

First Corinthians 11

Introduction:

1. This chapter, especially the first half, has fascinated many in their desire to rightly grasp hats, hair length, angels, etc.
2. I wish to publicly thank the blessed God for opening the first half of this chapter to my understanding. Thank you, Lord!
3. I regret any indirect or superficial use of this passage in the past that has misled anyone to improperly understand it.
4. The blessed God being my helper, I will not succumb to any pride or shame that keeps me from learning God's truth.
5. I recall debating the "covering" with a ThD as early as age 17, but now it is all so simple (Psalm 119:18; Prov 8:9; 14:6).
6. If we are attentive and careful, we can find the three levels of instruction – the primary lesson, the secondary lessons to support the primary, and jewels of wisdom buried in the secondary lessons supporting his main instructional objective.

Outline of Chapter 11:

1. Public decorum of the sexes (1-16)
2. Divisions in the church (17-19)
3. Abuse of the Lord's Supper (20-26)
4. Examination before Communion (27-32)
5. Summary against abuses (33-34).

11:1 Paul exhorted the Corinthian saints to follow his example of how to properly follow Christ.

- A. This is a transitional verse from the previous chapter, as it connects well with the last verse.
- B. In dealing with meat, Paul exhorted them to copy his sacrificial living (9:1-27; 10:32-33).
- C. Jesus ministered to Jews; we should follow Paul's example for Gentiles (Rom 15:8; 11:13).
- D. There are differences in practice: <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/BibleTopics/Scripture/JesusOrPaul/JesusOrPaul.htm>.
- E. Second-generation, Gentile converts should follow Jesus Christ according to Paul's example.
- F. It is very dangerous and false to prefer Christ's teachings over Paul's, for both are inspired by God, but for different congregations! The red writin' ain't no better than the black writin'!
- G. We trust this verse starting this chapter, since Paul taught a new form of worship (Heb 9:10).
- H. We feel no compulsion to say that it belongs with the previous chapter, as do commentators.

11:2 Paul commended the Corinthian church for their faithfulness in matters of church order.

- A. Due to their doctrinal and practical error in many matters, Paul shows gracious gentleness.
- B. This and the next three chapters deal with matters of public worship, so we may focus there.
- C. By comparing this verse to verse 17, we further understand that public worship is the object.
- D. Paul likely had to teach them much against both pagan and Jewish matters of public worship.
- E. The Jews were excessively scrupulous about everything, including covering the heads of men to show humility and reverence; and the Gentiles had no scruples about much of anything!
- F. Given what follows, his prior instruction that he had delivered to them must have included public ministering and the inclusion of women, according to the Spirit's gifts of that time.
- G. Given what follows, they were not fully practicing all godliness in these matters for sure; for this and the next three chapters deal with numerous errors in public worship.
- H. He was thankful they had kept up certain ordinances well and had consulted him about them.

11:3 There is a very definite order of authority involving God, Jesus Christ, men, and women.

- A. To clarify and perfect public worship, Paul laid out the fundamental authority relationships.
- B. This axiom of descending authority from God is essential for our proper service of God.
- C. The head, or controlling ruler, of every man is Jesus Christ, to Whom all men owe obedience.
- D. The head, or controlling ruler, of every woman is the man, to whom she owes her obedience.
- E. The head, or controlling ruler, of Jesus Christ is God the Father, to Whom He is subject.
- F. Men should conduct themselves in sober solemnity before their Head, publicly and privately.
- G. Women should conduct themselves in submission before their head, publicly and privately.
- H. Jesus is subject to the Father in His human nature as Mediator and Saviour (I Cor 15:27-28).

- I. While there is no difference between men and women legally, there is practically (Gal 3:28).
- J. The head has the brain and senses for controlling, directing, leading, and ruling the body.
- K. The word head in this verse clearly means leader, master, or ruler (Ex 18:25; Num 1:16; 7:2; 25:4; Deut 1:15; 28:13; Judges 10:18; 11:8,11; Micah 3:1,9,11; Eph 1:22; 5:23; Col 2:10).
- L. Regardless of what this “enlightened generation” says, this is the absolute opinion of God.
- M. Any compromise or violation of this order of authority and reverence leads to sin and trouble.
- N. Marriage is not his primary lesson, as there is no direct mention of it, husbands, or wives.
- O. But marriage must be formed on this order of men and women, if the marriage is to be godly.
- P. Public worship, with proper decorum of the sexes, is his primary lesson, with several appeals on a secondary level to the divinely appointed and natural differences of men and women.

11:4 Men engaged in public worship before Christ should not show subjection with a covering.

- A. The previous verse has just laid out the proper role of man under Christ and over the woman.
- B. By the following verses, we see Paul is primarily going after the women about a covering.
- C. It is describing, by association and larger context, inspired public praying and prophesying.
 - 1. Prophesying at this time, without a New Testament, was inspired teaching to the church.
 - 2. Paul explained inspired work of a prophet (12:8-10,28; 13:2,8-10; 14:1-5,22-24,29-32).
 - 3. Paul explained inspired work of praying (12:8-11,28-29; 13:1,8-10; 14:2,14-17,26-28).
 - 4. The Corinthians would have understood these things, though we have neither gift today.
 - 5. The close connection of prophesying and praying indicates the inspired sense of both.
 - 6. If Paul were writing to second-generation saints, he would call it preaching or teaching.
 - 7. The dishonor to his head is only realized by wearing a covering in public before others.
- D. If this is describing private worship, then men cannot pray under a military helmet, hard hat, motorcycle helmet, hunting cap, football helmet, winter hat, baseball cap, stocking hat, etc.
- E. The covering here is an artificial covering of a hat; he only appealed to hair at the end of his lesson as further evidence from nature in support of what he had taught by inspired wisdom.
 - 1. Since we understand the word covering, and Bible covering involved hats or veils, and there is no reason to look for another meaning, we ought to let covering mean covering.
 - 2. Scripturally, the Jewish priests wore the miters ordained by God (Lev 8:9; Zech 3:5).
 - 3. Historically, the Jews were wont to cover their heads as not worthy of God’s presence.
 - 4. Historically, both Greek and Roman men covered their heads when in religious service.
 - 5. Historically, the Jews did not allow women to be uncovered in public before other men.
 - 6. Historically, the Corinthians allowed priestesses with shaved heads in pagan worship.
 - 7. Paul specifically defined hair as “a covering,” not the covering he had required (11:15).
 - 8. Paul made separate appeals to hair that only by violence can hair be the covering here.
 - 9. He appealed to nature for another covering (11:4-6), before he mentioned hair (11:14-15).
 - 10. Dishonor (11:4) and shame (11:14) is the same thing; and our apostle is not redundantly pedantic; so we gather he is not repeating verse four again in verse fourteen.
 - 11. When he gets around to mentioning hair, he will not say it “also” teaches that men ought to have short hair. He will say that it “even” teaches short hair,
 - 12. The use of “even” in 11:14 means, “Intimating that the sentence expresses an extreme case of a more general proposition implied” (OED).
 - 13. Did Nazarites get to pray or prophesy in the Jewish temple and/or Christian church?
 - 14. The Jewish men did not have a problem with long hair. In fact, they were scrupulous about short hair, which made the Nazarite vow an even more exceptional act of worship.
 - 15. Women wore veils around men (Gen 24:65; 38:14,19; Num 5:18; Ruth 3:15; Song 5:7).
 - 16. If hair were the covering, God would say hair; He is very capable of it (Lev 13:4; 14:9; Num 6:5,18; Judges 16:22; II Sam 14:26; Ezra 9:3; Neh 13:25; Song 4:1; Is 3:24; Jer 7:29; Ezek 5:1; 16:7; Dan 7:9; Matt 5:36; John 11:2; 12:3; I Tim 2:9; I Pet 3:3; Rev 9:8).

- F. A hat or veil was a visible sign of humiliation, inferiority, or subjection, dishonoring a head.
 - 1. When David and his people were very ashamed, they covered their heads (II Sam 15:30).
 - 2. When Haman was entirely ashamed and humiliated, he did not grow hair (Esther 6:12).
 - 3. God did not protect David's head in battle by giving him fast-growing hair (Ps 140:7).
 - 4. Heads covered with something, not long hair, indicates confounding shame (Jer 14:3-4).
 - 5. There is constant play on "head" in these verses, so we must rightly divide (II Tim 2:15).
 - 6. Here both uses of "head" refer to a man's cranium and the public appearance of it.
 - 7. We assume emphasis on the physical head by the corresponding words in the next verse.
 - 8. What is the dishonor here? Is it legal, religious, national? Or is it natural dishonor, which proves that it cannot be talking about the extreme example of nature, hair (11:14)?
 - 9. By wearing a hat, in visible subjection, a man dishonors his physical head in weakness.
 - 10. By wearing a hat, visible subordination, a minister does not show the authority of Christ.
 - 11. Men, only under the authority of Christ, should appear bold and authoritative in public, for there is no one else present to whom they owe any religious homage or reverence.
 - 12. By parallelism with the next verse, wearing a hat in the public worship of God has the same dishonorable and unnatural appearance of a man with the long hair of a woman.
 - 13. The difference in appearance of a Doberman Pinscher and English Sheepdog is obvious.

11:5 **Women engaged in public worship before Christ should show subjection with a covering.**

- A. A common error in this section is to worry about the covering, proper hair length, and angels, when the matter that helps the most is identifying the praying and prophesying of women!
- B. Whatever praying and prophesying men engage in (10:4), it is precisely the same thing here by the obvious parallelism in the apostle's inspired language and the contextual connection.
- C. Consider that Paul will shortly refer to "all" members prophesying in the church (14:24).
- D. Women were given, during the time of reformation, gifts of the Spirit for public worship.
 - 1. The time of reformation was 30-70AD, before Jerusalem's destruction and completion of the New Testament Scriptures (Micah 7:15; Luke 16:16; I Cor 13:8-10; Hebrews 9:10).
 - 2. Joel had prophesied of these gifts coming upon women during this time (Joel 2:28-32).
 - 3. Peter confirmed that women were praying and prophesying at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-21).
 - 4. Philip, the deacon and evangelist, had seven virgin daughters that prophesied (Acts 21:9).
 - 5. Anna was a prophetess serving in the temple at the first arrival of Jesus (Luke 2:36-38).
- E. The general prohibition of women speaking in church does not overthrow these exceptions.
 - 1. Paul will shortly and plainly prohibit women from speaking in the church (14:34-35), and he further confirmed this rule when telling Timothy how to rule a church (I Tim 2:11-12).
 - 2. As in so many places, it is our sober duty to rightly divide the word of truth (II Tim 2:15).
 - 3. Since Paul appealed to the law, we will go there to see exceptions allowed for women.
 - 4. It is by this means of searching the law that we know women may say, "Amen!" in a church assembly (Numbers 5:22; Deut 27:15-26; I Chron 16:36; Nehemiah 5:13; 8:6).
 - 5. Consider the prophetesses under the law (Ex 15:20; Judges 4:4; II Kgs 22:14; Micah 6:4).
 - 6. Speaking by inspiration is more the Spirit speaking than the woman (12:7-11; 14:14,32).
 - 7. How can a woman speaking by inspiration truly be usurping authority over the man?
 - 8. And again in I Timothy 2:11-12, the rule is learning submissively, without questioning or teaching the man, to whom she is forever to be submissive and obedient (Gen 3:16).
 - 9. The prohibition of 14:34-35 is the general rule applying to all women under other circumstances, particularly any contentious, independent arguing or questioning of men.
 - 10. The prohibition of 14:34-35 is the absolute rule for us today, for the Holy Spirit's gifts of inspired praying and prophesying are both gone (I Cor 13:8-10).
 - 11. Every man makes some exceptions to the silence enjoined there, as in singing (Eph 5:19), giving testimony of conversion, or being a witness in a matter of church judgment.

12. We shall have more to say on the full sense of those words when we come to that place.
- F. If this is describing private worship, women cannot pray in bed without night-caps, in the shower without shower caps, or during sex without a bonnet. Absurdity endorses the truth!
- G. Paul will ask shortly, after dealing with female subordination, about the propriety of women praying without a covering (11:13).
 1. This must be public prayer; for who could or would, on what basis, fault a woman praying in her bed or her closet without a hat? He questioned the public propriety of a woman in religious duty without an artificial covering to emphasize her subordination.
 2. Due to the strict customs of the time, both Jews and Gentiles would think an uncovered woman out of place engaged in any such public acts, except for pagan priestesses.
- H. The covering here is not hair, but rather a hat or veil or other artificial covering for the head.
 1. Paul will appeal to long hair as indicative of the importance of another covering (12:14-15), by virtue of “even”; he there draws a further and natural illustration of his point.
 2. The use of “even” in 11:14-15 means, “Intimating that the sentence expresses an extreme case of a more general proposition implied” (OED).
 3. There was no fashion trend in those days of bobbed hair or other modern short styles.
 4. Women wore veils around men (Gen 24:65; 38:14,19; Num 5:18; Ruth 3:15; Song 5:7).
 5. A woman’s covering was an article of clothing (Gen 24:65; 38:14,15; Num 5:18).
 6. If we assume hair is the only covering, we get involved in absurdities with three different lengths of hair ... “If she have short hair, then let her be shaved clean; but if it is a shame to be shaved clean, then let her have long hair.” How short is short, and how long is long?
 7. We began with the man (4), where the covering to be hair would be unnatural and forced.
 8. If it were cutting off hair, then it would not be “even all one as if” she had cut off hair!
 9. The idea of a woman in public without an artificial covering was so preposterous to public decorum that Paul called for shaving her head to show her total insubordination.
- I. If she does not wear a hat or veil in her inspired activities before the church, it has precisely the same dishonorable and unnatural appearance of a woman with a shaved head.

11:6 **Inspired women wore hats or veils due to nature’s rejection of women shaving their heads.**

- A. If such a woman refused to wear a veil, then she ought to shave her head to be most manly.
- B. But if it is a shame for a woman to shave her head, which it was and is, let her wear a veil.
- C. We may see here rather clearly that Paul is driving from the natural propriety of things.
- D. We ought to use every social custom and more that is recognized to show Godly decorum.
- E. It was a shame for a woman to be shorn, for long hair was her glory, which Paul shortly used as an additional argument for the woman to have a covering over her head (11:14-15).

11:7 **The treatment of the head with a covering is indicative of each sex’s standing before God.**

- A. A veil to them showed humility, shame, subordination (II Sam 15:30; Est 6:12; Jer 14:3-4).
- B. The man is the image and glory of God by virtue of his authority and leadership in the world.
 1. Due to contrast with the woman, we are not dealing with human nature but sexual roles.
 2. Man is not in the image or glory of God other than a position of dominion (Gen 1:26-27).
 3. God is an infinite, invisible, and immortal spirit; we are very finite, visible, and mortal!
 4. Therefore, as God’s representative in worship, he ought to present himself boldly and authoritatively, without even a symbolic appearance of subjection to men or women.
 5. In those times and at that place, like ours, men in authority did not wear hats or veils.
- C. The woman is the glory of the man – an ornamental object created for his help and pleasure.
 1. The woman is not the image and glory of God: she does not have his role of dominion.
 2. She has a serving role of helping a husband; collectively, all women were made for men.
 3. She was made to help her husband, to whom she is in subjection, and should be covered.

4. A woman wearing an artificial covering gave further indication of her subordinate role.

11:8 **The woman was made from the man, not the man from the woman, proving subordination.**

- A. Inspired women, which no longer exist, must publicly show their creation order (I Tim 2:13).
- B. Eve was made of Adam's rib, when a suitable helper for him was not found (Gen 2:18-25).
- C. Here is a first principle of the sexes to be remembered: the man was made first by priority.
 - 1. A woman should think often upon the order of creation to remind her of her proper place.
 - 2. It was and is a man's world, and the woman was made from him to be a serving helper.
- D. While there is much wisdom for women here, Paul's primary point is their public decorum.

11:9 **The woman was created for the man, not the man for the woman, proving subordination.**

- A. Inspired women, which no longer exist, must publicly show her creation purpose (Gen 2:18).
- B. Eve was not even made for herself, like Adam was; she was made to suitably serve Adam.
- C. And Adam was certainly not made for Eve, for he was before her and due service by her.
- D. Every girl should be taught this axiom early in life for a happy and successful marriage.
 - 1. A woman should think often upon the purpose for her existence to remind her of her role.
 - 2. To optimize happiness and success, husband and wife ought to honor this divine order.
 - 3. Regardless of what a perverse society says, here are the inspired words of our Creator.
- E. While there is much wisdom for women here, Paul's primary point is their public decorum.

11:10 **Due to her subordinate role, a woman in public ministry must wear a symbol of authority.**

- A. Paul first established the impropriety of an uncovered woman's head in public ministry (4-6).
- B. Then he added three further arguments confirming her need to show a subordinate role (7-9).
- C. Therefore, "for this cause," she should cover her head with an artificial sign of submission.
- D. A hat or veil, signifying humiliation and/or submission, reflects a woman's subordinate role.
- E. We understand "power" here to mean authority, as in many other places (Rom 13:1; etc.).
- F. This elliptical construction is better understood with these words added: "a sign or symbol of the man's"; then we can read it as follows: "For this cause ought the woman to have [a sign or symbol of the man's] power on her head because of the angels."
- G. The angels here are angels: those ministering spirits attentive to the public worship of the saints (Psalm 34:7; Eccl 5:6; Matt 18:10; Eph 1:20-23; 3:10; Heb 1:14; 12:22-24; I Pet 1:12).
 - 1. Angels are extremely cognizant and respectful of authority (II Pet 2:10-12; Jude 1:8-10).
 - 2. Therefore, an inspired woman, not showing her subordinate position with a hat or veil on her head, is in danger of the angels, who know her position and expect it to be honored.
 - 3. When Paul charged Timothy, he charged him before the elect angels (I Timothy 5:21).

11:11 **Yet, a Christian woman is necessary for the happiness and success of a Christian man.**

- A. In case any women felt unduly cast down by Paul's rules, he comforted them a little here.
- B. In case any man felt unduly superior or arrogant in his position, Paul takes him down a little.
- C. His use of "nevertheless" is clearly to mitigate the strict censures he had placed on women.
- D. Though the woman is subordinate, a man cannot live happily or successfully without her.
- E. Though the woman is subordinate, she is most happy and successful being a serving wife.
- F. Though there is a great difference in their roles, they are most happy united in marriage.
- G. Marriage must be in the Lord, which is a God-fearing, Christ-loving, truth-seeking spouse.
 - 1. Two billion people on earth claim to be "Christian" at the present time, but not 1% of them are dedicated disciples of Jesus Christ, walking in the Spirit and hating the flesh.
 - 2. Compromise in the spirituality of a spouse is to compromise the marriage to that degree.
 - 3. See the study on this subject: <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/Sermons/pdf/MarriageInTheLord.pdf>.

11:12 **Yet, God has ordained that the man comes into existence by birth through the woman.**

- A. Paul is still applying salve to any wounded women, who thought him unduly harsh of them.
- B. In case any man felt unduly superior or arrogant in his position, Paul takes him down a little.
- C. Repeating his first argument of her subordination (11:8), he now shows man's dependence.
- D. Though the first woman was made from man, every subsequent man came from a woman!
- E. Every man enters the world as a nursing infant playing with a rattle on his mother's lap!
- F. And whether we look at things from his side or her side, all things originated with the Lord!
- G. The combination of indirect arguments Paul has used are all by the government of God.

11:13 **Paul appealed to their own sense of judgment and propriety about uncovered women.**

- A. It is not unusual in Scripture for the holy penmen to appeal to the understanding of the elect.
- B. Remember, Paul did this very thing in chapter 10 before giving three arguments (10:15-22).
- C. Since the Corinthians knew the woman's role better than we do in 2004, they judged rightly.
- D. For a woman to stand and prophesy in a mixed assembly by the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit without a veil would have been obviously froward and improper to those saints.
- E. Paul does not question its mere attraction to the eye, but rather its propriety to wise decorum.
- F. While we cannot judge with the same degree of ease, we should find it repulsive to our mind.
- G. Of course, Paul did not raise this question until he had dropped about seven mortars on them!
- H. Is there not a natural and social argument that women speaking in public cover their heads?
- I. We can safely consider some Spirit-filled women were assuming they were equal to men.

11:14 **Nature itself provides the powerful argument that it is shameful for men to have long hair.**

- A. By looking ahead, we see long hair is a natural and preliminary covering of the head (11:15).
- B. The use of "even" in this verse means, "Intimating that the sentence expresses an extreme case of a more general proposition implied" (OED).
- C. Paul made a two-verse appeal to the very different effect long hair has on men and women.
 - 1. Historically, we cannot find problems with long hair on men. Paul is correcting women!
 - 2. Since long hair is becoming and attractive on a woman, it teaches a veil is good and right.
 - 3. But the same long hair is shameful on men, which approves women covering their heads.
 - 4. The difference between the sexes demands a demonstration of that in the length of hair.
- D. It does not matter what any man or any group of men think, long hair is a shame on a man.
 - 1. Condemning long hair on men in this effeminate and rebellious generation brings hatred.
 - 2. A man with long hair is rebelling against his Creator's assigned role of head and ruler.
 - 3. Notwithstanding hippies and other effeminate or profane characters, long hair is a shame.
 - 4. The covered, sleepy, lazy, effeminate, humiliated, subordinate look of long hair is wrong.
 - 5. Elvis and the Beatles, who popularized long hair here, were effeminate, rebel losers.
 - 6. The Catholic Jesus is a profane caricature, as Satan has shamed him with long hair.
- E. God and nature demand there be a difference between the sexes (Deut 22:5; Rom 1:26-27).

11:15 **But nature gives a further argument by showing long hair as a glorious covering to women.**

- A. Long hair on a woman glorifies, beautifies, enhances, and exalts her as a desirable woman.
 - 1. It does not matter what the latest issue of supermarket magazines has to say, long is in!
 - 2. A woman who cuts her hair unnecessarily masculinizes herself toward dikes and butches!
 - 3. A woman who cuts her hair eliminates the single most obvious mark of her femininity!
 - 4. The glory of a young man is his strength, which all understand well (Pr 20:29). But men would despise a young man on a starvation diet to emasculate his body down to the frailty and weakness of a woman! It is the same absurdity when a woman cuts her hair!
- B. Her hair is given her for a covering, but it is not the covering Paul has been dealing with, for the artificial covering making the proper public statement was a veil (Gen 24:65; Num 5:18).

- C. Paul has contrasted that long hair, a form of a covering, is clearly most suitable on a woman.
- D. We live in a wicked generation seeking to erase the sexual distinctions God made, but we must resist with all our might for the glory of God and each sex (Deut 22:5; Rom 1:26-27).
- E. The excuse that long hair takes more work is absurd – for godly and beautiful women have long been willing to take extreme efforts and pains without your modern conveniences.
- F. The excuse that long hair takes more work is absurd – for what young man is not willing to work out intensely every day to maximize his glory – the youthful strength of his body?
- G. A woman ought to wear her hair as long, as feminine, as much of a covering as possible when she enters into the presence of God and His holy angels for worshipping with men.

11:16 **There is no room in the churches of Christ for contentious men who want to dispute.**

- A. While this issue must have caused much contention, Paul ended it all with sixteen verses!
- B. If you tell men to cut their hair or women to grow their hair, you will discover contentions!
- C. Because the spirit wishing to overthrow God and nature is one of high and perverse rebellion.
- D. Paul ordered the matter settled and beyond dispute from both the apostles and the churches.
- E. The longhair movement in this country went hand-in-hand with great rebellion and violence.
- F. There are very definite rules for public worship, and they are not to be disputed by anyone.

11:17 **Paul rebuked them for other errors in their public assemblies bringing God's disapproval.**

- A. While assemblies are held to perfect the saints, those in Corinth were making them worse.
- B. When a church assembles, members should seek the welfare of the body (Rom 15:1-7; I Cor 13:1-7; Gal 5:13; 6:1-5; Eph 4:1-3; I Thess 5:14; Heb 3:12-13; 10:23-25).

11:18 **The first error Paul rebuked in the Corinthian assemblies were their carnal divisions.**

- A. He had identified this problem at Corinth earlier in several places (1:10-13; 3:1-5; 4:6-7).
- B. The goal of every church of Christ is to have all members in total unity (1:10; Eph 4:1-3).
- C. He believed and hoped in charity that the situation was not as bad as Chloe had stated (1:11).

11:19 **Heretical ideas and divisions will occur in every church to expose both sinners and saints.**

- A. He had just identified the divisions at Corinth, which is by parallelism tied to the heresies.
- B. God is wisely over all – including temptations (10:13) and heretical divisions (11:18-19).
- C. This church had divisions from preacher factions to eating meat, from keeping a fornicator to women talking in church, and from lacking charity to denying the resurrection of the body!
- D. And he is about to enter upon the most corrupt of all – the abuse of the Lord's Supper itself.
- E. Members should prepare themselves for controversies to be found standing on God's side.

11:20 **The many divisions in the church and the consequent factions destroyed their Communion.**

- A. Their keeping of the Lord's Supper was a joke, given the divisions, factions, and follies of it.
- B. The level of abuse of the Lord's Supper is hard to even imagine, yet it is what was occurring.
- C. There were love feasts in the churches, but we cannot learn much of them here (Jude 1:12).
- D. When children, church members, are left without good leaders, almost anything can happen.

11:21 **They had corrupted the Lord's Supper into a great feast with abundance of food and wine.**

- A. They were not eating as a body; they were gorging like pagan gluttons at a profane feast!
- B. There were some totally stuffed with wine and food, and there were others leaving hungry!
- C. Remember, these converts had previously been pagans used to celebrating in such a way.
- D. There is reason to be thankful for even basic decorum learned in nominally Christian homes.

11:22 **Paul strongly rebuked them for eating very immoderately and for neglecting the poor.**

- A. The rich should have taken care of their appetites at home, not treated the supper as a feast.
- B. Paul will finish his remarks by telling them to eat at home and not bring an appetite (11:34).
- C. We should be making choices at home to promote and protect God's worship at assembly.
- D. Every action toward public worship reflects on your view of God and the other members.

11:23 **Paul specifically identified the procedure for the Lord's Supper from Jesus Christ Himself.**

- A. These people had been taught, for Paul wrote, "... that which also I delivered unto you."
- B. It is the Lord's Supper for two preeminent reasons: He governs it, and it is to remember Him.
- C. Though Paul was not at the Last Supper, Jesus personally taught him about it (Gal 1:11-12).
- D. We may see the gospel accounts for further details of the original Lord's Supper by Christ.
- E. The supper begins by taking bread, and there is no need for us to change our Lord's order.
- F. The body is broken before the blood is shed, so we break the bread before we drink the wine.
- G. We keep the Lord's Supper at night, and we shall continue it at night – after all, it is a supper.

11:24 **The Lord's Supper involves the formal blessing and distribution of bread in remembrance.**

- A. The bread was obviously unleavened bread, by virtue of it coming from the Passover Supper.
- B. The bread was obviously unleavened bread, by virtue of signifying a sin-free church (5:6-8).
- C. He no more meant the bread was literally His body than He meant He had hinges and a knob (John 10:7,9). Many of our fathers in the faith gave their lives to reject Rome's heresy!
- D. See the study on John 6:53, http://www.letgodbettrue.com/Sermons/pdf/Eating_and_Drinking_Christ.pdf.
- E. Consider the importance of finding a figure of speech in the crucial words "This is my body."
 - 1. These words, from I Corinthians 11:24, have been wrested by various denominations in various ways to justify their various heresies of the doctrine there.
 - 2. Remember that thousands have given their lives based on how they interpreted this text.
 - 3. Catholics are literalists. They deny any figure of speech here. When the magical words, "This is my body," are spoken ("hoc est corpus meum" in Latin), the bread actually becomes the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ through their damnable heresy of transubstantiation – the substance of the cracker is transformed into God.
 - 4. Lutherans see synecdoche. The figure of speech is in the word "body." For it is part of the body and bread combination that exists in the consecrated wafer by the damnable heresy of consubstantiation – the substance of the cracker is combined with God.
 - 5. Presbyterians see metonymy. The figure of speech is in the word "body." Christ's use of "body" is to be associated with the real offer of Himself spiritually and really and indeed in the sacrament. They maintain that sacramental grace is received by eating mere bread.
 - 6. The truth is a metaphor. The figure of speech is not in the word "body" but in the word "is." It is a comparison by representation. The bread represents the body of Jesus Christ.

11:25 **The Lord's Supper involves the formal blessing and distribution of wine in remembrance.**

- A. The cup of wine is taken in the same process as the bread, distributed after giving thanks.
- B. Regardless of what Roman Catholics dream, the wine was to be given to every communicant.
- C. See the study on Matt 26:27, <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/BibleTopics/Communion/allofit.htm>.
- D. By the prayer of thanksgiving, the wine is the cup of blessing which we bless (10:16-17).
- E. Why don't Catholics take these words literally and try gnawing on the cup or chalice itself?
- F. The Lord's Supper remembers the Lord's death until He comes; it does not re-offer Him!

- 11:26 **The Lord's Supper is preeminently the symbolic showing of the death of Jesus Christ.**
A. When bread and wine are blessed with thanksgiving like this, it is to remember His death.
B. This Supper is to be kept up in this simple format and procedure until Jesus Christ returns.
C. It is most wonderful to know that it has been observed for 2000 years throughout the earth.
- 11:27 **Since it is the memorial feast of the Lord's death, any hypocritical participation is heinous.**
A. By comparing what comes next, we understand "unworthily" to mean with unconfessed sin.
B. An irreverent or hypocritical eating of the supper accrues guilt for the crucifixion of Jesus, as comparable to the Jewish murderers, which brought horrible and irremediable judgment.
C. This connection is most logical and agreeable, but it is certainly intimidating (Heb 10:26-31).
- 11:28 **Self-examination is essential to a righteous and safe participation in the Lord's Supper.**
A. To avoid blood guiltiness of the Son of God, saints must examine themselves for any sin.
B. Self-examination is one of the chief means to keep your heart right and pure before God.
C. Elihu and David are two examples of making it important (Job 34:31-32; Ps 139:23-24).
D. Saints must identify and confess all sins, and they must prepare their heart to see the Lord.
- 11:29 **Taking the Lord's Supper without self-examination and a proper spirit is damning.**
A. The damnation here is not hellfire: it is the chastening judgment of God as Father (11:32).
B. The damnation here is not hellfire: it is the chastening condemnation of God (11:34).
C. The damnation here is the weakness, sickness, and premature death as described (11:30).
D. The Lord can damn (condemn or judge) His children in more ways than one (II Sam 12:14).
E. There is more damnation than eternal condemnation in eternal fire (Romans 13:2; 14:23).
F. No child of God should fret about this text; if you have partaken unworthily, repent, now!
- 11:30 **Many at Corinth had already been judged severely for corrupting the Lord's Supper.**
A. Many were not only weak and sickly, but many also were asleep – had died prematurely.
B. We had a supernatural case of premature death for Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11).
C. And Paul had just enumerated several such examples from Israel's sordid history (10:1-11).
D. This is not light – it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb 10:31).
E. Every saint better serve Him acceptably – for our God is a consuming fire (Heb 12:28-29).
F. The judgment fits the crime: abusing the Lord's Supper brings guilt for His death (11:27,29).
G. It is amazing how foolish saints think they can live and eat carnally and get away with it!
- 11:31 **Self-examination, confession, and repentance are the means to avoid God's judgment.**
A. The judgment we are to practice is the self-judgment of confession and repentance for sins.
1. Paul has already stated the prerequisite for the Supper is self-examination (11:28).
2. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins (I John 1:9). Glory!
3. If we confess our sins, He will prosper us, rather than judge us (Job 33:27-28; Pr 28:13).
4. Wise men will beg the Lord for assistance in this most important thing (Ps 139:23-24).
B. Why do so many saints take this matter lightly and end up under God's chastening rod?
1. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb 10:31; I Cor 10:1-11).
2. Even a superficial reading of the Old Testament shows God's severe chastening.
3. And the very warning here is of weakness, sickness, and premature death (11:30).
C. David's quick judgment of himself brought God's quick forgiveness of his sin (II Sa 12:13).
D. Ahab and Manasseh found mercy from God for repentance (I Kgs 21:29; II Chr 33:12-13).

- 11:32 **God's chastening judgment of saints is evidence that they will not be judged in the future.**
- A. The judgment (or damnation) God shows His children is the affectionate chastening of a Father, which is a result and proof of electing and adopting love (Heb 12:5-8; Prov 3:11-12).
 - B. It is not the means of their salvation from eternal condemnation, but rather the proof of it.
 - C. The wicked receive no affectionate chastening in this life for their sins practically, and they will receive eternal torment in the Day of Judgment for continuing in their sins.
 - D. By covenant mercy, God saves His elect; but He will chasten them severely (Ps 89:30-36).
- 11:33 **Paul concluded by exhorting the church to patiently wait for the church to eat together.**
- A. The Lord's Supper is a spiritual meal showing common union in Jesus Christ (10:16-17).
 - B. The Corinthians had turned the Supper into a gluttonous feast for pleasure (11:21-22).
 - C. And they were not even waiting for one another – some were drunk; some were hungry.
 - D. The two-fold purpose of the Supper must always be remembered, if we are to please Christ.
 1. First, it is a symbolic memorial to remember Christ's death until He comes again (11:26).
 2. Second, it is for fellowship and common union with one another about Christ (10:16-17).
 3. This second aspect must be emphasized as well, which is why closed communion is right.
 4. The Lord's Supper is when all the members come together in one place (11:20,33).
 5. Parents know the difference of a family dinner versus foraging for yourself in the pantry.
 6. It should be emphasized to members not to forsake this special assembly (Heb 10:25).
- 11:34 **Eating for appetite should be taken care of at home to avoid unnecessary temptation.**
- A. The Lord's Supper is not to satisfy hunger or thirst appetites, so eat for appetite at home.
 1. The Corinthians had turned the Supper into a gluttonous feast for pleasure (11:21-22).
 2. The original Supper, which is our pattern (11:23), followed a large meal (Luke 22:13-20).
 3. The Lord's Supper identifies a mere portion of bread and wine for spiritual significance.
 4. Therefore, to please the Lord and avoid any temptations, come with your belly full.
 5. The seriousness of the ordinance and the symbolic portion size prohibit foolish hunger.
 - B. It appears the churches had feasts of charity, which were designed for charity and fellowship.
 1. Jude writes of these when condemning wicked hypocrites among the saints (Jude 1:12).
 2. They may have been full suppers provided for brotherly love and care of poor saints.
 3. If there were such a thing, they were not to be so attached to Communion to cause abuse.
 4. Since we are not told further about them, we do not make them binding commandments.
 5. The duty of charity is binding, and frequent potluck-type dinners are good and useful.
 - C. Paul determined he could give them further instructions they needed when he was there.
 1. If the instructions were important, they are found in other epistles. Scripture is complete.
 2. Never forget that Scripture can make (a) the man of God perfect, (b) thoroughly furnished, and (c) unto all good works (I Tim 3:15; II Timothy 2:2; 3:16-17).

Conclusion:

1. The Bible has stated, as clearly as language allows, the subordinate position of the woman in life and church.
2. Love and unity in the church of Jesus Christ should be visible and practiced by all for the benefit of the body.
3. Paul is introducing the sobriety to be exercised in Christian worship, as opposed to the levity of pagan feasts.
4. The Lord's Supper is a most important event in the church and should be participated in very carefully.
5. Self-examination, confession, and repentance are key actions to avoid the chastening judgment of God.

Additional study:

1. [Jesus and Paul distinguished by doctrine and practice.](#)
2. [Marriage – Only in the Lord.](#)
3. [Transubstantiation is easily denied from John 6:53.](#)
4. [Restricting the cup or wine from the laity is a heresy.](#)