

Proper Worship
Lesson #22
1 Corinthians 11:2-34

In this next section of his letter to the Corinthians, Paul continued addressing problems and questions within the church and how to correct them. Throughout church history there has been much controversy regarding the application over these next few chapters. Although biblical scholars disagree as to its application for today, all agree that Paul was writing about specific problems within the church at Corinth. For this study, the emphasis will be on discovering, through the text, how the Corinthians would have understood Paul's letter.

To Cover or Not to Cover - 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

1. Paul began this section, just as he had the previous one, with praise for what the Corinthians were doing right. What did Paul praise them for? (Corinthians 11:2)

2. After praising them for what they did right, we can assume that the next three issues Paul dealt with must not have been clearly communicated, or were not an issue while he was with them. Please read the entire passage of 11:3-15. If you have access to a modern version of the Bible such as the New Living Translation or The Message, these can help aid in bringing clarity to these issues. We will begin with what was not an issue. Who did Paul expect would be praying and prophesying in the church? (1 Corinthians 11:4, 5)

3. Using 1 Corinthians 11:4-8:
 - What problem was Paul addressing?

 - What did Paul say about this issue?

4. What word did Paul use to describe either a man or a woman who did not uphold this custom? (1 Corinthians 11:4, 5)

5. What reason did Paul give for upholding this custom?
 - 1 Corinthians 11:7

 - 1 Corinthians 11:8

- 1 Corinthians 11:9

 - 1 Corinthians 11:10
6. The problem, in understanding what Paul actually meant if taken out of context, can be illustrated by looking at two examples from Scripture. According to Genesis 1:27, who is created in the image of God?
 - And, what did God say about long hair on men? (Numbers 6:1-8)
 7. Knowing the Corinthians (and future generations) could use this in a way Paul did not intend, what stern warning did he give? (1 Corinthians 11:11, 12)
 8. Returning to his main point, what was the real issue Paul was addressing? (1 Corinthians 11:13)
 9. Drawing on the culture, or practice of the day, Paul reminded them that improper hair styles could either bring honor or disgrace in their society. (Keep in mind the cultural significance of honor and shame in the ancient world.) What was Paul's final statement regarding this issue? (1 Corinthians 11:16)
 10. **Reflect:** Some of the difficult issues of Paul's day may or may not apply in our day and culture(s). However, there are principles that apply to all cultures and all time. What was Paul's primary purpose for addressing these issues, and how would you apply that purpose to your life? (see 1 Corinthians 9:19-22)

Observance of the Lord's Supper - 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

11. In the first section on worship, Paul praised the Corinthians. But, in the next section Paul said, "*In the following directives I have no praise for you.*" Why? (1 Corinthians 11:17)

12. Using 1 Corinthians 11:18, 19:
 - When was this taking place?

 - What was the problem?

 - How did Paul learn about this problem and what was his comment?
13. The issue was the way in which the Corinthians were observing the Lord's Supper. What was his complaint? (1 Corinthians 11:20, 21)
14. How did Paul express his disapproval? (1 Corinthians 11:22)
15. Paul said that he had received the observance of the Lord's Supper "*from the Lord,*" and that observance was what he had passed on to them. Using 1 Corinthians 11:23-26:
 - When did the Lord initiate this observance?

 - What did the Lord say the bread represents?

 - What is the significance of the cup (of wine)?
16. The Lord said that both the bread and the cup were to be taken in remembrance of Him. What else did Christ say? (1 Corinthians 11:26)
17. Paul then added a "*therefore.*" Based upon that truth, what behavior were the Corinthians guilty of that made them unworthy to observe the Lord's Supper? (1 Corinthians 11:27)
18. What did Paul say should be done before partaking of the Lord's Supper? (1 Corinthians 11:28)

- Why? (1 Corinthians 11:29)
19. Paul said they had already experienced judgment because of their unworthy behavior. What was on his list as part of God's judgment? (1 Corinthians 11:30)
20. But that didn't have to be. What was Paul's solution to this problem? (1 Corinthians 11:31)
21. Why, according to Paul, does the Lord discipline his children? (1 Corinthians 11:32)
- Please note Paul's use of "we" and not "you." Do you see any significance in that?
22. Paul ended his instruction on proper observance of the Lord's Supper with "*so then.*" What were his very practical instructions? (1 Corinthians 11:33, 34a)
- What additional note did he add? (1 Corinthians 11:34b)
23. **Reflect:** Although Paul was writing of abuse (of the Lord's Supper) in the Church at Corinth, it is just as easy today to come to the Lord's Supper (Communion) in an unworthy manner. Was there anything in Paul's words that will help you when you also partake in the Lord's Supper?