



Uncommon Sense 1 Corinthians Wk. 46
How to Get Ministry Done
By Pastor Jody May 04/19/2026

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 16:5-14 ESV

The Collection for the Saints

Plans for Travel

⁵I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, ⁶and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my journey, wherever I go. ⁷For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. ⁸But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

¹⁰When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. ¹¹So let no one despise him. Help him on his way in peace, that he may return to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers.

Final Instructions

¹²Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he has opportunity.

¹³Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. ¹⁴Let all that you do be done in love.

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

People - "Thanks be to God."

Pray

Illustration



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I have a function in ministry that exists outside this body, and it is something I can't escape. It is always a surprise to me, but when I meet people, and I get to know them usually after a while they will always ask what I do for a living. Of course, for the most part, when I tell them I am a Pastor at HCC it usually comes with a shock. Sometimes it is even accompanied with a reprimand like, "Why didn't you tell me?" or "I didn't know!" probably because they are frantically trying to remember their use of language in front of me. 😊

All of that to say, I usually can't forgo that identity marker of someone being called out to stand for God in the community. When I am around those that already know me where counsel and/or prayer is needed, usually they will ask. If there something that needs to be done through public speaking, they will usually turn to me. This all comes with the understanding that whenever I step out into public life, I always must be alert and on my best behavior for I not only represent my name but God's as well. Being a local Pastor comes with a **24 hour a day, 7 day a week calling** of being an ambassador for Christ. Granted, at first, I found that tiring, but now as I get older, I have embraced it and look for ways to make Him known. Honestly, viewing life that way helps in sanctification.

Introduction

Well, in my years of pastoring it has also come to my attention that sometimes congregants mistake the role of pastor and believe the elder represents them in the community as much as he is to represent Christ. In other words, it is **not as important** for them to adhere to God's Word as it is for me. That my friends, when you read Paul's epistles over and over through the years, one should not think that way. First, nowhere in scripture does it call a church member to a list of different requirements, outside of teaching/male, as that of an elder. What you see as qualifications for an elder in scripture you should strive to do as well. Secondly, nowhere in scripture does it tell you that you do not represent God, that you do not do the work of ministry, just like any officer of the church.

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 ESV



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¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave **us** the **ministry** of reconciliation;¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to **us** the message of reconciliation.

²⁰ Therefore, we are **ambassadors** for Christ, God making his appeal through **us**.

US, that is we **ALL** are ministers of **RECOILIATION**. All people of the church help lost people connect with God, we do that as **AMBASSADORS**/representatives for Christ. God makes appeals to this world through us to be reconciled to Him through Christ. In other words, **we all have a 24 hour a day/7 day a week calling**, representing Christ to this world. SO, in light of all the work you all have already done this weekend let's talk about how we all can accomplish our ministry together a little better by recognizing what Paul is pointing out in the text.

MP

We are always participating in ministry.

There is never time off, there is never a break, and because of our mutual calling as ambassadors there are three different areas that we should consider in a life of ministry. The first is **Plans under Providence**, that is to keep in mind nothing is coincidence, God has laid out your life, so wherever you are, represent Him well. Secondly, there is a **Prescription for Co-laborers**, just because we all are ministers of reconciliation does not mean we all do the same thing or work on the same schedules, there is flexibility in the ministry of reconciliation. Thirdly, there are **Precepts for Life**, once you accept this reality Paul gives us all some very specific, descriptive, rules on how to live as ambassadors especially in life with each other in the church.

1. Plans under Providence.

Plans for Travel

⁵I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, ⁶and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that



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you may help me on my journey, wherever I go. ⁷For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. ⁸But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

What is going on?

First off please notice Paul is not on vacation! Paul spends his Amex travel miles on ministry stops, how many of us would give up free miles for the Lord's errands. Perhaps we would get to travel more if we surrendered our time/plans to the Lord? He is writing to his beloved church in Corinth, and his plans to have an extended stay with them. That is the heart of a man that has been changed by God and sees his changing was done by grace. He wants to spend quality time with people who have been causing him some headaches. That is parental love in action folks!

Building on the theme of giving from last week he wants to spend time with them so they can help him. In the Greek that is usually an alluding to monetary help involving missional work. He wants to grant them the opportunity for them not only to help the saints at Jerusalem (1-4) but to help him as well.

Why a whole winter?

Well because in that part of the world you did not travel by sea during those months. The storms were much more sever and frequent, and the vessels of that day could not handle that type of abuse yet. We know that to be true from Luke's account in Acts 27-28 when they run aground at Malta.

Where's he at?

He's in Ephesus and it seems that there is a lot of action going on. When you look at Acts 19:11-20 you will see that Paul has indeed been blessed by a wide door of opportunity which has been kicked in by the Lord, and along with that, has come the accumulation of adversaries. If you were to look there, you would see he has been speaking for two years out of the hall of Tyrannus, and all of Asia has now heard the Gospel.



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The demonic hordes of Hell had been confronted in the witchcraft stronghold of Ephesus. Three things that make that very clear. First it was like a scene out of the modern prosperity Gospel movement, article of cloths that had touched Paul were passed around and people were healed by touching the cloth. The sons of Sceva, exorcists, had just failed miserably while the demons said they know of Paul. Lastly, people came from all over Ephesus burning their spell and occult books (50,000 silver pieces or 3-6 million dollars' worth)!

Now it may seem to you that Paul is reacting to life as it comes, as opportunity presents itself, he takes advantage of it. While a part of that is true, it only happens because of Paul's understanding of his calling.

Paul understood his role from the beginning.

Galatians 1:15-16 ESV

¹⁵ But when he who had set me **apart before I was born**, and who called me by his **grace**, ¹⁶ was **pleased** to reveal his Son to¹ me, in order that I might **preach him among the Gentiles**, I did not immediately consult with anyone;

Galatians is most likely written before 1 Corinthians for it comes during his first missionary journey. It is in his letter to Galatians that Paul shows us how his **Plans are always under God's Providence**.

(15) Paul recognizes that a Providential God had **caused him to be born** because of a predetermined purpose already created for Paul. Paul wasn't placed into a spot on a team, the spot was made with Paul in mind. No one else would do, it was all Paul's job!

(15) Secondly it was **grace** that put him into that spot. That means it was God's good favor or the receiving of something he did not deserve, given in place of what he really deserved. God called Paul not because of his scholarly pursuits, his high achieving test scores, nor dedication to Godliness and Holiness, He was called solely because God picked him, and that picking was a kindness to Paul based in God's choosing/desire alone.



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(16) Thirdly, God was pleased or **delighted in revealing Jesus** to Paul. Meaning, God took pleasure in showing Paul on that road who the 2nd person of the trinity was. Paul, the Jew of Jews, was so overcome by God's revelation that it drastically changed him, a complete 180, for all of life. God loves revealing His glory in His Son and blowing up people's view of who they think God is.

(16) Fourthly, the sole purpose, that which he was created for, was to **preach Him among the Gentiles**. And then there is one more thing, a condition, that was set upon Paul by which he could judge if he was on the right track. He knows God's plans for his life, and he understood what it would mean.

Acts 9:15-16 ESV

"Go (Ananias), for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶For I will show him how much he must **suffer for the sake** of my name." - Jesus

The condition that let Paul know he's on the right path is it would cause suffering. It means that it won't come easy, it will look hard, it will come with peril, and those conditions are what told Paul you are in the right spot keep going, don't quit, this is the work you were called to do!

Why does Paul stay in Ephesus, because he knows his calling and he sees the danger, and those things when they come together tell Paul you're on the right path. They also tell him though, don't just give your life away, there is still a lot to do!

Submitting to the Gospel Work in front of you.

Look as we are closing up our study of Corinthians what does this mean for us? I think Paul's message speaks in volumes to what the Corinthians should be concerned with now. Clean up your ecclesiology, straighten out your theology, and get motivated for your missiology!

Do you know what you are called to do?

You're sitting in here this morning, and you have plans. You have plans for vacation, you have plans for things in your home, and you most likely have



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plans for lunch already, but how many of us, actually have plans for what we are supposed to be doing for the Lord? For some reason that is the one place the universal church has decided to all become frozen chosen/Calvinists, just sit and wait and look and see what happens.

Family let me at least offer you some things to get your thoughts rolling a little.

If God is Providential and if He uses all things for the good of those He calls (Rom 8:28), He has prepared for us work to do ahead of time (Eph 2:10) and He has a plan to unite all things in Christ (Eph 1:10). Then all that has happened in our lives **was for the purpose** to do something to bring glory to Jesus! So, for all in this room if we are sitting and waiting for destiny and fate to fall in our laps then are we may be choosing **not to believe** what scripture says and work towards those ends. **WARNING:** If we do too much of that, we too are going to have endless arguments about how to do church and what to believe (Corinth), instead of actually engaging what we should be doing with our lives.

3 Areas that Show God's Divine Interventions leading to your Divine Calling:

- **Core Values:** The fundamental principles, passions, and convictions that drive decisions.
- **Spiritual Gifts:** Unique abilities or talents given to individuals.
- **Past Experiences:** Both positive and negative events that have shaped a person. (Please see Craig Groeschel's book [Chazown](#))

All of those are Sovereignly controlled by God to make you who you are and where all those things overlap is a good place to start with.

Are you aware of the opportunities?

Are we viewing our world through the lenses of ministry opportunities? Where do we see challenges, where do we see struggles, and where do we see evil AND do we run away from it, or like Paul, is that a doorway that has been kicked open by Christ to run through? Perhaps you may be under the false pretense that hard things mean it's not a God thing.

Philippians 1:29 ESV



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²⁹ For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also **suffer for his sake**, ³⁰ engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

We just like Paul have been given the opportunities and privilege to suffer for the sake of Christ. (Please see Michael Foster's book [*It's Good to be a Man*](#))¹ It is through our suffering we are sanctified, it is through our suffering that Jesus is glorified, and it is through our suffering that God rescues His people. Ministry opportunities are everywhere, we are living in the time of God's making to take advantage of them, for just like Paul, all of our life falls under the **Providential Plans of God**.

2. Prescription for Co-laborers.

¹⁰ When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. ¹¹ So let no one despise him. Help him on his way in peace, that he may return to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers.

Ok one part of being a ministry involved church member is to **recognize our ability to help other ministers of the Gospel**. Timothy is being sent by Paul, and he expects them to treat him as they would treat him; put him at ease, stand between him and those that would despise him, and raise support for him for his travels back to Paul.

This example is important for us, for we can't help everyone, so we must be particular about who we help. Timothy, when he comes, speaks for Paul

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- **¹Understanding God's Design:** Recognizing that men are created by God with unique, purposeful traits—including aggression and power—that are meant to be harnessed for building the kingdom.
 - **Embracing Mission and Dominion:** Shifting from a passive mindset to one focused on "dominion," which involves actively ordering one's world, creating value, and working towards a clear, purposeful mission.
 - **Cultivating Godly Masculine Virtues:** Focusing on a triad of virtues: **wisdom** (knowledge of God's ways), **workmanship** (skill in exercising dominion), and **strength** (the fortitude to stand firm, face adversity, and act on wisdom).
 - **Building Households and Legacy:** Developing a vision for founding families and providing for them, which includes raising godly seeds and leaving a legacy.
 - **Brotherhood and Mentorship:** Finding community and accountability with other godly men to stay on mission and avoid the pitfalls of isolation or spiritual immaturity.
 - **Rejecting Cultural Narratives:** Moving away from the "nice guy" or "passive boy" persona encouraged by modern culture, and instead accepting responsibility and acting with, as described in the book, "dangerous" in the right way—focused and ethical—masculinity.



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himself, he comes with the authority of Paul's office, and the doctrinal distinctions that Paul champions.

As the church it is **important for us to recognize and support those that we more closely relate with.** Being involved with CAYA for the summer to feed the needy does not need as much doctrinal agreement say as doing foreign mission work, which does not need as much alignment as needed for church planting. Who and what we support needs to align with our ministry goals and beliefs, and we need to guard that well. Those that do align with our beliefs and distinctions better, we in turn will be able to sacrifice for them more even though they may not be a part of our church.

Final Instructions

¹²Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he has opportunity.

Going back to 1:12; 3:4, if you remember some tried to invoke Apollos' name like they were following him instead of Paul. Now at the end of the letter probably to the shock of some, they discover Apollos is there with Paul, but he flat out **refused to come** now. Perhaps he wanted to distance himself from them, or perhaps he's just busy, or perhaps he wants to strengthen Paul's leadership in front of the Corinthians. Whatever it is, it shows the freedom of co-ministers in the Gospel to decide when and how they will help the body. In God's Providential Plans, just because some believe it a good idea to do something now, even those of bigger ministries, it doesn't mean it is always the right thing to do for other ministers/ministries, nor is it the right time. Paul models the humility of a Godly man by humbling himself to Apollos' opinion and desire.

For us this example just declares to us that **you don't have to jump on the bandwagon of the bigger ministries and pastors;** we have a calling, we need to understand it, and we need to keep our freedom in getting to choose what we can be a part of. That's being a Baptist. We can work with other Baptists, we can serve them sacrificially for causes of the Gospel, but we must maintain our freedom to make the best decision for ministry we can, exercising our Corporate Liberty of Conscience.



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The **prescription for co-laborers?** First, be willing to work harder for those that are more aligned with you. Second, Be willing to say no to good opportunities if you believe it is not the best option for your work of ministry. And in both instances let the glory of Jesus help guide you to making the wisest decision you can.

3. Precepts for Life.

¹³ Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. ¹⁴ Let all that you do be done in love.

Paul sounds now like an army commander addressing his army with some final orders. That is not by accident it is how we are to face our lives. The Corinthians need to guard against the temptation to treat each other based on social status (Chps 1-4; 11:21-22), they need to be alert for bad company and bad theology (5:1-7; 15:33), they need to keep steering clear of sexual immorality (Chps. 5-7) neither can they become complacent about the dangers of greed (6:1-11) idolatry, and self-centered religion (Chps. 8-14).

This use of metaphorical language is a repeat of a motif from the OT. For example, like where Moses reminded his people before moving into the promise land, *be strong and faithful* (Deut. 31:6-7). They too would face temptation of ungodliness, and we know how that went. Living as mere fallen men will only get you so far in this life but living as a person that has been infected by the love of Christ, that person CAN stand and so can you.

Family, standing on your own strength just refraining from evil is a noble but it is a tiresome ordeal. But when we **choose to love**, and not just practice any type of love, but in v. 14 that is Agape love, the same type of love from Chp. 13! Paul described this great love in that chapter, and said when he became a man, he put away childish ways, alluding to that he had put on this Agape love (13:11). So now here at the end of the letter Paul is asking his people to do the same thing. It is now their turn to put on love, the love of Christ, the love that sacrifices for others instead of for one's own gain, int is covenantal not contractual.



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Family the call to a life of active ongoing ministry is not a life of trying to do good works and just resisting evil, it is putting on love for one another and that is what keeps you from evil, that is HOW you stand. That is your **precept for life.**

[CALL TO OBEY]

- **Plans under Providence.**

Investigate the intersection of your values, gifts, and past experiences and pray and ask God to show you what might be your sweet spot for ministry, Then don't wait to be asked, speak into another person's life today! Invite someone to a meal, ask them about their life, encourage them in their walk, and be a part of the good work that God has set aside for you. In this way you put on love, and you kill indecision.

- **Prescription for Co-laborers.**

Don't despise those that are younger than you and those that don't help you the way you want. Provide help for those that are seeking to serve God in the way the need and don't resent those that ask for your help and have good reasons why you can't help someone, as in you have another calling to fulfill.

- **Precepts for your life.**

Start the day strengthening Agape love by strengthening your love for Christ. Make your scripture reading, prayer, and devotional life a priority, make confession of sin a priority, make repentant living a priority, make "*forgiving others of their trespasses as God in heaven forgivse you*" for the more you love Christ the more you will be able to love/serve others.

MP

We are always participating in ministry.

Charge: Let all we do family be done in love and let us stand together fulfilling our call to ministry, as ambassadors of Christ, representing Him well in all aspects of life.



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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. The Lord lived a life following the predetermined plan for His life perfectly. He observed the scriptures, He completed all His tasks, He never shirked His responsibilities, and when the OT presented His suffering, He accepted without question. Jesus never took a day off and because of His tireless work we now can find rest. Praise be to our King, who loved the Father with perfect obedience.

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood for the new covenant. As his people we inherited the responsibility to make much of Him, to have dominion for His name's sake, and when glory/reputation came our way, we took it for ourselves. Because Jesus followed the precept of Agape Love towards us, He kept His covenant with us, paying for our sins when we could not. Thanks be to our High Priest for His eternal sacrificial love!

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

* The Congregation will stand

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



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LBCF 1689 Chapter 16. Of Good Works Paragraph 3. The Ability to Do Good Works Comes From the Spirit

Pastor Jody reads:

Their ability to do good works is not at all from themselves, but rather completely from the Spirit of Christ 10 To be enabled to do good works, they need—besides the grace they have already received—an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do his good pleasure. 11

Congregation Reads:

However, they should not become negligent, as if they were not required to perform any duty unless they receive a special motion of the Spirit. Rather, they should be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them. 12

10. John 15:4-5

11. 2 Corinthians 3:5; Philippians 2:13

12. Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Isaiah 64:7

[OFFERING+LAST SONG]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, for He has granted us the honor and privilege to be His ambassadors and to suffer when called upon for His name.

Go in the name of the Son, who won for us a new life, where we too can bring God glory, where our lives and the work of our hands again have value towards Kingdom objectives.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, who leads us in God's providential plans, enabling cooperation with other like-minded laborers, and empowers precepts based in Agape Love. Now go share that message with the world!



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[FELLOWSHIP CONVERSATIONS]

1. Plans under providence: Where do you most resist saying, “if the Lord permits” (v.7)? What would it look like this month to hold one key plan with open hands before the Lord?
2. Open door + adversaries: Where has God set a “wide door” before you (home, church, workplace) and what adversaries or frictions come with it (v.9)? How can the group pray for courage and perseverance there this week?
3. Honoring co-laborers: What are two concrete ways our group or families can “put [gospel workers] at ease,” refuse contempt, and “help them on their way in peace” (vv.10-11) in the next 30 days (hospitality, provision, prayer, notes of encouragement)?
4. The five imperatives: Which charge from v.13—be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong—is most needed in your household right now, and why? How will love (v.14) shape the way you practice that charge this week?
5. Home worship and leadership: For heads of home, what one step will you take to lead watchfully and lovingly this week (catechism, family prayer, hospitality)? For others, how can you actively support and strengthen that leadership in love?



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