncivilized Scythian" or "rough Scythian"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:11 (#6)

"Christ {is} all, and"

Here Paul speaks of **Christ** as being **all** things. By this, he means that none of the categories he just listed matter because Christ is the only person who matters. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a verb such as

"matters" or a noun such as "importance." Alternate translation: "Christ is all that matters, and he is"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:11 (#7)

"in all"

Again, Paul speaks of those who have died and risen with Christ. Here, instead of speaking of the Colossians being "in Christ," he reverses the form, just as he did in [1:27](#): Christ is **in all** of those who believe in him. If possible, translate this expression the same way you translated "Christ in you" in [1:27](#). Alternate translation: "is united to all of you"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:12 (#1)

"Therefore"

Here the word **Therefore** introduces an exhortation based on what Paul has already told the Colossians in [3:9–11](#) about putting off the old man, putting on the new man, and the effects of this. Use a word or phrase in your language that introduces an exhortation based on what has already been said, and you could refer back to what Paul has already said. Alternate translation: "Because you have put off the old man and put on the new man"

See: Connecting Words and Phrases

Colossians 3:12 (#2)

"put on"

The phrase **put on** uses the same words Paul used in [3:10](#) for "having put on" the new man. Here, he uses the same clothing metaphor to show the Colossians that "putting on" the new man means that they also must **put on** the character traits he lists here. This means that they must consistently behave in ways that show **mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, {and} patience**. If possible, translate **put on** as you did in [3:10](#). Alternate translation: "step into new virtues, including"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:12 (#3)**"as"**

Paul uses the word **as** to introduce his description of who the Colossians are. He describes them in ways that will give them a reason to "put on" the virtues he lists. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea by using a word or phrase that gives a reason or basis for a command. Alternate translation: "because you are"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Colossians 3:12 (#4)**"chosen ones of God"**

Paul here uses the possessive form to indicate that the Colossians are **chosen ones** because **God** chose them. If your language would not use the possessive form to express that idea, you could express the idea by translating **chosen** with a verb such as "chose," with God as the subject. Alternate translation: "ones whom God has chosen"

See: Possession

Colossians 3:12 (#5)**"inner parts of mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, {and} patience"**

If your language would not use abstract nouns to express these ideas, you could: (1) translate the abstract nouns as verbs. Alternate translation: "the character traits of showing care to others, treating them nicely, not thinking highly of yourselves, considering others more important than yourselves, and not being easily annoyed" (2) translate the abstract nouns as adjectives. Alternate translation: "the merciful, kind, humble, gentle, and patient new man"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:12 (#6)**"inner parts of mercy"**

Greek speakers could refer to the **inner parts** as the location of emotions, especially emotions related to love or empathy for another person. The **inner parts of mercy**, then, refers to having **mercy** where one experiences emotions. In this sentence,

inner parts is connected with an **of** only to **mercy**, not to any of the other character traits. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an alternate metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "a heart of mercy" or "a merciful heart"

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:12 (#7)**"kindness"**

The word **kindness** refers to the character trait of being good, kind, or helpful to others. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable word or express the idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: "a generous attitude toward others"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:12 (#8)**"gentleness"**

The word **gentleness** describes the character trait of being considerate of and gentle with others. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable word or express the idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: "a considerate attitude"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:12 (#9)**"{and} patience"**

In this context, the word **patience** refers to the ability to remain calm and even-tempered even when others do things that provoke one to anger. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable word or express the idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: "and forbearance" or "and the ability to remain calm"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:13 (#1)

"bearing with one another and being gracious to each other if someone may have a complaint against someone else"

If your language would put the conditional statement first, you could move the **if** clause to the beginning, starting a new sentence. Alternate translation: "If someone may have a complaint against someone else, bear with one another and be gracious to each other"

See: Information Structure

Colossians 3:13 (#2)

"bearing with one another"

In Paul's culture, the phrase **bearing with one another** refers to being patient with others, even when they do things that are annoying or strange. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "putting up with one another" or "being patient with one another"

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:13 (#3)

"if"

Paul uses **if** to introduce a hypothetical situation that he thinks will happen among the Colossians at times. It is in this kind of situation that he wants them to "bear with one another and be gracious to each other." If your language would not use **if** to express that idea, you could express the idea by using a word or phrase that refers to any time something happens. Alternate translation: "whenever"

See: Hypothetical Situations

Colossians 3:13 (#4)

"someone may have a complaint against someone else"

This phrase indicates a situation in which one person feels offended or hurt by another person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or an expression that indicates that one party has been offended or hurt by

another. Alternate translation: "a person has been offended by another person"

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:13 (#5)

"may have a complaint against"

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **complaint**, you could express the idea by translating the abstract noun as a verb. Alternate translation: "may complain against"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:13 (#6)

"just as also the Lord forgave you, so also should you"

If your language would put the comparison after the command, you could switch them in your translation, including "forgive" in the new first clause. Alternate translation: "you should forgive others, just as the Lord forgave you"

See: Information Structure

Colossians 3:13 (#7)

"just as also the Lord forgave you"

Here Paul draws a comparison between how he wants the Colossians to forgive and how Jesus has forgiven them. Use a word or phrase that would normally be used for comparing things that are similar. Alternate translation: "in the same way that the Lord forgave you"

See: Simile

Colossians 3:13 (#8)

"so also should you"

Paul leaves out words that could be needed in some languages to make a complete statement. If your language needs these words, you could supply words such as "forgive one another." Alternate translation: "so also you should forgive each other"

See: Ellipsis

Colossians 3:14 (#1)**"But above all these things, love"**

Here Paul speaks as if **love** is higher than, or **above**, all the things he has said. By this, he means that **love** is more important than **all these things**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly with a word such as "important" or "essential." Alternate translation: "But what is most essential is love"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:14 (#2)**"love"**

Here Paul omits some words that may be required in your language to make a complete thought. If your language would include more words, you could insert the words that Paul implies, which can be found in [3:12](#): "put on." Alternate translation: "put on love"

See: Ellipsis

Colossians 3:14 (#3)**"love"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **love**, you could express the idea by using a verb. If your language requires you to specify who the Colossians are supposed to "love," you could clarify that Paul has other believers in mind first, but he is also thinking of God. Alternate translation: "love one another" or "love each other and God"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:14 (#4)**"which is the bond of perfection"**

Here, **the bond of perfection** is a metaphor for something that brings people together in perfect unity. This could refer to: (1) the perfect unity in community that Paul wishes for believers. Alternate translation: "which brings you together in perfect unity" (2) the perfect unity that love

brings to all Christian virtues. Alternate translation: "which brings all these virtues together to perfection"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:14 (#5)**"the bond of perfection"**

Here Paul uses the possessive form to describe: (1) **the bond** that leads to **perfection**. Alternate translation: "the bond that brings perfection" (2) **the bond** that has **perfection**. Alternate translation: "the perfect bond"

See: Possession

Colossians 3:14 (#6)**"the bond of perfection"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **perfection**, you could express the idea by an adjective such as "perfect" or a verb such as "complete." Alternate translation: "the perfect bond" or "the bond that completes"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:15 (#1)**"let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts"**

Here Paul uses a third person imperative. If you have third person imperatives in your language, you could use one here. If you do not have third person imperatives, you could translate this imperative in the second person, with the Colossians as the subject of a verb such as "obey" and the **peace of Christ** as the object. Alternate translation: "in your hearts obey the peace of Christ"

See: Imperatives — Other Uses

Colossians 3:15 (#2)**"let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts"**

Paul speaks of the **peace of Christ** as if it should be the "ruler" in the Colossians' hearts. The word **rule** is closely related to the word translated "deprive of your prize" that Paul uses in [2:18](#): both are used of

a judge or an umpire making a decision, although in [2:18](#), the judge or umpire decides against the Colossians. Here, the idea is that the **peace of Christ** acts as the judge or umpire in the **hearts** of the Colossians, which means that this **peace** helps them decide what to feel and do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "let the peace of Christ make your decisions in your hearts"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:15 (#3)

"in your hearts"

In Paul's culture, **hearts** are the places where humans think and plan. If it would be helpful in your language, you could refer to the place where humans think in your culture or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "in your minds" or "your thinking"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 3:15 (#4)

"which"

The pronoun **which** refers to "the peace of Christ." If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "which peace"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

Colossians 3:15 (#5)

"also you were called"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: "God called you also"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 3:15 (#6)

"in one body"

Paul speaks of the Colossians as if they were **in**, or part of, **one body**. With this metaphor, he clarifies

the situation in which they have been called to peace: in the **one body**, which is the church. Just as the parts of a body are at "peace" with each other (when the body is working properly), so also the Colossians are to be at peace with each other in the church. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "as you together make up the church"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:15 (#7)

"become thankful"

Alternate translation: "become thankful people" or "be thankful"

Colossians 3:16 (#1)

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly"

Here Paul uses a third person imperative. If you have third person imperatives in your language, you could use one here. If you do not have third person imperatives, you could express Paul's command in the second person with the Colossians as the subject of a verb such as "welcome." Alternate translation: "Welcome the word of Christ richly into your lives"

See: Imperatives — Other Uses

Colossians 3:16 (#2)

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you"

Here Paul speaks as if the **word of Christ** were a person who could **dwell** or live in a location, which is the group of believers in Colossae. This metaphor emphasizes how the **word of Christ** should be a consistent and constant part of the Colossians' lives as surely as if it were somebody permanently living with them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a comparable metaphor or plainly. Alternate translation: "Let the word of Christ be a part of your lives consistently and"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:16 (#3)**"the word of Christ"**

Here Paul uses the possessive form to relate **the word** to **Christ**. This could mean: (1) that **the word** is about **Christ**. Alternate translation: "the word concerning the Messiah" (2) that **the word** is spoken by **Christ**. Alternate translation: "the word from Christ"

See: Possession

Colossians 3:16 (#4)**"the word"**

Here, **word** represents a message that is made up of words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "the message"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 3:16 (#5)**"richly"**

Here Paul speaks as if the "word" were wealthy and could do something **richly**. He uses this metaphor to command that the word should dwell in the Colossians completely and with all the blessings that come from it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable metaphor or express it plainly. Alternate translation: "in every way and with every blessing" or "fully"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:16 (#6)**"in all wisdom"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **wisdom**, you could express the idea another way. Alternate translation: "in all wise ways"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:16 (#7)**"in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another" - "singing"**

Paul uses the words **teaching**, **admonishing**, and **singing** to show the Colossians some ways in which they can "let the word of Christ dwell" in them. Therefore, **teaching**, **admonishing**, and **singing** happen at the same time as **the word of Christ** dwelling in them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could directly state it. Alternate translation: (start a new sentence) "you could do this by teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom ... and by singing"

See: Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

Colossians 3:16 (#8)**"teaching and admonishing"**

These two verbs have only slightly different meanings. The word **teaching** refers positively to giving someone information, skills, or concepts. The word **admonishing** refers negatively to warning someone against something. If you have words that fit these two ideas, you could use them here. If you do not have words that make these distinctions, you could translate both of them with a single verb such as "instruct." Alternate translation: "instructing"

See: Doublet

Colossians 3:16 (#9)**"with psalms, hymns, {and} spiritual songs"**

These three terms name different kinds of songs. The word **psalms** refers to songs from the book of Psalms in the Bible. The word **hymns** refers to songs sung in praise, usually to a deity. Finally, the word **songs** refers to vocal music that celebrates someone or something, usually in poem form. If you have words that roughly match these categories in your language, you could use them here. If you do not have words that match these categories, you could express the idea with only one or two words or use adjectives to describe the different types of songs. Alternate translation: "psalms and spiritual songs" or "biblical songs, praise songs, and celebratory spiritual songs"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:16 (#10)**"and} spiritual songs"**

The word **spiritual** could refer to: (1) the Holy Spirit as the origin or inspiration of the **songs**. Alternate translation: "and songs from the Spirit" (2) **songs** that are sung by or in the power of the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "and songs empowered by the Spirit"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:16 (#11)**"with thankfulness"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **thankfulness**, you could express the idea by using an adverb such as "thankfully" or an adjective such as "thankful." Alternate translation: "in thankful ways"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:16 (#12)**"in your hearts"**

Here the Colossians would have understood the phrase **in your hearts** to describe something that people do that they fully believe in. It means that the **singing** should be done with sincerity and the full approval of one's own mind. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable idiom or plainly. Alternate translation: "wholeheartedly" or "with genuineness"

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:16 (#13)**"in your hearts"**

In Paul's culture, **hearts** are the places where humans think and desire. If it would be helpful in your language, you could refer to the place where humans think in your culture or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "in your minds"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 3:17 (#1)**"everything, whatever you might do in word or in deed, do all in"**

The word **all** refers back to **everything, whatever you might do in word or in deed**. If your language would not write the object (**everything, whatever you might do in word or in deed**) first, you could put it where **all** is, after the verb. Or, you could change the object into a relative clause. Alternate translation: "do everything, whatever you might do in word or in deed, in"

See: Information Structure

Colossians 3:17 (#2)**"everything, whatever you might do"**

In Paul's culture, this is a natural way to refer to anything someone might do, including all possibilities. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a customary way to refer to all possible actions. Alternate translation: "anything you do"

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:17 (#3)**"in word or in deed"**

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **word** and **deed**, you could express the idea with verbs such as "speak" and "act." Alternate translation: "in speaking or in acting" or "when you speak or act"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:17 (#4)**"in the name of the Lord Jesus"**

Acting **in the name of** a person means representing that person. Representatives, those who do anything **in the name of** someone else, should act so as to help others think well of and honor the people they represent. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom for representing someone or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "as representatives of the Lord Jesus" or "in a way that leads to honor for the Lord Jesus"

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:17 (#5)

"through him"

The phrase **through him** does not mean that the prayers of thanks are mediated to God the Father by God the Son. Rather, it is **through** the Son that the Colossians are able to give thanks. This means that they can give thanks because of what the Son has done for them. If that meaning of **through him** would not be understood in your language, you could express the idea with a preposition such as "because" or clarify that it is **through** the "work" of the Son. Alternate translation: "because of what he has done" or "through his work"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 3:18 (#1)

"Wives"

Here Paul directly addresses the **Wives** in the audience. Use a form in your language that indicates that the speaker is singling out a specific group of people as the intended audience of the following words. Alternate translation: "You wives"

Colossians 3:18 (#2)

"be subjected to your husbands"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form with a verb such as "obey" or "submit." Alternate translation: "obey your husbands" or "submit to your husbands"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 3:18 (#3)

"to your husbands"

Here Paul does not explicitly state that wives must **be subjected** to "their own" husbands. However, Paul writes this sentence in such a way that the Colossians would have understood him to mean this. The ULT includes **your** because this is an essential part of what Paul is saying. Use a form in your language that specifies that Paul has each

wife's husband in mind. Alternate translation: "to your own husbands"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 3:18 (#4)

"as"

Here, the word **as** functions to introduce the reason why "wives" should "be subjected to" their **husbands**. If **as** does not indicate a reason in your language, you could express this idea using a causal word such as "since" or "because." Alternate translation: "because this"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Colossians 3:18 (#5)

"is fitting"

The phrase **is fitting** refers to what or to whom something properly belongs. If **is fitting** would be misunderstood your language, you could express the idea by using a word or phrase that identifies proper behavior in specific circumstances. Alternate translation: "is suitable" or "suits your position"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:18 (#6)

"in the Lord"

Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in the Lord** to describe the union of believers with Christ. In this case, being **in the Lord** or united to the Lord is the standard for how to behave. Alternate translation: "in your union with the Lord"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:19 (#1)

"Husbands"

Here Paul directly addresses the **Husbands** in the audience. Use a form in your language that indicates that the speaker is singling out a specific group of people as the intended audience of the following words. Alternate translation: "You husbands"

Colossians 3:19 (#2)**"your wives"**

Here Paul does not explicitly state that husbands must **love** "their own" wives. However, Paul writes this sentence in such a way that the Colossians would have understood him to mean this. The ULT includes **your** because this is an essential part of what Paul is saying. Use a form in your language that specifies that Paul has each husband's wife in mind. Alternate translation: "your own wives"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 3:19 (#3)**"do not be embittered against"**

The phrase **be embittered** could refer to: (1) the husband doing or saying things that cause his wife to be bitter or upset with him. Alternate translation: "do not do what makes them bitter against you" (2) the husband becoming bitter or upside with his wife for doing or saying certain things. Alternate translation: "do not become bitter against them"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:20 (#1)**"Children"**

Here Paul directly addresses the **Children** in the audience. Use a form in your language that indicates that the speaker is singling out a specific group of people as the intended audience of the following words. Alternate translation: "You children"

Colossians 3:20 (#2)**"your parents"**

Here Paul does not explicitly state that children must **obey** "their own" parents. However, Paul writes this sentence in such a way that the Colossians would have understood him to mean this. The ULT includes **your** because this is an essential part of what Paul is saying. Use a form in your language that specifies that Paul has each

child's parents in mind. Alternate translation: "your own parents"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 3:20 (#3)**"in all things"**

The phrase **in all things** is an idiom that indicates that children should obey "everything their parents command" or "in every situation." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or indicate what the **things** are. Alternate translation: "in everything they tell you to do"

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:20 (#4)**"for"**

The word **for** introduces the basis or reason for something; here it is Paul's command to children. Use a word that indicates the reason for a command in your language. Alternate translation: "since"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Colossians 3:20 (#5)**"is pleasing"**

If something **is pleasing**, that means that the person it "pleases" finds that thing acceptable, agreeable, or pleasant. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word that emphasizes that obedience to parents is something that is acceptable to God. Alternate translation: "is acceptable"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:20 (#6)**"pleasing"**

Paul does not state to whom obedience to parents is **pleasing**, but it is clear that it pleases God. If your language would state who is pleased, you could expressly state that it is God. Alternate translation: "pleasing to God"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 3:20 (#7)

"in the Lord"

Just as in [3:18](#), Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in the Lord** to describe the union of believers with Christ. In this case, being **in the Lord**, or united to **the Lord**, identifies specifically that those who are united to **the Lord** are to behave in this way. Alternate translation: "in your union with the Lord"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:21 (#1)

"Fathers"

Here Paul directly addresses the **Fathers** in the audience. Use a form in your language that indicates that the speaker is singling out a specific group of people as the intended audience of the following words. Alternate translation: "You fathers"

Colossians 3:21 (#2)

"do not provoke your children"

The word **provoke** in this context refers to irritating someone or making them angry. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or a short phrase. Alternate translation: "do not irritate your children" or "do not provoke your children to anger"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:21 (#3)

"so that they may not be discouraged"

This clause indicates the goal or purpose of the previous command, but this purpose is in the negative. If your language has a customary way to indicate a negative purpose, you could use it here. Alternate translation: "lest they be discouraged"

See: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Colossians 3:21 (#4)

"they may not be discouraged"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form with the **Fathers** as the subject. Alternate translation: "you may not discourage them"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 3:21 (#5)

"they may" - "be discouraged"

The phrase **they may ... be discouraged** describes the feeling of despair or hopelessness. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that expresses this idea. Alternate translation: "they may ... despair" or "they may ... lose heart"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:22 (#1)

"Slaves"

Here Paul directly addresses the **Slaves** in the audience. Use a form in your language that indicates that the speaker is singling out a specific group of people as the intended audience of the following words. Alternate translation: "You slaves"

Colossians 3:22 (#2)

"your masters according to the flesh"

The phrase **according to the flesh** describes the **masters** as humans on this earth. Paul uses this phrase to describe these **masters** because he is already setting up a contrast with the "Master" over these masters: Jesus (See: [4:1](#)). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or express the idea with an adjective such as "human" or "earthly." Alternate translation: "your earthly masters" or "your human masters"

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:22 (#3)**"your masters"**

Here Paul does not explicitly state that slaves must **obey** "their own" masters. However, Paul writes this sentence in such a way that the Colossians would have understood him to mean this. The ULT includes **your** because this is an essential part of what Paul is saying. Use a form in your language that specifies that Paul has each slave's master in mind. Alternate translation: "your own masters"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 3:22 (#4)**"in all things"**

Just as in [3:20](#), the phrase **in all things** is an idiom that indicates that slaves should obey "everything their masters command" or "in every situation." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or indicate what the **things** are. Alternate translation: "in everything they tell you to do"

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:22 (#5)**"not with eyeservice"**

The word **eyeservice** describes how people sometimes behave to look good more than to do the right thing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or a short phrase such as "wanting to look impressive." Alternate translation: "not focusing on how you appear to others"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:22 (#6)**"as people pleasers"**

The phrase **people pleasers** describes the kind of people who care about "eyeservice." Here, **people pleasers** are those who focus on impressing humans rather than doing what God desires. If it would be helpful in your language, you could emphasize that **people pleasers** want to please humans only, not God. Alternate translation: "as

people who want to please humans rather than God"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 3:22 (#7)**"with sincerity of heart"**

Paul here uses the possessive form to describe a **heart** that is characterized by its **sincerity**. If your language would not use the possessive form to express that idea, you could express the idea by translating **sincerity** with an adjective such as "sincere." Alternate translation: "with a sincere heart"

See: Possession

Colossians 3:22 (#8)**"with sincerity of heart"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **sincerity**, you could express the idea by using an adjective such as "sincere" or and adverb such as "sincerely." Alternate translation: "sincerely in your heart" or "with a sincere heart"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:22 (#9)**"of heart"**

In Paul's culture, the **heart** is the place where a person thinks and desires. If it would be helpful in your language, you could refer to the place where humans think in your culture or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "of mind" or "of desire"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 3:22 (#10)**"fearing the Lord"**

The phrase **fearing the Lord** could describe: (1) the reason why the slaves should obey their masters. Alternate translation: "because you fear the Lord" (2) the way or manner in which the slaves should obey their masters. Alternate

translation: "showing fear for the Lord" or "in a way that shows that you fear the Lord"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Colossians 3:23 (#1)

"Whatever you might do"

In Paul's culture, this is a natural way to refer to anything someone might do, including all possibilities. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a customary way of referring to all possible actions. Alternate translation: "In anything you do"

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:23 (#2)

"from the soul"

Working **from the soul** is comparable to the English idiom working "with all one's heart," which refers to doing something with diligence, without holding anything back. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable idiom or express it plainly. Alternate translation: "with all your heart" or "with all your strength"

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:23 (#3)

"as to the Lord and not to men"

This contrast indicates that, even though they serve **men**, they should consider their work to be directed to or in service of **the Lord**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a contrast phrase such as "even as." Alternate translation: "to serve the Lord, even as you are serving men"

See: Idiom

Colossians 3:23 (#4)

"to men"

The word **men** does not refer to only male people but to humans in general. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word that refers to

people or humans in general. Alternate translation: "to humans" or "to people"

See: When Masculine Words Include Women

Colossians 3:24 (#1)

"knowing"

The word **knowing** introduces a reason why the slaves should obey as Paul commands them to in [3:22-23](#). If **knowing** would not introduce a reason in your language, you could clarify this by using a word such as "because." Alternate translation: "since you know" or "for you know"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Colossians 3:24 (#2)

"the reward of the inheritance"

Here Paul uses the possessive form to identify the **reward as the inheritance**. If your language does not use the possessive form in this way, you could clarify that these two words name the same thing by using a phrase such as "that is." Alternate translation: "the reward, that is, the inheritance" or "the reward, which is your inheritance"

See: Possession

Colossians 3:24 (#3)

"the reward of the inheritance"

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind **reward** and **inheritance**, you could express those ideas in another way. Alternate translation: "what he has promised to hand down to you"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:24 (#4)

"You are serving the Lord Christ"

Here Paul uses a simple statement as: (1) a reminder that states for whom they actually work. Alternate translation: "Keep in mind that you are serving the Lord Christ" (2) a command about whom they should serve. Alternate translation:

"Serve the Lord Christ" or "You should serve the Lord Christ"

See: Statements — Other Uses

Colossians 3:25 (#1)

"For"

The word **For** introduces support for what has already been said. Here Paul uses it to introduce a negative reason for obedience (he already gave a positive reason in [3:24](#)). If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that the word introduces another reason for obedience. Alternate translation: "Do these things because"

See: Connecting Words and Phrases

Colossians 3:25 (#2)

"the one doing unrighteousness" - "he did unrighteously"

Here Paul speaks in general of anyone who does **unrighteousness**. However, he directs this general statement to the slaves he has been addressing (not the masters, since he does not address them until [4:1](#)). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a customary form for generic statements or include the slaves as the ones being addressed. Alternate translation: "any of you who do unrighteousness ... you did unrighteously"

See: Generic Noun Phrases

Colossians 3:25 (#3)

"doing unrighteousness"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **unrighteousness**, you could express the idea differently, such as with an adverb. Alternate translation: "acting unrighteously" or "doing unrighteous things"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:25 (#4)

"will receive what he did unrighteously"

In this context, the phrase **will receive** refers to getting something in payment or in return for

something else. Paul, then, speaks as if **the one doing unrighteousness will receive** as payment or recompense exactly **what he did unrighteously**. By this, Paul means that God will punish those who do **unrighteousness** in a way that fits with what they did. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "will receive a punishment that fits the crime"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 3:25 (#5)

"there is no favoritism"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **favoritism**, you could express the idea with a verb such as "favor" or with a short phrase. Alternate translation: "God does not favor anyone" or "God judges everyone by the same standard"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 4:1 (#1)

"Masters"

Here Paul directly addresses the **Masters** in the audience. Use a form in your language that indicates that the speaker is singling out a specific group of people as the intended audience of the following words. Alternate translation: "You masters"

Colossians 4:1 (#2)

"give to your slaves {what is} right and fair"

Here Paul speaks of how masters treat their slaves as if the master were "giving" the treatment of their slaves. By this, he means that the thing given (**{what is} right and fair**) is what characterizes the master's dealing with the slave. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea by using adverbs such as "rightly" and "fairly" with a verb such as "treat." Alternate translation: "act rightly and fairly towards your slaves"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 4:1 (#3)**"what is} right and fair"**

The word **right** describes someone or something that properly follows laws, principles, and expectations. The word translated **fair** describes someone or something that is impartial and does not pick sides. If you have words in your language that roughly represent these ideas, you could them here. If you do not have words that make these distinctions, you could express the idea with one word that indicates that something is fair, legal, and proper. Alternate translation: "what is just and impartial" or "what is right"

See: Doublet

Colossians 4:1 (#4)**"knowing"**

Paul uses the word **knowing** to introduce a reason why the masters should treat their slaves as he commands them to. If **knowing** would not introduce a reason in your language, you could make this explicit with a word such as "because" or "since." Alternate translation: "since you know"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Colossians 4:1 (#5)**"a master in heaven"**

The words **Masters** and **master** are usually translated "lords" and "Lord" elsewhere. However, here they are translated **Masters** and **master** because the relationship between slaves and their masters, or "lords," is in view. Paul wishes the **Masters** to treat their slaves justly because they also serve a "Master," the Lord Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea by identifying that the **master** is the Lord Jesus. Alternate translation: "a master in heaven, the Lord Jesus"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 4:2 (#1)**"Continue steadfastly in prayer"**

Alternate translation: "Keep praying faithfully" or "Pray consistently"

Colossians 4:2 (#2)**"staying alert"**

The word **staying alert** expresses what Paul wants the Colossians to do as they pray. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a customary expression that indicates that **staying alert** happens at the same time as they "continue steadfastly in prayer." Alternate translation: "and stay alert"

See: Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

Colossians 4:2 (#3)**"in it"**

Alternate translation: "during your time of prayer"

Colossians 4:2 (#4)**"in thanksgiving"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **thanksgiving**, you could express the idea by using a verbal phrase such as "and giving thanks" or an adverb such as "thankfully." Alternate translation: "thankfully"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 4:3 (#1)**"together"**

In this context, the word **together** does not refer to people being together but rather, it refers to actions happening **together** or at the same time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that indicates that the Colossians should pray for Paul at the same time they pray about other things (the things mentioned in [4:2](#)). Alternate translation: "at the same time"

See: Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

Colossians 4:3 (#2)**"us" - "to us"**

In this verse, the word **us** refers to Paul and Timothy but not to the Colossians.

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Colossians 4:3 (#3)

"so that"

The phrase **so that** could introduce: (1) the content of what they should pray. Alternate translation: "that" or "asking that" (2) the purpose for which the Colossians should pray for Paul. Alternate translation: "in order that"

See: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Colossians 4:3 (#4)

"God may open a door to us for the word"

Here Paul speaks of God providing opportunities for Paul and Timothy to preach the gospel as if God were "opening" a **door** to them **for the word**. The image is of God opening a door so that Paul and Timothy can go in and preach the message about Christ. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "God may give us opportunities to preach the word"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 4:3 (#5)

"for the word to speak"

Here, **for the word** and **to speak** mean almost the same thing. If your language would not use both of phrases here, you could combine them into one. Alternate translation: "to speak"

See: Doublet

Colossians 4:3 (#6)

"for the word"

Here, **word** represents a message that is made up of words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "for the message" or "for what we say"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 4:3 (#7)

"to speak"

The phrase **to speak** indicates the purpose for which the "door" is opened. If **to speak** would not indicate purpose in your language, you could use a word or phrase that does indicate purpose. Alternate translation: "in order that we might speak" or "so that we can speak"

See: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Colossians 4:3 (#8)

"the mystery"

Paul speaks of his message as **the mystery** of Christ. This does not mean that the message is hard to understand, but rather that it had not previously been revealed. Now, however, Paul does "make it clear" (as [4:4](#) says). If it would be helpful in your language, you could replace **mystery** with a short descriptive phrase. Alternate translation: "the concealed message" or "the previously hidden message"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 4:3 (#9)

"the mystery of Christ"

Here Paul uses the possessive form to speak of a **mystery** whose content is a message about **Christ**. If your language does not use the possessive form to express that idea, you could express the idea with a preposition such as "about" or a relative clause such as "that concerns." Alternate translation: "the mystery that concerns Christ"

See: Possession

Colossians 4:3 (#10)

"on account of which"

The pronoun **which** refers back to the "mystery of Christ." If it would be helpful in your language, you could state explicitly what **which** refers to by

adding a word such as “mystery.” Alternate translation: “on account of which mystery”

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

Colossians 4:3 (#11)

“I have been bound”

Here Paul uses the phrase **I have been bound** to refer to how he is in prison. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable word or phrase that stands for being in prison or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: “I am imprisoned” or “I am incarcerated”

See: Metonymy

Colossians 4:3 (#12)

“I have been bound”

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form with a vague or indefinite subject. Alternate translation: “they have bound me” or “the authorities have bound me”

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 4:4 (#1)

“in order that”

The phrase **in order that** could introduce: (1) another thing for which the Colossians should pray (in addition to what is said in [4:3](#)). Alternate translation: “and that” or “and asking that” (2) another purpose for which the Colossians should pray for Paul (in addition to what is said in [4:3](#)). Alternate translation: “and so that”

See: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Colossians 4:4 (#2)

“I may make it clear”

Alternate translation: “I may reveal it” or “I may express it clearly”

Colossians 4:4 (#3)

“as”

Here, the word **as** functions to introduce a reason why Paul must preach his message clearly. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning of **as** with a word or phrase that introduces a reason for an action. Alternate translation: “because this is how”

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Colossians 4:4 (#4)

“I ought to speak”

If your language would state who requires Paul **to speak** in these ways, you could include “God” as the one that role. Alternate translation: “God has commanded me to speak”

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 4:5 (#1)

“Walk” - “toward”

Here Paul uses the word **Walk** to refer to consistent, habitual behavior (like putting one foot in front of the other). In this image, walking **toward** someone refers to consistent behavior in relationship with that person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable metaphor or plainly. Alternate translation: “Act ... with”

See: Metaphor

Colossians 4:5 (#2)

“in wisdom”

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **wisdom**, you could express the idea with an adverb such as “wisely” or an adjective such as “wise.” Alternate translation: “in wise ways”

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 4:5 (#3)

“the ones outside”

The phrase **the ones outside** is a way to identify people who do not belong to one's group. Here, **those outside** would be anyone who does not believe in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable word or phrase for people who are not in one's group. Alternate translation: "outsiders"

See: Idiom

Colossians 4:5 (#4)

"redeeming"

The word **redeeming** introduces an example of how to "walk in wisdom toward those outside." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a customary way to indicate that the **redeeming** happens at the same time as "walking in wisdom" and gives an example of how it might look. Alternate translation: "which includes redeeming"

See: Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

Colossians 4:5 (#5)

"redeeming the time"

Here Paul speaks of **time** as something that one could be **redeeming**. The picture is of a person buying **time** from someone. Paul uses this picture to refer to making the most of (**redeeming**) one's opportunities (**the time**). If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a comparable metaphor or express it plainly. Alternate translation: "making the most of every chance you have"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 4:6 (#1)

""

This verse provides one way in which Paul wants the Colossians to "walk in wisdom toward those outside" (4:5). They are to speak with words that are compelling and carefully chosen to fit the situation.

Colossians 4:6 (#2)

"your words always with grace"

Paul has not included a verb for "speaking" in this phrase, because it was not necessary in his language. If your language would require a verb of speaking here, you could include it. Alternate translation: "speaking your words always with grace" or "your words always spoken with grace"

See: Ellipsis

Colossians 4:6 (#3)

"with grace"

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **grace**, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: "gracious"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 4:6 (#4)

"seasoned with salt"

In Paul's culture, when food was **seasoned with salt**, it would taste good and be nourishing. Paul thus speaks of seasoning one's "words" **with salt** to say that the words should be interesting (like food that tastes good) and helpful (like food that is nourishing). If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable idiom or plainly. Alternate translation: "both compelling and helpful"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 4:6 (#5)

"to know"

Here Paul uses the phrase **to know** to introduce the result of speaking words **with grace** and **seasoned with salt**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different word or phrase that introduces a result. Alternate translation: "with the result that you will know" or "so that you might know"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Colossians 4:6 (#6)

"how it is necessary for you to answer"

Alternate translation: "how to best answer" or "the right answer to give to"

Colossians 4:6 (#7)

"each one"

The phrase **each one** refers to individuals who would be considered part of "those outside" ([4:5](#)). If it would be helpful in your language, you could explicitly refer back to how you translated "those outside." Alternate translation: "each outsider" or "each one who does not believe in the Messiah"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

Colossians 4:7 (#1)

"All the things concerning me, Tychicus will make known to you, the beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow slave in the Lord"

Connecting Statement:
If it would be helpful in your language, you could rearrange this sentence so that: (1) what **Tychicus will make known** to them comes after **to you**, and (2) the words that describe **Tychicus** come after his name. You may need to make one or both of these changes to make the verse clear in your language. Alternate translation: "Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow slave in the Lord, will make known to you all the things concerning me"

See: Information Structure

Colossians 4:7 (#2)

"All the things concerning me"

When Paul speaks of **All the things concerning me**, he refers to details about his life such as where he is living, his health, how his work is progressing, and other similar details. If your language has a customary way to refer to this kind of information, you could use it here, or you could express the idea with a descriptive phrase. Alternate translation: "All the news about me" or "All the details about how I am doing"

See: Idiom

Colossians 4:7 (#3)

"Tychicus"

Tychicus is the name of a man.

See: How to Translate Names

Colossians 4:7 (#4)

"faithful servant"

If your language would state whom Tychicus serves, you could make this explicit. He could be a **servant** to: (1) Paul. Alternate translation: "my faithful servant" (2) the Lord, and thus the Lord's church as well. Alternate translation: "faithful servant of the Lord and his church"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 4:7 (#5)

"fellow slave"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could make it explicit that Tychicus is a **slave** of Christ, along with Paul. Alternate translation: "fellow slave of Christ"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 4:7 (#6)

"in the Lord"

Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in the Lord** to describe the union of believers with Christ. In this case, being **in the Lord**, or united to the Lord, identifies Paul and Tychicus as "slaves" of the Lord because of their union with him. Alternate translation: "in union with the Lord"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 4:8 (#1)

"I sent"

Here Paul uses the past tense form **sent** to describe something he has not yet done when he is dictating this letter. He uses the past tense because, when the letter is read to the Colossians, his sending of Tychicus will be in the past. If your language would

not use the past tense here, you could use whatever tense would customarily be used in this situation in your language. Alternate translation: "whom I send" or "whom I have sent"

See: Predictive Past

Colossians 4:8 (#2)

"you for this very {reason}, so that"

It may seem that the phrase **for this very {reason}** contains redundant information in your language, since Paul also includes **so that**. If both of these phrases would be redundant in your language, you could use a single purpose phrase, such as **so that**. Alternate translation: "you so that" or "you in order that"

See: Doublet

Colossians 4:8 (#3)

"so that you might know the things concerning us"

While many manuscripts have **so that you might know the things concerning us**, some say "so that he might know the things concerning you." If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the phrase it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to follow the example of the ULT.

See: Textual Variants

Colossians 4:8 (#4)

"so that" - "and that"

The words **so that** and **and that** introduce two of Paul's purposes in sending Tychicus to the Colossians. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a customary way to introduce a goal or purpose. Alternate translation: "in order that ... and in order that"

See: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Colossians 4:8 (#5)

"the things concerning us"

Just like the phrase "all the things concerning me" in [4:7](#), the phrase **the things concerning us** refers to details about life such as where people are living, their health, how their work is progressing, and other similar details. If your language has a customary way to refer to this kind of information, you could use it here, or you could express the idea with a descriptive phrase. Alternate translation: "the news about us" or "the details about how we are doing"

See: Idiom

Colossians 4:8 (#6)

"us"

The word **us** does not include the Colossians. Instead, Paul is referring to himself and those who are with him, including Timothy.

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Colossians 4:8 (#7)

"your hearts"

Here when Paul refers to **your hearts**, the Colossians would have understood him to mean the entire person. Paul uses **hearts** because his culture identified **hearts** as the body part where people experienced encouragement. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that identifies the location where people experience encouragement in your culture, or you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "your souls"

See: Synecdoche

Colossians 4:9 (#1)

"Together with Onesimus"

Paul uses this phrase to tell the Colossians that he is sending **Onesimus** along with Tychicus to the city of Colossae. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this explicit by adding a verb such as "sending." Alternate translation: "With him I send Onesimus" (start a new sentence with "they will make")

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 4:9 (#2)**"Onesimus"****Onesimus** is the name of a man.

See: How to Translate Names

Colossians 4:9 (#3)**"is from among you"**

The phrase **from among you** means that Onesimus used to live with the Colossians and was part of the group to whom Paul is writing the letter. To express this idea, you could use a word or phrase that indicates that a person belongs to a specific group of people. Alternate translation: "is from your town" or "used to live with you"

See: Idiom

Colossians 4:9 (#4)**"they will make known"**

The pronoun **they** refers back to Onesimus and Tychicus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this explicit by using their names or referring to "two" of them. Alternate translation: "the two of them will make known"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

Colossians 4:9 (#5)**"all the things here"**

Just like the phrases "all the things concerning me" in [4:7](#) and "the things concerning us" in [4:8](#), the phrase **all the things here** refers to details about life such as where people are living, their health, how their work is progressing, and other similar details. If your language has a customary way to refer to this kind of information, you could use it here, or you could express the idea with a descriptive phrase. Alternate translation: "all the news about us" or "all the details about what is happening here"

See: Idiom

Colossians 4:10 (#1)**"Aristarchus," - "Mark," - "of Barnabas"****Aristarchus, Mark, and Barnabas** are all names of men.

See: How to Translate Names

Colossians 4:10 (#2)**"greets"**

As was customary in this culture, Paul concludes the letter by extending greetings from people who are with him and who know the people to whom he is writing. Your language may have a particular way of sharing greetings in a letter. If so, you could use that form here. Alternate translation: "asks to be remembered to" or "says hello to"

Colossians 4:10 (#3)**"my fellow prisoner"**

The phrase **my fellow prisoner** identifies Aristarchus as someone who is in prison along with Paul. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a short phrase instead. Alternate translation: "who has been imprisoned with me"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 4:10 (#4)**"and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas"**

Paul has not included the verb "greet" in this clause because it was unnecessary in his language. If it is necessary in your language, you could include it here. Alternate translation: "and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, also greets you"

See: Ellipsis

Colossians 4:10 (#5)**"the cousin of Barnabas"**

The word **cousin** refers to the son of the brother or sister of one's mother or father. If possible, use a word in your language that makes this relationship clear, or you could describe the relationship.

Alternate translation: "the son of Barnabas' aunt or uncle"

See: Kinship

Colossians 4:10 (#6)

"whom" - "he may come" - "him"

The words **whom**, **he**, and **him** refer back to Mark, not Barnabas. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make it explicit. Alternate translation: "Mark ... he may come ... him"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

Colossians 4:10 (#7)

"about whom you received orders"

Paul does not clarify who sent these **orders** to the Colossians, and it was probably not him. If it is possible in your language, leave the person who sent these **orders** unexpressed. If you must clarify who sent the **orders**, you could use an indefinite expression. Alternate translation: "about whom someone sent you orders"

See: When to Keep Information Implicit

Colossians 4:10 (#8)

"if he may come to you"

Here Paul indicates a hypothetical situation. It may be that Mark does visit the Colossians, but Paul is not sure if he will or not. Use a form that indicates a true possibility in your language. Alternate translation: "he may or may not come to you, but if he does,"

See: Hypothetical Situations

Colossians 4:10 (#9)

"receive him"

To **receive** someone means welcoming that person into one's group and extending hospitality to him or her. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression that indicates this kind of hospitality or express the idea with a descriptive phrase. Alternate translation: "show him hospitality and accept him into your group"

See: Idiom

Colossians 4:11 (#1)

"Jesus," - "Justus"

Jesus and **Justus** are two names for the same man.

See: How to Translate Names

Colossians 4:11 (#2)

"the one called Justus"

Here Paul gives further information about "Jesus." This information identifies which "Jesus" this is (the one also known as **Justus**), distinguishing him from other men who might be named "Jesus." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a form in your language that expresses this idea. Alternate translation: ", the one called Justus"

See: Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

Colossians 4:11 (#3)

"the one called"

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with an indefinite or vague subject. Alternate translation: "whom some people call"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 4:11 (#4)

"and Jesus, the one called Justus"

Paul has not included the verb "greet" in this clause because it was unnecessary in his language. If it is necessary in your language, you could include it here. Alternate translation: "and Jesus who is called Justus also greets you"

See: Ellipsis

Colossians 4:11 (#5)

"These {are}"

The word **These** refers back to the three men mentioned in this verse and the previous verse:

Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could restate their names or indicate the reference in another way. Alternate translation: "These three are"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

Colossians 4:11 (#6)

"These {are} the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God being from the circumcision, who were a comfort to me"

Paul here describes the three men in two ways. First, he identifies them as the **only** ones among his **fellow workers** who are Jewish (**from the circumcision**). In other words, Paul distinguishes them from all the other people who work with him, because these three men are the only ones who are circumcised Jews. Second, he describes them as ones **who have been a comfort** to him. Here, he is not distinguishing them from other fellow workers; instead, he just wishes to say that they have **been a comfort** to him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the two descriptions differently so that it is clear that the first distinguishes the three men while the second describes the three men. Alternate translation: "Out of all my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, these are the only ones being from the circumcision, and they have been a comfort to me"

See: Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

Colossians 4:11 (#7)

"being from the circumcision"

Paul uses the label **from the circumcision** to identify the men as Jews who had received circumcision. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea plainly by using a term such as "Jewish." Alternate translation: "who are Jewish"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 4:11 (#8)

"who were a comfort to me"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **comfort**, you could express the

idea with a verb such as "comfort." Alternate translation: "who have comforted me"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 4:12 (#1)

"Epaphras"

Epaphras is the name of a man. He was the one who first preached the good news to the people in Colossae (See: [Colossians 1:7](#)).

See: How to Translate Names

Colossians 4:12 (#2)

"greets"

As was customary in this culture, Paul concludes the letter by extending greetings from people who are with him and who know the people to whom he is writing. Your language may have a particular way of sharing greetings in a letter. If so, you could use that form here. Alternate translation: "asks to be remembered to" or "says hello to"

Colossians 4:12 (#3)

"He {is} from among you"

The phrase **from among you** means that Epaphras used to live with the Colossians and was part of the group to whom Paul is writing the letter. To express this idea, you could use a word or phrase that indicates in your language that a person belongs to a specific group of people. Alternate translation: "He is from your town" or "He used to live with you"

See: Idiom

Colossians 4:12 (#4)

"always"

Here, **always** is an exaggeration that the Colossians would have understood to mean that Epaphras prays for them very often. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word that indicates frequency. Alternate translation: "consistently" or "frequently"

See: Hyperbole

Colossians 4:12 (#5)**"striving on behalf of you in prayers"**

The word **striving** is usually used for attempting to win a contest, whether that is athletic, military, or legal. While Epaphras is not actually participating in an athletic or military contest, Paul uses the metaphor to explain how earnestly Epaphras prays for the Colossians. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "praying zealously for you" or "spending much effort on his prayers for you"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 4:12 (#6)**"so that"**

The phrase **so that** could introduce: (1) the content of Epaphras' prayers. Alternate translation: "asking that" (2) the purpose or goal of Epaphras' prayers. Alternate translation: "in order that"

See: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Colossians 4:12 (#7)**"you may stand complete and fully assured in all the will of God"**

Here Paul speaks as if the Colossians can **stand complete and fully assured in all the will of God**. By this, he means that they should consistently do God's will, just as if God's will served as a foundation underneath them. The words **complete and fully assured** explain the way in which they are supposed to **stand** or continue to obey. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "you may be complete and fully assured as you consistently do all the will of God"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 4:12 (#8)**"complete"**

The word **complete** in this context means that a person is what he or she is supposed to be and is able to do what he or she is called to do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word that has this meaning, such as "perfect" or "excellent," or translate **complete** with a short phrase. Alternate translation: "fit for what God has called you to be"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 4:12 (#9)**"fully assured"**

The phrase **fully assured** describes people who are confident or sure of what they believe and do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: "convinced about what you know" or "without doubts"

See: Translate Unknowns

Colossians 4:12 (#10)**"in all the will of God"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **will**, you could express the idea by using a verb such as "wants" or "desires." Alternate translation: "in whatever God desires"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 4:13 (#1)**"For"**

The word **For** introduces further support for Paul's statements about Epaphras in the previous verse. In [4:12](#), Paul says that Epaphras is "always striving" for them, and he supports that claim here by giving his own testimony about how hard Epaphras has worked for the Colossians and for other believers who live near them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces support for a previous statement, or you could refer back to what Paul is supporting. Alternate translation: "you could be sure that he does this, because"

See: Connecting Words and Phrases

Colossians 4:13 (#2)**"he has much hard labor"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **labor**, you could express the idea by using a verb such as "labor." Alternate translation: "he labors diligently"

See: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 4:13 (#3)**"of the ones in Laodicea and of the ones in Hierapolis"**

Here Paul leaves out to whom the pronoun **the ones** refers, since in his language it was clear that **the ones** refers to people who live in the cities he mentions. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that **the ones** refers to believers who live in these two towns. Alternate translation: "of believers who live in Laodicea, and of believers who live in Hierapolis" or "of believers who live in Laodicea and Hierapolis"

See: Ellipsis

Colossians 4:13 (#4)**"Laodicea" - "Hierapolis"**

Laodicea and **Hierapolis** were towns near Colossae. In fact, they were all in the same valley. If it would be helpful to your readers to clarify that these are nearby towns, you could include this information. Alternate translation: "nearby Laodicea ... nearby Hierapolis" or "Laodicea ... Hierapolis, churches near you"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 4:14 (#1)**"greets"**

As was customary in this culture, Paul concludes the letter by extending greetings from people who are with him and who know the people to whom he is writing. Your language may have a particular way of sharing greetings in a letter. If so, you could use that form here. Alternate translation: "asks to be remembered to" or "says hello to"

Colossians 4:14 (#2)**"Luke," - "Demas"**

Demas is the name of a man.

See: How to Translate Names

Colossians 4:14 (#3)**"Luke, the beloved physician, greets you, and also Demas"**

Paul has not included the verb "greet" with **and also Demas**, because it was unnecessary in his language. If including "greet" is necessary in your language, you could: (1) move **and also Demas** before **greets you**. Alternate translation: "Luke the beloved physician and also Demas greet you" (2) include it with the phrase **and also Demas**. Alternate translation: "Luke the beloved physician greets you, and also Demas greets you"

See: Ellipsis

Colossians 4:15 (#1)**"Greet"**

As was customary in this culture, Paul not only extends greetings from people who are with him and who know the people to whom he is writing (as he has done in [4:10-14](#)). He also asks the Colossians to extend greetings for him to other people that both he and the Colossians know. Your language may have a particular way of sharing greetings in a letter. If so, you could use that form here. Alternate translation: "Remember me to" or "Say hello for me to"

Colossians 4:15 (#2)**"the brothers"**

The word **brothers** does not refer to only male people. Instead, it refers to both men and women who are part of the group of believers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a word that does not refer to natural gender or you could use both male and female genders. Alternate translation: "the brothers and sisters"

See: When Masculine Words Include Women

Colossians 4:15 (#3)**"Nympha"****Nympha** is the name of a woman.

See: How to Translate Names

Colossians 4:15 (#4)**"in her house"**

The phrase **in her house** is a way to indicate that the church used Nympha's house as their meeting place. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "that gathers in her house"

See: Idiom

Colossians 4:16 (#1)**"has been read" - "it would be read" - "would read"**

In this culture, letters sent to a group were normally read out loud by one person to everyone else in the group. The words that are translated by **read** in this verse refer to this practice. If you have a way to refer to this practice, you could use it here. Alternate translation: "has been heard ... it is heard ... hear"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 4:16 (#2)**"this letter has been read among you," - "it would be read"**

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active forms by supplying an indefinite subject such as "person" or by expressing the idea with a different verb such as "hear." Alternate translation: "you have heard this letter ... they hear it"

See: Active or Passive

Colossians 4:16 (#3)

"make sure that it would be read also in the church of Laodicea and that you also would read the one from Laodicea"

With these commands, Paul is asking the churches to exchange letters. He wants the Colossians to hear the letter he sent to Laodicea, and he wants the Laodiceans to hear the letter he sent to the Colossians. If you have a specific form to refer to sending and receiving letters, you could use it here. Alternate translation: "send it off to Laodicea to be read in the church there, and request the letter I sent to them so that you could read it too"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 4:16 (#4)**"the one from Laodicea"**

The phrase **the one from Laodicea** refers to a letter that Paul has already sent or is about to send to the church in Laodicea. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an expression that clarifies that this is a letter from Paul, not one written to Paul. Alternate translation: "the letter I addressed to Laodicea"

See: Idiom

Colossians 4:17 (#1)**"And say"**

In addition to asking the Colossians to greet others for him ([4:15](#)), Paul also asks them to **say** something to Archippus. If you have a specific form in your language for instructions on relaying a message, you could use it here. Alternate translation: "And relay this message"

Colossians 4:17 (#2)**"to Archippus"****Archippus** is the name of a man.

See: How to Translate Names

Colossians 4:17 (#3)

"Look to the ministry that you have received in the Lord so that you may fulfill it"

The instruction from Paul to Archippus is written as a direct quote. If your language does not use this form, you could write it as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "that he must look to the ministry that he has received in the Lord, so that he may fulfill it"

See: Direct and Indirect Quotations

Colossians 4:17 (#4)

"say to Archippus, "Look to the ministry that you have received in the Lord so that you may fulfill it"

The words **Look, you have received, and you may fulfill** all refer to Archippus alone and are singular. However, the word **say** refers to the Colossians and is plural.

See: Forms of 'You' — Singular

Colossians 4:17 (#5)

"Look to the ministry"

Here Paul speaks as if Archippus' **ministry** were something he can **look to**. By this, he means that he wants Archippus to focus on carrying out his ministry just as if it were something he could stare at. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a comparable metaphor or plainly. Alternate translation: "Focus on the ministry"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 4:17 (#6)

"the ministry" - "you have received"

Paul does not clarify or even hint at what **the ministry** is or from whom Archippus **received** it. If it is possible, leave this information unclear in your translation. If you must include some extra information, you could clarify that "God" gave him the **ministry** of serving the church. Alternate translation: "the task of serving the church ... God gave you"

See: When to Keep Information Implicit

Colossians 4:17 (#7)

"in the Lord"

Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in the Lord** to describe the union of Archippus with Christ. In this case, being **in the Lord** or united to the Lord identifies the situation in which he **received** his **ministry**. He received this **ministry** when he was united to **the Lord**. Alternate translation: "in union with the Lord"

See: Metaphor

Colossians 4:17 (#8)

"so that"

The phrase **so that** introduces a goal or purpose. Here, it is the purpose for which Archippus should **look to** or stay focused on his ministry. Use a word or phrase that introduces the goal or purpose of a previous statement. Alternate translation: "in order that"

See: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Colossians 4:18 (#1)

"This greeting {is} by my {own} hand"

Paul concludes his letter by writing a final greeting to the Colossians. Your language may have a particular way of sharing greetings in a letter. If so, you could use that form here. Alternate translation: "I ask to be remembered by my own hand" or "I say hello by my own hand"

Colossians 4:18 (#2)

"{is} by my {own} hand"

In this culture, it was normal for a scribe to write down what the author of the letter was saying. Paul here indicates that he himself is writing these last words. The phrase **by my {own} hand** means that it was his own hand that took up the pen and wrote. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind **by my {own} hand** using a comparable expression or include any extra information needed to make it clear. Alternate

translation: "is in my handwriting" or "I write myself"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 4:18 (#3)

"Paul"

Here Paul speaks of himself in the third person. He does this to sign his name to the letter, which shows that the letter is from Paul himself and carries his authority. If your language has a specific form for signing letters or documents, you could use it here. Alternate translation: "I am Paul"

See: First, Second or Third Person

Colossians 4:18 (#4)

"my chains"

Paul speaks of his **chains**, by which he means his imprisonment. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or state the idea plainly. Alternate translation: "that I am in jail" or "remember my imprisonment"

See: Metonymy

Colossians 4:18 (#5)

"Grace {be} with you"

As was customary in his culture, Paul closes his letter with a blessing for the Colossians. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. Alternate translation: "May you experience kindness within you" or "I pray that you will have grace"

See: Blessings

Colossians 4:18 (#6)

"Grace {be} with"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **Grace**, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: "May God be gracious to"

See: Abstract Nouns