



Uncommon Sense 1 Corinthians
Wk. 13 A Father's Work is Never Done
By Pastor Jody May 07/20/2025

1 Corinthians 1:25 - For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Uncommon Sense - *"God's Wisdom over man's pride through a Flawed Church."*

[CALL TO HEAR]

1 Corinthians 4:14-21 ESV

¹⁴ I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. ¹⁵ For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. ¹⁶ I urge you, then, be imitators of me. ¹⁷ That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. ¹⁸ Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. ¹⁹ But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. ²⁰ For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. ²¹ What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

Pastor - "People of God, this is the Word of God."

People - "Thanks be to God."

Pray

Illustration

A Father's Work is Never Done. Growing up I saw this in the physical side of life. There was no such thing as a 40-hour work week, for my dad. He left the house every day at 6am and got home if he was lucky before 5. At the end of the week, he was always staring at what every homeowner in S. Fl. knows is coming, yard work. No matter how your week went, no matter the weather patterns, no matter what game you had to catch on the tv, Saturday morning was coming and the sooner you got up the quicker you got done. Then after the yard work, that was when you got to the honey-do list, the projects that needed doing. For my dad his life of physical labor was ongoing rotating lists



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of never-ending things. I learned early on if you are taking more than 1 sabbath during the week then you are most likely just being lazy.

Neither is moms. You should know that my mother was right there with him. She was a 9-5er and Saturday was never a sit and take it easy day. Between the two of them I quickly learned that parenting was more than just work and bringing home a paycheck. They both struggled to make the most of life and sought to lead me the best way they could, showing the ropes in life, showing me how to budget and manage jobs, bank accounts, and social relationships. They were always supportive of me and this life, never pampering, but always engaging with me to see where I needed coaching and direction. Their goal was that when they left me here on this earth I could stand on my own and make it. They weren't perfect but they did the best they could with the energy they had and the resources available to them.

Introduction

This **same pattern of leadership**, where a person is never really done engaging in mentorship, is what the Apostle Paul is showing today. ***For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*** (v15). Paul is making the bold claim, since I was there in the beginning, my work as God's church planter, I recognize that I am your spiritual father. I was the person God gave you to give you your first instructions, the Gospel of the sure foundation. Now Paul is soon to return home to pick up his job from those he had entrusted their care to, not because they did a bad job, but he sees that now the next stage of their existence is to take what they have learned and put it to practical uses. His work as a father is not done, he needs to show them the ropes, how to use the gift of the Gospel in their lives for the glory of God not for man.

While this passage of scripture is about Paul's never-ending work as their father, it **still has ramifications for us**. There are principles, several to be exact, that we need to take away for they are universal in their appeal. They are universal because every church has a need for spiritual leadership that needs to be present in the body, for many people never had a spiritual father, someone to show them the ropes, and the church has become the surrogate



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spiritual parent if you will for many. I say this for this is the conclusion I believe the text points to today:

MP:

**It's important for growing
Christians to have mature leadership.**

That's not just from the pastor and the pulpit. That was my prayer this past week, Heather will tell you. I prayed for Grace Community Church, I prayed for John MacArthur's family that they grieve well and be overcome with joy, but I also prayed that the people of GCC would not believe they had no proper leadership. I prayed for their testimony, for it is even more important now that Pastor MacArthur is gone, that GCC flourishes.

How they live their life as a church now will either add credibility to or take away from MacArthur's testimony. The question remains to be seen: are they grown up, have they taken the sure foundation of the Gospel, has it become their base, will they be able to stand on their own? The answer will be seen in how they depend on each other, the leadership there now, does that church family know how to function now that their leader is gone.

So, it is critically important that we understand, I believe, the principles that Paul lays out for us in this text on Biblical Leadership and how it is to function in the church. There are 4 things, 4 truths that the text will show us today, biblical leadership works best in relationships. Biblical leadership offers examples to follow. Biblical leadership confronts the obstinate. Lastly, biblical leadership corrects as needed.

1. Biblical Leadership works best in relationships.

¹⁴I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. ¹⁵For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.



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Ok so Paul after his sarcastic berating last week he takes a step back and turns down the heat a little. I think that many of us recognize that as parents, right after we have had to reprimand a child we step back and not saying sorry, but we offer an apology, that means a reasoning for why you did what you did. That's not weakness that's just good parenting. Paul says I said what I said not to shame you, to make you feel guilt/ridicule but to admonish you, to get you to avoid wrongdoing.¹ I used stark sarcasm to get you to pay attention! Why? **Because I see you as my children whom I love.** He has gone from using his usual terms of "brothers" to something more endearing, it is the first time he mentions in his pleadings, corrections, reasoning, and admonishing's, I do this because **I love you like you were my own kids.**

Biblical leadership works on the basis of having established relationships.

One thing you begin to learn from Paul's letters, is that when you are a member of the church **love is a prerequisite.** To withhold your affections, to try and **not care** for the people in this room is a sin (John 13:34-35). Are we willing to endure with each other enough that it causes us some emotional turmoil when people don't act as we expect them to act when they are here? Biblical leadership is given and received in the context of personal relationships where love for one another has been established.

Paul goes on to talk about how they had countless guides in Christ, but not many fathers. "Guides" come from the Greek word παιδαγωγός (*paidagōgos*)². These guides were known in the Greek world as people who taught the basics, they taught the life skills necessary for everyday living, but they did not pass along the responsibilities, the passions, and the priorities of the family name. That wasn't their job, that was when the father came back into the scene to show the child how to conduct themselves for the honor of the name they bore.

¹ νοουθετέω (*noutheteō*). vb. **to admonish.** *To advise someone about avoiding wrongdoing.* Michael Scott Robertson, "[Discipline](#)," in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

² 4080 παιδαγωγός (*paidagōgos*), οὔ (*ou*), ὁ (*ho*): n.masc.; ≡ Str 3807; TDNT 5.596—LN 36.5 **guardian**, custodian, supervisor (1Co 4:15; Gal 3:24, 25+) James Swanson, [Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)](#) (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).



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As a final nail in the coffin over arguments for unity, Paul is saying you were never to argue about who you follow for it was not their name you uphold, you uphold Christ's and that is my job, as I brought to you first the Gospel, to show you how to live for Him.

¹⁵ ... *For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*

Biblical leadership demonstrates a responsibility to the Gospel first.

Paul is stating his right/responsibility to speak into their lives as their Spiritual Father/ Biblical Leader which comes from the Gospel. He came to them of first priority to spread the Gospel, he writes to them because of the need to clear up the Gospel, and he is going back to them to ensure the Gospel is not tainted. The Gospel is that important folks! It overrides your need not to be bothered with anyone, it overrides your desire not to get into conflict, its' importance and value demands you engage when you would rather not.

Everyone in this church may not have a calling to teach formerly, may not have a calling to the office of deacon or elder, but **every member shares the responsibility to lead each other, in ways of the Gospel**. Neither sex, nor experience, nor age is a factor in helping people follow the Gospel (360° leadership). All is needed to help lead is a prior relationship built on love, and a love for the Gospel that saves you! If I know you love the Gospel and you love me then I am ready for your assistance, If I doubt those first two things I will most likely shut you out. That should be the same way with you.

Biblical Leadership works best in relationship where love for one another has been shown and a respect for the Gospel has been established.

2. Biblical Leadership offers examples to follow.

¹⁶ I urge you, then, be **imitators** of me. ¹⁷ That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.



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This right here is one of the **SCARIEST** verses in the Bible and it keeps us from embracing the role of biblical leadership in each other's lives. It is scary, for Paul does something that only Jesus has ever dared to do, and that is to get people to look at him for inspiration and clarification on how to live one's life. You want to know if someone is committed to the Gospel? It will be the person that dares offers their life for examination, for they know this, they may trip up and not do ALL things right, but the Gospel has affected them in such a way they know **their possible failures do not define their righteousness.**

Paul is sending Timothy, we don't think he's there yet, but he is on his way and will beat Paul there (16:10). Paul is stating his testimony in Timothy, this is an example of someone that I modeled for. He is the walking story of how Paul took a young person in the Gospel, modeled it, taught him the ropes, trained him and sent him out to do God's work. The sending of Timothy validates what Paul is trying to do for the Corinthians, and by this time, Timothy already has a reputation that speaks for itself.

Listen this is an important spot in this sermon, in this moment right here. I know this much, the **greatest detriment to wanting to be a leader in the church is the fact that we are afraid to fall.** No one wants the responsibility of standing in front of others, while trying to live your life, and then offer your life as a testimony to try and emulate (their greatest fear is looking like a CEO at a Coldplay concert). That is the scariest thing in life and that is exactly why we have a lack of biblical leadership in the church.

Although the same good news for Paul that made him feel ok to say, *imitate me*, the **Gospel frees us all** from condemnation as well!

It doesn't take a belief that you can lead others well in the Gospel, **it takes a belief in the scripture to know it has the power to lead people well.** The power of Biblical Leadership does not come from your will, it comes from the revealed will of God in the scripture. Jesus is the King and lead shepherd not us, and the scriptures are his Divine Will, not ours, to be obeyed.



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THEREFORE, Biblical Leadership is not a matter of always trying to have the **right thing to say** but the **courage** to say what scripture says, the **courage** to **live out** what it says **in your life first**, and the **courage** to ask someone why **they won't**, and remember that is all to be done **in love!**

Biblical leadership starts with obedience to the Word, so that when it comes time to talk to others who may have a problem with it, they have already seen you struggle with it yourself. You have to walk the walk first to talk the talk to your neighbor second.

3. Biblical Leadership confronts the obstinate.

¹⁸Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. ¹⁹But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power.

Paul is like I hear that some of those people who talk bad about me and the Gospel, I gave you are arrogant. Like they are saying, *if Paul cared for you then he would be there.* That's nice, tell them I AM COMING, and that I won't boast in anything, but I will find out firsthand where they got their ideas from.

Everyone needs a little of this in their lives, a little Oomph! Biblical leadership needs church members that when they hear unloving talk, unedifying talk, non-unifying talk, a talk that does not portray the Gospel well, they speak up! That's what Mat 18 is for; Jesus provides the rules for engagement. If a brother or a sister is in sin, you are called to take that role first as the reconciler and go confront the person with which is causing some trouble. **Example:** In the body you find white blood cells everywhere, every member has them, and when an infection comes up, if you are the closest healthy person to it, get in the fight!

Whenever the body engages in dialogue and confronts obstinate people many times church discipline will stop right there, with a verbal investigation, by someone that has shown they are living out the gospel and has already shown they love that person through an existing relationship.



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Biblical leadership is willing to stand up to obstinate or at least falsely assuming people, and that is a job for everyone in this room.

4. Biblical Leadership corrects as needed.

²⁰For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. ²¹What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

Paul, the way he ends this section on unity here will make more sense when we jump into chapter 5. Let's just say he's going to have a lot to say (11 chapters) about how they have been behaving, he has not even started yet, and when he gets done it will be with the expectation that it was addressed. It also shows that the rest of this letter, while it is eye opening and corrective, is not the rod. Clarifying what sin is and what sin is not is **not punitive**, that is loving correction. The rod is what comes if you don't repent. So, what he is saying here is if you do not address what I am about to lay out, then WHEN I show up there is a confrontation, not just for obstinance but for the unrepentant sin that has been going rampant.

Now you may think that this is a no brainer, like how can you have church where there is unconfessed sin and non-repentant people around. Like Jody that is two things that don't go together. The Gospel where it is preached along with the Law, and the need for constant repentance, it should take care of itself. Yet even after Paul's warnings in Corinthians, when he showed up there were people he confronted and there were people he expelled. Biblical leadership will require people in this world to not just say something if what they are hearing is unloving, but it will have them putting their foot down if sin is not addressed. We all should be people that are not ok with people living in this room that are ok to make a mockery of living for Jesus.

MP:

It's important for growing Christians to have mature leadership.

[CALL TO OBEY] - If you are up for the challenge.

- **Love through service.**



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In John 13:34 Jesus gives the command to *love one another as I have loved you*. The example that Jesus just showed them to prove that point was to wash their feet. If one is going to accept sideways leadership from someone, if someone is going to accept a correction, admonition, or encouragement then it will have to come from the person that has served that person first. Biblical Leadership models Christ, and modeling Christ means sacrificing for someone to show them they are worth the time. Loving through service builds both relationship between people and love for one another.

- **Live by example.**

If you are ever going to be comfortable with living as an example, and by the way you should, especially if you have to do it as a parent first, then you are going to have to become comfortable with being able to **die to your own sin**.

How to dies to sin/2 ways:

Take the time in your relationships and ask someone you feel comfortable with, where in your life are you missing it, where in your life are you failing, where in your life could you do better. Accept the criticism and then ask them to observe you to see if you are getting better at it.

For the person that likes to critique everyone and everything this will slow your role way down. For the person afraid to give feedback to others this will help you get over your fear of being criticized. Having a confidant that can give advice and critique without condemnation is a blessing, and we should be able to get that in this church.

Family we all have a job to do in maintaining unity in this body, and that happens through embracing our call to lead one another for it is...

MP:

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And may God who gives graciously for the church so bless us in this endeavor.



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Prayer

Communion

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 ESV

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Today when you eat of the bread remember the life of Jesus which was lived for us. In his life Jesus from day one had to have understood that His life would be THE example for all to emulate. When it came to shoulder responsibility for others, He did so. When it came time to confront sin in His disciples, family and friends, He did so. And when those times came, they all understood it came from a heart that had loved them first. Praise be to God for His gracious example.

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood for the new covenant. When we fail to love others as we would love ourselves, He loved us still through His sacrifice. When we strive to shirk our responsibilities for helping each other live out the Gospel, He displayed the glory of the Gospel through His freely given shed blood. Praise be to Him for His wonderful love.

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

* The Congregation will stand

Elder - "Christians, what do we believe?"

Congregation - recites

London Baptist Confession of Faith 1689 Chapter 1 Paragraph 4.



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The Bible is Authoritative Because It Is the Word of God

The Bible should be believed because of its authority, which does not depend upon the testimony of any person or church, but rather upon God, who is the author and is truth itself. Therefore, the Bible should be received because it is the Word of God. 7

7. 2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 John 5:9

[OFFERING+LAST SONG]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that provided in love the perfect example of servant leader in this life and death of His Son.

Go in the name of the Son, that sought to lead us by giving of Himself as the ultimate example, even when it called for His life.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that calls us to step into the lives of each other in this room, for the sake of the Gospel, now go share that good news with others.



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