



**Uncommon Sense 1 Corinthians**  
**Wk. 22 Love over Liberty**  
**By Pastor Jody May 09/21/2025**

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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 8:1-13 ESV**

**Food Offered to Idols**

**8** Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." This "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up. <sup>2</sup>If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. <sup>3</sup>But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

<sup>4</sup>Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "an idol has no real existence," and that "there is no God but one." <sup>5</sup>For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"—<sup>6</sup>yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

<sup>7</sup>However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. <sup>8</sup>Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. <sup>9</sup>But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. <sup>10</sup>For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? <sup>11</sup>And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. <sup>12</sup>Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. <sup>13</sup>Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

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



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**Pray**

**Illustration**

Rights that we assume everyday can be used in a way that demonstrates God's kindness. A story of vehicle traffic misunderstanding.

**Introduction**

Explaining and recapping what is happening in this scene with food offered to idols. What are the dangers in assuming one's liberties without thought and consideration for others.

**MP:**

**Let the Liberties we pursue accompany  
the love of Christ for others.**

1. Regulate your **actions** by the principle of **Christian Love**.

**Food Offered to Idols**

**8** Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." This "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up. <sup>2</sup>If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. <sup>3</sup>But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

As we move on from the topic of marriage and sexual immorality Paul makes what seems like an abrupt stop. In reality it is not that abrupt because as you will see in a moment this a continuation of a battle that Paul has been engaging since the beginning of this letter. His new thesis statement here begins with "*Now concerning food offered to idols:*"

If you remember from a couple of weeks ago, I told you that in this letter there was also 4 specific questions that Paul was answering. Questions that came with the contingent from Corinth to him in Ephesus, this topic of food offered to idols was the second question (7:1 is it good to pursue sexual relations with



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a wife). All that means is that this situation that Paul is addressing here is already causing problems in the church, it is committing people to sin, and it is keeping the body of Christ from being unified. Those are big issues for any church especially when you are living in a demonically controlled metropolis. Disunity in belief and action in a church in such a setting not only makes it ineffective but if that thing is not corrected it leaves a door open in the church for the world to make its' way in (as with church plants in our culture).

Here is the big problem though, and as I said earlier it is a problem that Paul struck at since the beginning of this letter. ***This knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.*** (v.1). Paul is hitting on again the ultimate problem in Corinth:

**1 Corinth 1:22-25 ESV**

<sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek **wisdom**, <sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified, a **stumbling block** to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are **called**, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ** the **power** of God and the **wisdom** of God. <sup>25</sup>For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

The type of knowledge being displayed here in vs. 1-3 is not a knowledge that glorifies God by building up believers. The knowledge being used here has a countereffect to the Gospel because it was tearing down believers. This is a knowledge that men are using for their own gain and not for the gain of others. It is an **ignorant and arrogant Greek Wisdom** that looks to employ knowledge for the sake of self-gain and enlightenment. That to Paul is a *foolishness of man* thing.

Before we go any further let' stop for one moment and look at this type of Christian love that we are to be expressing towards each other that Paul mentioned in v.1.

**1 Corinthians 13:4-5 ESV**

<sup>4</sup>Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or **boast**; it is not arrogant <sup>5</sup>or rude. It does **not insist** on its **own way**; it is not irritable or resentful;



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Christian love is kind, it never boasts which seems to be a repeating pattern in Corinth now, it never insists on its own way; never demands its rights, and it doesn't get mad when it doesn't get its' own way. In short **Love looks after the interests of others before it ever looks to taking advantage of its' own freedoms.** That is the type of love that builds up.

Paul then goes on to remind us that even though it seems wise in what you are doing when it comes to food sacrificed to idols, your actions are foolish to God, and those who are **known by God** (saved) would actually be able to see this. So, what is the foolish knowledge and what is the actual knowledge of God in these first three verses?

First Paul recognizes a general knowledge that these Christians have in Corinth, the ones he was addressing, and that is that there are no such thing as other gods in this world. V. 4 spells that out for us:

*“Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.”*

Paul says in v.1 like, no duh, we all *“possess that knowledge”* (v. 4), we all know that, but as you see, not everyone is running out exercising their new found freedom which is enjoying the meat that has been sacrificed to idols. Hey Corinth meat lovers, did you ever stop to ask why the Apostles don't do that? Did it ever cross your mind that just because something sounds like a good idea doesn't necessarily mean you should do it? Did you ever stop to think how this freedom might be perceived by others?

**1 Corinthians 10:23 ESV**

*“All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up.*

**The strength of the Gospel is not displayed in claiming one's Liberty but in tempering one's liberty for love of others.**

Liberty is having the freedom to do or believe a thing, and the fact of the matter is that when we are saved out of this world, there are many things we



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are freed from. One of those things we are freed from is having to obey man-made traditions and beliefs about things that have shown to be false. (Drinking, smoking, tattoos, long hair on men, short hair on women not to mention pants on women, not wearing ties on Sunday, tucking in your shirts, not wearing hats in a building, cutting your grass every week). But when acting out on those new freedoms the Christian always has to call to mind the example of Christ.

Christ upon His incarnation into our reality is the freest man to have ever lived. He comes to the earth with all authority as the creator and the power of heaven to empower all His decisions, to accomplish all that He wants, and no one can say otherwise for He alone is perfect, and no matter what His judgment is on anything He's always right. But instead, out of operating out of all that freedom He restrained Himself out of love!

- When Christ's hometown, family, and disciples rejected Him and abandoned Him, He had every right to condemn them to Hell.
- When Christ saw that the Jews only wanted what they could get from Him instead of offering worship, He had the right as King to turn His back on them.
- When Rome, the Herodian Monarchs, and the Sanhedrin all condemned, tortured, and persecuted Him He had at that moment every right to strike them down and erase any memory of them from the face of the earth.

Christ had every right to do whatever He wanted but had already decided in times past that instead of doing the lawful thing He would do the loving thing. He would forgive His people on the day of the cross and every day to come after it, for in His own words, **"we know not what we do"**.

Family, that is the example of a knowledge that does not puff up, but that is the example of a love that builds up, that is the Gospel, and that is what we are called to do for one another. We show the strength of the Gospel, the love for Jesus, not by recklessly enjoying whatever is our right in front of others, rather we carefully determine that what we do in front of others builds them up and not tears them down. Our freedoms must be tempered with love for others.



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<sup>2</sup>If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know.

This is Paul's way of saying for those that think they know what is best in this situation, and their conclusion is to exercise liberty no matter how it affects the other Christians around them, then they actually don't know squat. As a matter of fact that '**does not yet know**' phrase, Paul speculates out loud that he suspects that they are not really saved.

<sup>3</sup>But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

But for those that exercise their liberty with consideration are demonstrating a love that builds up others (v.1), and that shows that God has first loved you. One of the fruits of Salvation is a care and concern of others over your perceived rights. You are realizing that Jesus loved you despite His right not to love you and of that you are very grateful. Paul says that is the person that is actually saved.

There may be some in this room this morning, that you have a right to exercise some liberties that would harm others. Spouses you may think right now you have a right to be mad at your significant other and that may be so, but you also have a responsibility to do more good for those it affects when you are not forgiving, not compassionate, and unloving. Children often are the inheritors of a parent's rights to be happy which has left a wake of broken homes full of hurt. It does not matter how much we tell kids that a decision to leave was not about them, they will make it all about them, and they are more likely statistically to emulate that behavior. That sin needs to stop in the church in America and instead we need to model the restraint that Christ showed when His people treated Him like trash.

Let us regulate our actions as well church just as Christ chose the better path of loving us unconditionally.

**2. Regulate your worship with True Doctrine.**



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<sup>4</sup>Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.” <sup>5</sup>For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—

Ok so Paul in being considerate to some of these folks in Corinth for he acknowledges that they are indeed understanding a doctrine rightly. He agrees with them that there are no other Gods other than the one true God, and he quotes from Deuteronomy 6:4, which is also the beginning of the Shema<sup>1</sup>, a Jews most high prayer, this truth:

**Deuteronomy 6:4 ESV**

<sup>4</sup>“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

Paul would have taught them this truth along with every other church plant he had been involved with for he was always walking into a polytheistic society. As Paul is a Jew of Jews, he would have been taught from an early age, that his people suffered from deceit of foreign nations, having allowed themselves to be lured away into false worship, and then faced with the consequences of those actions were dispersed into the world as a corrective discipline. Paul knew this truth and would have definitely taught it, and it would have been ‘amened’ by his Jewish converts.

And I would have to imagine that if you are a new Christian in a Pagan culture and you wake up to the deception of this world you might be a little irritated that you too were duped. As Paul makes commentary about it in Romans.

**Romans 1: 21-23 ESV**

<sup>21</sup>For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup>Claiming to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup>and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bibleproject.com/articles/what-is-the-shema/>



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So, before we start calling these people evil (that's not the complaint, foolishness is) who are exercising their rights let me just say this, *I might be right there with them.* I can imagine being served by people who honored their own god and were selling me their excess meat to make coin, but I would never give any honor whatsoever to their gods. As a matter of fact, I would have made sure they saw me give thanks to the one true God for the food they plopped in front of me, for He is the one that owns the all the cattle of a 1000 Hills (Ps 50:10). I would want to show God my thanks for no longer being duped by this world and I would want to let people know who they need to thank for their blessings. I guess I might need a little correcting from time to time as well. 😊

<sup>6</sup>yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one **Lord, Jesus Christ**, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

This Doctrine of Divinity is very important even for us today, that's why Christians in 325 AD developed the Nicene Creed to fight Arian heresy that was denying the divinity of Jesus.

### **The Nicene Creed**

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial  
with the Father;  
through him all things were made.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,

For Paul though what was happening at Corinth, people were calling on Jesus as Lord, but they were not demonstrating the character of their Lord, which



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is what the word Christian means.<sup>2</sup> Our Worship of the one true God always must be done in reverence of the only begotten Son of God. We are to emulate Him, not emulate the arrogance of false gods and false religions, we emulate His humility which is what drives the lost to Him and reminds others why they love Him.

**Our Worship must look like the Son's Worship which was always full of Grace and Truth.**

Now a part of that truth is also understanding your enemy. Paul knows this as well, there may not be any other gods in this universe but **there are demonic spirits** that seek to steal worship from God. They take/steal worship by influencing the mind of others, making them think they have power, they can possess people. They still have power to do a lot of harm even though it is a diminished power since Jesus defeated their unified scheming and power structure with His incarnation.

Bottom line folks just because you know Satan is defeated, just because you know he cannot affect your life personally without Jesus' permission, does not mean he is not affecting others around you. There are people in this world that have very dark pasts and things they are running from and even getting close to those haunts they want nothing to do with it!

Regulating our worship with True Doctrine means understanding Jesus is Lord, but demonic power still exists so be patient with brothers and sisters that are still learning how to live with those facts and their new freedom.

**3. Regulate your tolerances with Christian Consideration.**

<sup>7</sup>However, not all possess this knowledge.

It's not that they are not saved, but that some of the saved have not yet learned or accepted the fact that there are no other gods, and that the power of

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<sup>2</sup> **5985** Χριστιανός (*Christianos*), οὐ (*ou*), ὁ (*ho*): n.pr.masc.; ≡ Str 5546; TDNT 9.493–LN 11.35 **Christian** (Ac 11:26; 26:28; 1Pe 4:16+) James Swanson, [Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)](#) (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).



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demons are made powerless in the lives of believers. It is hard to for people coming out of the influence of the occult and paganism to just forget it all like it never happened. Christians all come to a full reality of their Salvation in different rates. For most people it takes years to learn to walk in the freedom of the Gospel.

But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. <sup>8</sup>Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. <sup>9</sup>But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

What was happening is that for some in the church they were not convinced that the meat had no power in it. They still believed the essence of deities were residing in that dead flesh, and that adding that foreign god to them was defiling them. You can imagine as new Christians are now fighting to control their worldly desires that when temptation came, they would now just blame the gods of their old world and doubt their Salvation. It was messing up their doctrine of sin and their doctrine of man. Paul says look, you are not getting any brownie points from God by going to these places and buying this meat for those of you that have the right knowledge. That is works based mentality and you need to get that out of your minds as well.

You see how all of this is boiling down to a fight for correct theology? Theology matters family, what you believe will affect how you live. Not only that but if your theology is not tempered with love for others, you will almost always go with a theology that most suites your personal likes. Not only do we need to understand and apply the Gospel we need to be a people deep in the study of God.

<sup>10</sup>For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? <sup>11</sup>And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. <sup>12</sup>Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.



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Last part here then, if a person sees you eat, and they have bad theology or underdeveloped theology, and they see you eat in a temple, empowered by your rights in Christian Liberty, you have taught them wrongly. Just because it was a good thing to do, or even a neutral thing, doesn't mean it was the right thing. Stop thinking of them as weak and a nuisance to you, Christ died for them! Meaning when you cause them to stumble you sin against Christ.

**<sup>13</sup> Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.**

Ok v.13 the most important verse in this whole text, if what I do causes my brother to stumble then I **will never** eat meat lest I make him stumble. That is something Paul is going to repeat and teach on in Chapter 9, so I am going to stop with that right there. But it does remind me of a story I want to share with you. (Illustration of my two lost brothers)

**MP:**

**Let the Liberties we pursue accompany  
the love of Christ for others.**

**[CALL TO OBEY]**

Today I want to give us some guidelines on how to exercise our liberties and these are universal, they work for anyone and for anything that you want to do that is not sin.

**Be aware of embracing excess.** First guideline I ask myself about a gray-area thing is do I need it. Do I need it? Hebrews 12:1 says, "Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every" – what? – "weight." In other words, there's no sense in running the race dragging a ball and chain. Do I need this?

**Be aware of a thing's expedience.** And this is kind of the other side of it. 1 Corinthians 6:12 it says, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient (helpful)." That means useful. Is it useful? Not only does it not have a negative effect, but does it have a positive effect? If I do this, is it going to



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help me? Is this something I need to be a better man of God, a better woman of God? Is this something very positive that I have to do to increase my effectiveness as a believer? That's important.

**Be aware of your call to emulation.** This is that old saying WWJD, would Jesus do this in the same situation. I know that got overplayed in the 90s but it is still real helpful.

**Be aware of your work for evangelism.** "If I do this, is it going to enhance my testimony to an unbeliever?" Colossians 4:5 says, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are outside." In other words, whatever I do, it should be done wisely toward the people who don't know Christ, that they might better see Christ in me, that there might be a better base of testimony for me.

**Be aware of your own edification.** "Will it build me up? Having done this, will I be stronger in Christ?" 1 Corinthians 10:23, "All things are lawful" – yes – "but all things edify not." Not everything builds me up. It might be lawful to do it, but it won't build me up. I ought to really think through whether it builds me up or not, whether I can gain a positive thing out of this to build me up in Christ.

**Be aware of glorious exaltation.** "If I do it, will it exalt the Lord?" 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, "Whatever you do" – right? – "whether you eat or drink" – what? – "do it all to the glory of God." That's a great principle. Will it exalt God? If I do this, will it exalt the Lord?

Family let me just remind you again don't be so quick to exercise your liberties but rather let your liberties be tempered by your love of God and love for your brothers and sisters. Then all you do will bring glory to God.

## **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



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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. The Lord had all the opportunity to exercise His Liberty as we are the ones that broke our covenant with Him. The Lord instead chose to serve His people with great humility and by His work, perfected the Law that calls us to Love God above all and loving neighbor as oneself. 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. The Lord gave up His liberty for His people, when He deserved to be set free from His trials. Family be thankful that Jesus chose to love instead of exercising His right to be justified. Family be thankful that we have received His Father's forgiveness in place of His Father's wrath. Praise be to Him for His wonderful love!

**[CONFESSION OF FAITH]**

\* The Congregation will stand

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

**LBCF 1689 Chapter 21.1 Of Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience**

The liberty Christ has purchased for believers under the gospel is found in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, and the severity and curse of the law.<sup>1</sup>

It also includes their deliverance from this present evil age,

<sup>2</sup> bondage to Satan,

<sup>3</sup> the dominion of sin,

<sup>4</sup> the suffering of afflictions,

<sup>5</sup> the fear and sting of death,



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the victory of the grave,  
<sup>6</sup> and everlasting damnation.<sup>7</sup>

In addition, it includes their free access to God and their obedience to Him, not from slavish fear<sup>8</sup> but from a childlike love and willing mind.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Galatians 3:13. <sup>2</sup>Galatians 1:4. <sup>3</sup>Acts 26:18. <sup>4</sup>Romans 8:3. <sup>5</sup>Romans 8:28. <sup>6</sup>1 Corinthians 15:54-57. <sup>7</sup>2 Thessalonians 1:10. <sup>8</sup>Romans 8:15. <sup>9</sup>Luke 1:73-75; 1 John 4:18.

**[OFFERING+LAST SONG]**

**[BENEDICTION]**

Go in the name of the Father, that gave the world His only begotten Son, in order to make more like Him.

Go in the name of the Son, that tempered His liberties by loving perfectly for the Glory of His Father.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that enables us to discern liberties with the consideration of not neglecting Christian Love. Now go and share that love with a world that needs to see it.



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