



**Uncommon Sense 1 Corinthians**  
**Wk. 20 Condition Correction**  
**By Pastor Jody May 09/07/2025**

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**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 7:17-24 ESV**

**Live as You Are Called**

<sup>17</sup> Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. <sup>18</sup> Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. <sup>19</sup> For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God. <sup>20</sup> Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. <sup>21</sup> Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) <sup>22</sup> For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ. <sup>23</sup> You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men. <sup>24</sup> So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.

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**Pastor - "People of God, this is the Word of God."**  
**People - "Thanks be to God."**

**Pray**

**Illustration**

Where you live, what sport teams you follow, what you tattoo on your body, what clothes you wear, what color your hair is, what piercings you have, what music you listen to, what vehicle you drive, what stores you shop at, what



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stars you follow, what media influencers you like, what denomination or religion you are, what computer/phone you prefer, where you go to school, and of course how you vote, all contributes to this trend – **you must brand yourself with your beliefs/worldview!** In our current world of the 'Enlightened West' if you have a certain persuasion of belief, how you think the world works, a particular worldview, then culture calls on you to display that. Even if you choose to be like Switzerland (see WWI/WWII) and choose to remain neutral in all this cultural identifying, whatever you pick will still determine a societal cast ranking cast on you from other people. You will not escape being judged by others on your external markings. You cannot escape it, even if you wanted to, you could be the most libertarian person in all the world, *"live and let live"* is your motto, and you would still be labeled by either side as some type of racist or phobic/uncaring person. You cannot escape a subjective perceived identity in this world, welcome to the 21<sup>st</sup> century!

Now to be fair that type of stereotyping has always been with us. When I was much younger it was always asked by men, *"What do you do for a living?"* What that means is be prepared for being judged on how much you make, tempered with how manly it seems your job is, and that then sets one up to judge everything else in life like a man's wife, kids, home, etc. Then there was always in the religious circles, *"What denomination are you?"* That was basic 40 years ago, if you were Catholic (orthodox), it meant you were conservative but didn't go to church much, if you were Methodist (mainstream), you were nice, but your pastor didn't preach much, and if you were Baptist (dunked) then you were more about morals and not high on Grace. Identity stereotyping has always been with us, it has just gotten more intense especially over the last decade. That is because people always want to have visual recognition of their choices in life BECAUSE **social validation of who you are makes you feel better about yourself.**

Let me be clear, you and I prefer to live with the ability to identify and be identified by external means for it means we have some control over how we are perceived – that's right we like it! Therefore, we can control whether someone likes us or not, and we can control how much someone likes us or not, and because it is external signaling, I don't have to be involved with you at too much of a personal level. Just like in nature where animals warn each



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other by their colors and sounds so we as people are always signaling to other people whether to come closer or stay away. All that work though in light of scripture today, Paul would call a waste of time, and a waste of Grace that the good Lord gave us.

## **Introduction**

Paul is going to combat the very same thing we struggle with today, cultural identity, and the pursuit of that. He is going to change our minds about how we view ourselves, so that we may stop making our subjective social identities our personal idols that we love to build and serve, and instead put our focus back on Christ, whom alone is worthy to be praised and worshipped. He is going to do that by highlighting 3 times in the text, the condition in which God saved you.

<sup>17</sup> Only let each person **lead the life** that the Lord has **assigned** to him...

<sup>20</sup> Each one should **remain** in the **condition** in which he was **called**.

<sup>24</sup> So, brothers, in whatever **condition** each was **called**, there let him **remain** with God.

Each time Paul points out that yes, it may not be your fault, and you may not like where you were born or to whom you were born to, or to which state you were brought into being, but that is exactly where God had assigned you, and you should accept that and use it to start living for the Lord. **When we choose to live for the Lord FIRST, that will build an identity that will be perceived by others in the way God wants it to – your identity is built rightly when your first choice is to live for the Lord!** We were not placed on this earth to spend all our energies, time, and resources trying to change our outward circumstances and standing in this culture, but we are to use our status and placement to reveal the Christ that saves, to those around us!

The church is no place to have to fight over a pecking order, the church is no place to have to come and worry if how you will be judged by your social status, neither is the church a place to try and gain good feelings on how others perceive you. The church is where all God's people can gather and worship God and be blessed so that they may go out into their positions in this



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world and influence their community with the Gospel of our Lord. To sum that up nicely for our passage today here is what I believe Paul wants us to walk with away today.

**MP:**

**God knows where you are, and He can use who you are.**

God knows who you are and had a hand in making who you are, **that who you are can give Him all the glory, for who He is!** It is a blessing and a calling to be who you are for only 'you' can live for God in your unique calling/vocation for the works that were prescribed to you before time ([Eph 2:10](#)). Paul has a couple of applications for us today to embrace this and a command at the end to follow up. The first thing is to **be fine in your assignment from the Lord**. That means don't try to change who you are to be more accepted or liked by others but work to live out God's commands in the identity God has given you. Secondly, **be flexible in your conditions in the Lord**. There are times where one should change a living condition but changing your living conditions is not always the top priority of your life. We must learn to do sometimes with what God gives us and seek to magnify Him in that life. Lastly, **be free in your relationship with the Lord**. Don't get caught up in the rat race called life that demands you identify with others in this world, instead you identify with Christ, for you are His, and in Him is life!

**1. Be fine in your assignment from the Lord.**

**<sup>17</sup>Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.**

Ok we are starting off with one of those condition statements I mentioned earlier, the first of the three. He is going to have application after this but let's break it down first to ascertain what exactly he is saying.

Paul starts off with '*only*' used as a conjunction, meaning he is using the topic last week of different types of marriage arrangements to bring us into this topic of identity searching. He is saying that married, unmarried, or married to an unbeliever, let each person lead the life out the life that God assigned to



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them. That word for assign in the Greek, μερίζω (*merizō*):<sup>1</sup>, means **to give a particular task or responsibility**. That's important here, for Paul means the life you are living right now Christian, has a Sovereign purpose to it, it came with responsibilities, it has divine connotations, God's will was behind it, and therefore it is not to be spurned.

Paul then makes a connotation here that takes the connection from the Corinthians and from marriage and applies it universally to every Christian. *This is my rule in all the churches*. There has been in every church for all of time a people that God had foreordained a calling for, **An Assignment**, that only they are to fulfill and of which that person will be responsible to answer to God for one day.

**(Illustration)** Just like at my house, anyone in my house can and will take out the garbage, but there has been one person that it has been assigned to. He always knows when it needs to go out for, he fills it up the most. He currently has the strongest frame so as to forgo injury when trying to take a full bag to the garage. He has a truck so that when the garbage goes from garage to the can at the end of the driveway it doesn't dirty his car. This was his job assigned to him before time prepared for him to do so that the house can function at a more efficient level.

When he doesn't do his job others have to step in for it still needs to be done. The problem is though it will require extra duty on the behalf of others, it requires more strain on their bodies and puts them at a disadvantage in transporting it to the can out by the road. This has been his assigned life for the time being and it is in this assignment he practices honoring his father and mother, he practices discipline and concern of others, and in a small way as he learns to do it with gratitude, that earned humility will make him more like Christ.

Now just imagine if we take that same consideration and apply it to all church members for all of time, if we all bucked our responsibilities and calling our

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<sup>1</sup> **3532** μερίζω (*merizō*): vb.; ≡ Str 3307; give **assign responsibility**, give to a particular task (Ro 12:3; 1Co 7:17; 2Co 10:13+) James Swanson, [Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)](#) (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).



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churches would be a mess. :/. Yes, things still get done around a church, but others have to step in and do it if there are people who always look around and think someone else will get that. My friend you will be responsible for the life and assignment you had for Christ. Family we need to be fine with the life God is calling us to for God knows exactly what needs to get done and knows exactly what you need to be saved, trust the process!

Paul now uses some specific examples for application let's look at those.

**<sup>18</sup> Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision.**

To be fine in your assignment from God is not to try an altar the things about yourself in order to fit in where you are. In Corinth it seems there were some who were thinking of either being circumcised to fit in with Jewish believers and there were some Jewish business owners or Christians hiding their circumcision (*epispasm*) from Gentiles not wanting to lose their status with the Greeks<sup>2</sup>. Paul uses the Jewish practice of circumcision and builds the case for being fine in your assignment from God.

There was a debate early in the Christian Church where Jewish Christians believed and taught that to be distinguished as a true believer then Gentiles should circumcise themselves as a sign of their conversion. This battle was made most evident in the book of Galatians where Paul after some very hostile words gets to his conclusion on the matter:

**Galatians 6:15 ESV**

**<sup>15</sup> For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.**

The heart is what matters, the new man who is made alive by God, the sign is the heart of stone being replaced by a heart of flesh according to the New

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<sup>2</sup> Winter contends that some Jewish Christians may have wanted to hide their circumcision (through epispasm) in order to give them a higher status in society. Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, [The First Letter to the Corinthians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 310.



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Covenant ([Jer 31:31-33](#); [Ez 36:26-27](#)). What you look like on the outside that identifies you with a group of people does not matter. That's why every believer is baptized into union with Jesus' Church, for that is the mark of what has happened in the heart. We don't withhold baptism because of a previous life but we baptize when the person testifies to the new creation in them, and it is confirmed by those around them. Baptism is the sign that replaces circumcision.

What a great testimony that is for Jesus' church! When we can have Jew and Gentile alike in the same church marked by the same Baptism displaying what has gone on inside the person hence why Jesus commands this in Matthew 28 that His disciples be marked with the sign of 'water immersion'. Then Paul ends with this phrase on his example.

<sup>19</sup> For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but **keeping** the **commandments** of God.

The sign of an internal change, a heart that now loves God above all and is practicing loving others as loving self, is the heart that obeys the commandments of God. **Now here's the danger** if you can't become fine with your past, fine with your lineage, fine with how you were raised, **you will try to adhere some code of conduct to justify yourself.**

Sometimes newly converted Christians try to assert into the world the worth of their conversion by getting rid of everything that associated them with a prior life, or they spend more time trying to argue with everyone from that old life, and in doing so they forget about the Grace that brought them to new life. That's the dangerous moment for many times that's when a new Christian can go rogue and become more like a Pharisee and they get judgy on what everyone else is doing, and they start to have arguments in the church because they think they are one of the few ones living right. Folks that will wreck unity in your church because the fact is **no one has more righteousness than anyone else** because all the righteousness you have was given to you by Christ ([imputation](#)). Therefore, to judge others based on their external signs of faith and not the fruit of faith is wrong for you to do.



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Family be fine in your assignment from God, with where you come from, because God knows who you are and will use who you are, just be obedient to loving him above all and loving others with the Grace that won you over.

**2. Be flexible in your conditions in the Lord.**

<sup>20</sup> Each one should **remain** in the **condition** in which he was **called**. <sup>21</sup> Were you a **bondservant** when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.)

So, Paul now uses another current day example for his time in the church to further explain that the physical life and its' social ranks is not what identifies the Christian. But here he is using an example that has caused a lot of people in the modern day some trouble in accepting this truth.

Let's look at that word for bondservant there in v. 21, that is the word δοῦλος (*doulos*) and it means slave, that means another person procured and owned by another.<sup>3</sup> So Paul goes from one example of physical markings that people thought could be used to distinguish oneself, to a societal standing that we can see no one thought much of. But why doesn't Paul just condemn the act of slavery here, isn't slavery wrong PJ? Well, we got to dig a little into the context of that day and age.

Some scholars suggest that roughly a third of Corinth were slaves, and another third would be made up of people who were once slaves, leaving a third as naturally born citizens. Whatever your feelings on slavery in our present-day slavery was accepted back then and it was A-moral issue in culture to own one. You could be born a slave, you could have sold yourself into slavery to pay off debt, or you could had been taken in an act of war. Some slaves lived miserable lives working in things like mines where it was dangerous and life expectancy was not long, while others served as doctors, musicians, barbers, cooks, teachers, managers, and all varieties and positions in town life. Slavery back

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<sup>3</sup> δοῦλος (*doulos*). n. masc. **servant, slave**. Refers to someone who is the property of another. A servant (*doulos*) is someone who is a slave and obeys the commands of his or her master. For example, in Matt 8:9 the centurion claims that he says to his servant (*doulos*), "Do this," and he does it. Paul often refers to himself as the servant (*doulos*) of Jesus Christ (Rom 1:11; Gal 1:10). The idea that he is a slave to Christ carries the sense of belonging to him—Christ has bought him, and owns him. Ron Clark and Dougald McLaurin III, "Duty," in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).



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then was not based on your nationality or cultural background; anyone could be a slave back then. Ancient slavery, like the slavery of the West we are familiar with over the last 300 years, meant no personal freedoms or rights and sometimes along with that came the cruelty of masters and those who owned slaves. But that wasn't the way for every slave and master relationship back then, as many slaves had personal freedoms to live life as they chose as long as they remained loyal and got their work done.

What Paul wanted to address is that fact that his beloved church people were concerned with their ability to live as Christians. **Their concern was not over their freedom, but would that their life hindered them from having the freedom to do for God**, because of the way they were perceived. Wow what a statement, no claim of being a victim or the demand that God deliver them, but that their concern was how could they serve God when they belonged to someone else?!

Paul says hey if you were a bondservant when you were called, then **God knew who you are and wants to use who you are where you are at**. Your current predicament never means you can't be used by God, that's what that means. Family there is nothing in your current life that can keep you from living as a Christian, FOR all of life's conditions have been provided to you so that you may live as a Christian where you are called, you just got to be flexible in that. Now of course Paul does see competition in having to be a bondservant to others so of course he desires for people to be free from slavery (see the book of Philemon) so he's like if you can avail yourself of freedom then please do so. Even then, the reality is that most likely some of these people were choosing to stay in slavery for it made it easier to live life that way.

That's no different today for many claim they can't follow God the way they want because of an earthly condition. *My family doesn't support me, I don't have the time, my job doesn't allow me, I don't have the funds to give an offering, where I moved there are no good churches, I have church hurt*, and the list goes on and on. Family those are signs of being a bondservant/slave to the whims of culture and bad self-talk, you are free in Christ to pursue Him. AND when it is hard to pursue Him, we are expected to try and free ourselves from that which keeps us from worshipping God together on His day! Here's



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why we can't give up on pursuing God nor should we worry about what our status in society should say about us.

<sup>22</sup> For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a **bondservant of Christ**.

Two things, if you are a Christian then that means no matter your outer circumstances, no matter how confined you feel in a job, in a relationship, in a position, in any and all circumstances if you are called, as one of the elect, then you have been Freed in Christ! You are not hand tied in any way not to act like a Christian but what may cause some persecution in your life when you act like one, may have been put there so you may be sanctified and so that the Gospel may be preached!

What's more Paul says you don't have a choice about it, when you are rescued from this world you are made a bondservant/slave of Christ! Your freedom from the world was won in a war against Satan who held your papers of ownership, and they were taken by force by Christ, paid with by His blood, and you now belong to Him! Sometimes though Jesus doesn't remove us out of a hard situation because just like in war there are more to rescue, there are more to save, and you are now the connection to the lost world. **We need to stay flexible in the conditions we are called for God wants to use us where He found us.**

**3.** Be **free** in your **relationship** with the Lord.

<sup>23</sup> You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men. <sup>24</sup> So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.

Simply put family whatever your situation in life, no matter how people identify you, no matter how people judge you, no matter if you are poor or rich, young or old, male or female if you have been called and bought with a price, do not again put on a yoke of slavery to this world. Even if it means a little suffering in this present age Christ is worth that!

**1 Peter 4:16 ESV**



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Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

That also means family don't let the world tell you that they need to identify you by some other means. Don't believe for a moment you have to decide to use pronouns because everyone else is. Don't think you have to get on social media and doctor it up with flattery about yourself because everyone else is. Don't think you need to spend more money than you save because everyone else is. Paul said when you were saved you were made free and you are to remain that way with God.

It means you don't make decisions the way the rest of the world does, you are to remain free from that as well. You don't always have to move for a better job that takes you away from friends, family and a good home church. You don't always have to have new toys making your budget evolve around consumables instead of giving towards the eternal work of ministry. You don't have to raise your kids like everyone else, you don't have to vacation like everyone else, you don't have to live like everyone else, be free from those demands God has set you free to pursue Him right where you are!

**MP:**

**God knows where you are, and He can use who you are.**

**[CALL TO OBEY]**

Family the way we work towards not being slave to this world is that we have to learn how to be content in all things. I have three suggestions to help us learn how to be content, so we are not selling ourselves back into bondage in this world.

**Trust in God's Plan**

Romans 8:28 *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

God works everything in your life for good, that means not just for yourself but others. The place, the condition/status in which you are in right now God is working that not just for your good but for His plans above all else. When



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we seek to escape that which feels uncomfortable all the time you are rebelling against God's desires to use you where you are, His assignment for you. God's plans always come with challenges because they call us to surrender our wants and trust Him first.

### **Serve Others**

One of the things that gets us off track sometimes and puts us in bondage to this world is that we forget about the work we are called to; *do unto others as you would have them do unto you* (Mat 7:12). In the SoM that means to help those that thirst for righteousness, that want to find the Kingdom, that need help in following Jesus, you help them do that. There is a room full of people every week that need your help and you have been given something specifically to do here, of which **God assigned** for you specifically. Serving others sacrificially in this room gets your mind off what the world is calling you to waste time on, and you practice your bondservice to Christ, for His glory. *"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own",* (1 Cor 6:19).

### **Avoid Comparison**

Lastly, we must put on our Christian blinders. When we spend too much time in the world by cultural window-shopping; we tend to make decisions based on how others make decisions. Let me ask my family some easy things to consider, before making major decision about raising children (dating, sports, schooling), or about your lifestyle (marriage, jobs, homes, budgets) ask a couple of people in this church first before making that decision. I find many times Christians make decisions based on what they have seen others do but very rarely do they make decisions based on people in the church and what they say with the wisdom of God at the forefront. Perhaps we all need to do a little less worldly window-shopping and do a little more soul searching and allow others to check our motives.

Family you are free in Christ, and you are free to love Him with all you have just remember this:

**MP:**

**God knows where you are, and He can use who you are.**



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Let's not waste any more time trying to change the things that God has called us to.

**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, <sup>24</sup> 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." <sup>25</sup> 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." <sup>26</sup> 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 a world that demanded He brand Himself as a Jew first, then pressured to take on the yoke of a pharisaical teacher, to take on the militaristic role of an earthly Messiah that Israel wanted, He denied all forced earthly identities by man. Instead, He bore the title the Son of Man so that He may perform and live life for all His people then and to come. Praise be to Him for His commitment to the Father!

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood for the new covenant. When we, His people, have tried to identify ourselves with someone or something other than God. When we took on the yoke of this world, it was only the blood of Christ, that could free us. By His payment we have become His and by His blood we have been sealed unto His service. Praise be to Him for His wonderful love!

**[CONFESSION OF FAITH]**

\* The Congregation will stand



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Elder - **"Christians, what do we believe?"** Congregation - recites:

**London Baptist Confession of Faith 1689 Chapter 26 Paragraph 5 The Purpose of Local Churches**

To carry out the authority given to him, the Lord Jesus calls people out of the world who are given to him by his Father through the ministry of his word, by his Spirit. 9 He calls them to walk before him in all the ways of obedience that he prescribes for them in his Word. 10 He commands all who are called to walk together in local congregations, or churches, to edify one another and participate in the elements of public worship that he requires from them while they are in the world. 11

9. John 10:16; John 12:32

10. Matthew 28:20

11. Matthew 18:15-20

**[OFFERING+LAST SONG]**

**[BENEDICTION]**

Go in the name of the Father, that would not let our slavery to this world go unnoticed but instead conceived the plan to free us.

Go in the name of the Son, who by His work has set us free, so honor Him with the life He purchased.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that opens our eyes to our assignments of Holy Living, working hand in hand with Christ, to set the captives free.



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