

# Colossians 1:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working,  
which worketh in me mightily.

## Analysis

**Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.** Paul describes intense effort using *kopiō* (κοπιῶ, "labor to exhaustion") and *agōnizomenos* (ἀγωνιζόμενος, "striving"), from which we get "agonize." The athletic imagery pictures maximum exertion—the effort that leaves competitors gasping. Ministry demands everything Paul possesses: physical stamina, mental acuity, emotional investment, spiritual discipline.

Yet this striving operates "according to his working" (*kata tēn energeian autou*, κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν αὐτοῦ). *Energeian* (ἐνέργειαν, "energizing power") provides the root for English "energy." Divine power energizes human effort—not replacing it but empowering it. This paradoxically combines maximum human exertion with total divine enablement. Paul works hard precisely because God works in him.

"Which worketh in me mightily" (*tēn energoumenēn en emoi en dynamei*, τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐν δυνάμει) emphasizes power's source and strength. *Dynamei* (δυνάμει, "power/might") appears repeatedly in Colossians (1:11), stressing that supernatural results require supernatural power. Paul's ministry achievements—despite opposition, suffering, and limitation—testify to divine empowerment, not human ability.

## Historical Context

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Ancient labor divided into manual (slaves) and intellectual (free citizens). Paul integrates both: intellectual rigor in teaching doctrine, manual labor in tentmaking (Acts 18:3), emotional labor in pastoral care. His example counters both activism (trusting human effort alone) and quietism (passively waiting for God to act without human cooperation). Effective ministry requires both divine power and human diligence.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How do you balance working hard in ministry with depending on God's power rather than your own efforts?
2. What evidence of divine empowerment exists in your service—results disproportionate to natural abilities or resources?
3. Where might you be relying solely on human effort without seeking or expecting God's energizing power?

## Interlinear Text

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|                  |            |              |                |                 |                     |              |
|------------------|------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------|
| εἰς              | ὃ          | καὶ          | κοπιῶ          | ἀγωνιζόμενος    | κατὰ                | τὴν          |
| <b>Whereunto</b> | G3739      | <b>also</b>  | <b>I</b>       | <b>striving</b> | <b>according to</b> | <b>which</b> |
| G1519            |            | G2532        | G2872          | G75             | G2596               | G3588        |
| ἐνέργειαν        | αὐτοῦ      | τὴν          | ἐνεργουμένην   | ἐν              | ἐμοὶ                | ἐν           |
| <b>working</b>   | <b>his</b> | <b>which</b> | <b>worketh</b> | <b>in</b>       | <b>me</b>           | <b>in</b>    |
| G1753            | G846       | G3588        | G1754          | G1722           | G1698               | G1722        |
| δυνάμει          |            |              |                |                 |                     |              |
| <b>mightily</b>  |            |              |                |                 |                     |              |
| G1411            |            |              |                |                 |                     |              |

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Corinthians 15:10** (Parallel theme): But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

**Ephesians 1:19** (Kingdom): And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

**Philippians 2:13** (Parallel theme): For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

**Ephesians 3:7** (Kingdom): Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

**Colossians 2:1** (Parallel theme): For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

**Hebrews 13:21** (Kingdom): Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Colossians 4:12** (Parallel theme): Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

**Romans 15:20** (Parallel theme): Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

**1 Corinthians 12:11** (Parallel theme): But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

**Philippians 2:16** (Parallel theme): Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

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