

Status Update: Developing a New View of You in Christ
1 Corinthians

11:1-34 Status Update: The Body of Christ Should Value Each Other Equally

The following commentary is designed to cause us to learn through unpacking truths from each verse of this book. Questions are listed after each section to help us process the verses. Answers should be easy to find in each section. Keep your study simple (about 15mins/day for most-especially families). “(FAM)” questions may be more helpful for parents to use in training their children.

“1 BE YOU FOLLOWERS OF ME, EVEN AS I ALSO AM OF CHRIST. 2 NOW I PRAISE YOU, BROTHERS, THAT YOU REMEMBER ME IN ALL THINGS, AND KEEP THE ORDINANCES, AS I DELIVERED THEM TO YOU. 3 BUT I WOULD HAVE YOU KNOW, THAT THE HEAD OF EVERY MAN IS CHRIST; AND THE HEAD OF THE WOMAN IS THE MAN; AND THE HEAD OF CHRIST IS GOD. 4 EVERY MAN PRAYING OR PROPHECYING, HAVING HIS HEAD COVERED, DISHONORS HIS HEAD. 5 BUT EVERY WOMAN THAT PRAYS OR PROPHECIES WITH HER HEAD UNCOVERED DISHONORS HER HEAD: FOR THAT IS EVEN ALL ONE AS IF SHE WERE SHAVEN.”

➤ **The gospel does not end created distinctions but rather helps us magnify God's glory through them**

DISCIPLESHIP

Paul began this section by concluding his argument which started in chapter 8 and tying it to a theological discussion of order in the church. He opened up in 11:1 by writing, **Be followers of me, even as I also am of Christ**. So Paul did not merely point believers to his own example but rather to **follow** (Grk. Mimetes) imitate or mimic him **as he followed Christ**. This is the essence of what we call discipleship where a student becomes like his teacher in character & manner of living. A disciple typically gets to know his teacher so well this is the natural result.

This reminds us of what we've learned in Corinthians about thinking and actions which are consistent and inconsistent with our new identity in Christ. For example, Paul clearly forbade believers from becoming involved in pagan worship practices because it was

inconsistent with their new identity in Christ. We also learned our freedoms (discussed in chapters 8-10) find their limits in our Christian identity and in their impact on our brothers and sisters in Christ. However, we should realize there can never be enough rules cover every situation which is why Paul offered up this one ultimate solution, Christ crucified. The more we get to know Him and His character through the Scriptures, the more we will be transformed into His image (see 2Corinthians 3:18).

In chapter 11 Paul began addressing problems within the worship practices of the gathered church. Specifically he dealt with issues of male and female distinctions in formal worship settings (11:2-16) as well the fact they were not serving one another (even abusing the poor) while celebrating the Lord's Supper (11:17-34). What's important to notice overall is how BOTH ISSUES in chapter 11 relate to the theme of EQUALLY VALUING THE MEMBERS of Christ's body. That is the lens through which we believe one should interpret chapter 11.

Many questions are addressed here including...Does God care how we conduct ourselves in worship or because the cross has happened, are all bets off? Does the way we relate to one another have any significance and does it communicate anything about the gospel? Discussions of this chapter usually raise questions regarding Paul's statement in Galatians 3:28 where he wrote, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus". Some think Paul meant there are no more distinctions or differences whatsoever for those in Christ. But a careful look at all of Galatians 3 helps us realize Paul was speaking of equal access to God through Christ. He was not speaking of the roles of individual members once they are part of the body of Christ. In fact, a simple reading of passages such as 1Corinthians 12 or Romans 12 should cause us all to agree each part of the body has a different role or function which in no way diminishes equality in Christ.

Now as we come to our present text, we notice Paul **praised** the Corinthians for keeping certain **ordinances** (Grk. Paradosis) which means teachings or traditions Paul had given them. Even for those who were free in Christ, there was an order to how they were to live as we see in 11:1-3 when Paul wrote, **Be you followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brothers, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.** Paul **delivered** (Grk. Paradiomi) or passed down over time certain **ordinances** (Grk. Paradosis) or traditions. It was common in Paul's day for Rabbis and teachers to "pass on" official, sacred religious traditions

(see 11:23). This is where we get our concept of discipleship (mentioned above) where truth is not only communicated but most importantly, as Jesus stated in Matthew 10:24-25, the student becomes like his teacher.

It may surprise us to read **praise** (Grk. Epaineo) or commendation in a letter filled with correction and with so little evidence in this letter of the Corinthians actually remembering to think or behave in ways Paul had instructed. This praise was either intended as ironic/sarcastic or perhaps they indeed were following the traditions in some way, shape or form but not in entirety. The problem seemed to be some kind of issue which blurred male and female distinctions in the church body. The Corinthians incorrectly believed male and female distinctions had ended because the kingdom (new age in Christ) had begun. Just as we saw early in the letter, the Corinthians were trying to jump too far, too quick into their kingdom life and all its benefits. By eliminating distinction between themselves, Paul explained they were somehow bringing shame on their relationship and ultimately on God's glory.

HEADSHIP EXPLAINED IN SCRIPTURE

Next, Paul further described the order of things for believers in terms of headship. In 11:3 he wrote, **But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.** The question is, what does all this talk of headship look like within the body of Christ? The word **head** (Grk. Kephale) designates some kind of chief authority or source much like a river flows from its source. Paul wrote, **the head of every man is Christ** which means Christ is the source of males in the sense that Christ (being God) created Adam from the dust (see Genesis 2:7; Colossians 1:16 and John 1:1-3). Next Paul wrote, **the head of the woman is the man** meaning males are the source of females in the sense that Eve was taken from Adam (Genesis 2:22) and certainly not in the sense that Adam created Eve. Finally Paul wrote, **the head of Christ is God** meaning God the Father is the head of Christ because Christ “came from the Father” (John 1:14; 16:27-28). It is hard to miss the plain meaning of this text.

The biblical use of the word “**head**” can be seen in such Old Testament passages as Numbers 17:3, Deuteronomy 20:9, Joshua 11:10, 22:14, 1Samuel 9:22, 15:17, 1Chronicles 24:31, Isaiah 7:8-9 and Habakkuk 3:13-14. The biblical use in the New Testament can be seen in Colossians 2:10, Ephesians 1:22, 5:23. Many New Testament writers also quoted Psalm 118:22 where “head” means “main” or “chief” (see

Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10, Luke 20:17, Acts 4:11 and 1Peter 2:7). What can be learned from all these references? It seems the Father, the Son and certain people are all sources and/or authorities in different ways. Sometimes the context emphasizes “source” (see Ephesians 4:15 & Colossians 2:19) and other times “authority” (the most common use of the word). We simply must read the entire context to determine the precise meaning of “head” when it is used. The differences in Paul's analogies make it impossible to make precise comparisons.

In Ephesians, the headship of Jesus is described as “for the sake of the church” as well as in terms of being the authority over the church and “head over all things”. It is hard to deny that in Ephesians 5:22-24 wives are to submit to husbands because they are the head like the church submits to Jesus Christ because He is her head. Was Paul not stressing both the husbands' authority over their wives and Christ's authority over the church? Think also about Ephesians 6 where parents are the head or source of their children and because of that also serve as their authority. Nothing tyrannical or negative is implied by this. Additionally, Colossians 1:18 reveals Jesus to have complete or sovereign rule over the church. His lordship over creation and the church is a major theme in Colossians 1.

The focus on “order” in this text is not meant to point to itself but rather to display something about God. Paul's point centers on the unique relationship which exists based on the fact one of God's created beings is the source of another one of God's created beings. While both men and women come from God, men were created first. One created being is the glory of the other and to blur the distinctions which naturally proclaim truth is to bring shame upon one's “head” or source and ultimately on God, the Creator.

Consider that for Paul to argue from creation is important because creation transcends any cultural issues at hand. People may (and often do) argue their viewpoints based on culture but it is hard to argue with the way God created things before the fall of the human race into sin. How essential is an argument based on creation? Well, if you consider that Paul's argument against homosexuality was based in creation (Romans 1:26-27) and Jesus' argument against divorce was also based in creation (Matthew 19:3-12), it seems to be very important.

EQUAL VALUE AND DISTINCT ROLES

As you might guess, difficulties arise when we attempt to further understand the ramifications of this headship. Just how far does it extend? The answer can be found when we consider the characters

mentioned in the verse. A simple consideration of the relationship between Christ and God, the Father, should help us comprehend what IS meant and what is NOT. While God, the Father, is the head of Christ this is in no way an unfavorable relationship. First and foremost we understand Christ and the Father are both equally God (John 10:30) and both equally co-created all things which exist (John 1:1-4).

Next, let's consider how this relationship is described in Philippians 2:5-9. There Paul wrote, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:". Without question Christ was equal with God, but both had distinct, complementary functions. Jesus humbled Himself to the will of the Father and in turn was exalted and lifted up by the Father. This was undoubtedly a mutually edifying relationship. In fact, theologians of all flavors throughout church history have argued for differences in the function of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost without for one moment suggesting Jesus had lesser dignity, worth or value than the Father or Holy Ghost.

This truth regarding the Holy Trinity guides us through the remainder of the passage. When we read, **the head of every man is Christ** it should be apparent that on one hand, believers have been made co-heirs with Jesus through the Gospel (Romans 8:17) and on the other hand, we do not share all the same functions as Jesus. The most obvious one is that nobody but Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of mankind. We are to share that good news with others, but we can never re-enact or replace His distinct work since God gave that role to Him alone. We cannot "be Christ" as some propose but we can be "like Christ" because we are His body. Similarly when we read, **the head of the woman is the man** it should be obvious that while men and women have equal value and worth before God, they were created differently with distinct roles and functions. Men and women have different roles and yet are equal in dignity, value and essence.

So what are we to learn in THIS text? While it is apparent God ordained headship roles, this text does not specify exactly what it looks like in each specific relationship. Those answers can only be found other places in Scripture. For instance...

How is the Father is the head of Christ?

Matthew 11:27; Luke 1:32; 10:22; John 3:35; 5:20-27; 8:28; 10:37-38; 13:16-20; Romans 2:16; 8:17,34; 1Corinthians 3:23; 15:28; 2Corinthians 4:4; 5:19; Ephesians 1:17; Philippians 1:11; 2:11; 1Timothy 2:5 and Hebrews 1:5.

How is Christ is head of a man?

John 13:16-20; Romans 9:5; 12:4-5; 1Corinthians 3:23; 8:6; 9:21; 10:16-17; 12:12-27; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 1:22-23; 3:6; 4:11-16; 5:22-33 and Colossians 1:16-20; 2:19; 3:15.

How is a husband the head of his wife?

1Corinthians 7:4; 14:35; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; Titus 2:4-5 and 1Peter 3:1-7.

How are parents the heads of their children?

1Corinthians 7:14; 2Corinthians 12:14; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20-21

How are masters the heads of their servants?

Matthew 10:24; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22; 4:1; 1Timothy 3:4,12; 6:1-2; Titus 2:9 and 1Peter 2:18.

How are church leaders the heads of their churches?

Acts 14:23; 15:4-6,22; 20:17,28-32; 2Corinthians 10:8; 13:10; 1Thessalonians 2:6; 1Timothy 5:17; James 5:14-15 and 1Peter 5:1-3-5)

How are government officials the heads of their citizens?

Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1 and 1Peter 2:13-14

Paul did not seem concerned in our Corinthian text to specify what heads and non-heads actually do and do not do. After reviewing the above passages, it should be obvious we must look beyond the term “head” to examine the unique features of each relationship. Paul's concern seemed to be a desire to praise them for keeping the traditions and to give them a theological foundation for understanding their relationships to one another. The goal is for heads of relationships to receive honor (notice the repeated concept of “shame” or dishonor).

Returning to our larger context, the Corinthians were very confused about how their roles played out in gathered worship settings now that they were all one in Christ. By their actions in their gathered worship, men and women are expected to honor Christ (11:4) and women are expected to honor men in some way (11:5). Just as Christ honored the Father thereby bringing God glory (15:24), men and women should also imitate this by bringing honor to their God-ordained heads and thereby display God's glory.

It is helpful to remember Paul regularly distinguished between spiritual gifts and roles without negating equality in Christ (see Romans 12:6-7, 1Corinthians 12:28-29 & Ephesians 4:11). For example in 1Timothy 2:11-12, Paul stated women were not to teach or exercise authority over men as Pastor/Elders. This in no way made women “less than” men, it just established a distinction which was meant to remind people of God's glory in His created order. Also in Paul's letter to Philemon, he did not overturn the master/slave relationship and yet reminded the two of their equality in Christ.

BE CAREFUL THAT WORSHIP DISPLAYS GOD'S GLORY

Paul went on to write in 11:4, **Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. Every man** (Grk. Aner) means every Christian male who **prays or prophesies** which leads us to see Paul was discussing what took place in the gathered assembly of believers. While we can pray privately, we cannot privately **prophesy** (Grk. Propheteuo) which is speech directed toward the congregation for edifying and exhorting (14:1-5) and is generally the transmission of truth from God (see 1Corinthians 14:29-33). It will always be in agreement with Scripture since it is God's truth. We see this gift in someone named Agabus who received truth from God about the famine in Jerusalem and Paul's imprisonment (see Acts 11:27-28 and 21:10-11).

The phrase, **having his head covered** (Grk. Kephale Kata) literally means “to have down the head” and has to do with shaming something. In Esther 6:12 we see this phrase used to mean a cloth covering (using part of a robe to disguise looks). This leads many to think Paul was referring to some kind of external cloth covering. It is doubtful Paul meant “long hair” because this would have been a very unusual way to refer to it in Greek literature. In honesty, we must admit we cannot conclusively determine what Paul meant, however, it is certain Paul and the Corinthian church knew. In order to determine the exact meaning of this phrase in Corinth would require extensive knowledge of all sorts of things including but not limited to male/female relationships in general and in marriage, prevailing customs of the Greeks, Romans and Jews, differences in geography, how one dressed when at home, when outside the home, when in worship and the differences between the rich and the poor. We simply do not have enough data here to nail down a solid conclusion.

By considering the rest of Scripture we can be certain Paul was not **delivering** or passing along some long-standing, pre-existent, universal

rule for all men to keep their head uncovered in worship. In Exodus 28:2-4, 37-39 & 29:6 God commanded Aaron, the High Priest of Israel, to wear a turban when he ministered (which would have included prophecy & prayer). As we study church history we learn Christian men covered their physical heads in worship for such reasons as warmth and decoration. It seems reasonable to think Paul's teaching here was simply some kind of response to pagan influences in the church of Corinth.

In 11:5 Paul wrote, **But every woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.** The "head" dishonored in this relationship is the man from 11:3. It is tough to fully support the idea of some who believe this refers to the woman's husband because 11:3, 5-6 and 7-9 all refer to general male/female relationships in the assembly and shaming or breaking down distinctions between them. Again, we should remember the Corinthians were having what we might technically call, "trouble with eschatological realities" or trouble determining how to act when trying to reconcile their present existence, truths about themselves in Christ and their future promises in Christ.

Another question exists in regard to what Paul meant when he wrote, **prays or prophesies with her head uncovered** (Grk. Kephale Akatakalyptos). Once again, it is virtually impossible to be certain. Yet here's what we do know:

- This is similar to the wording for long flowing hair which appears in Leviticus 13:45 and Numbers 5:18
- Women of that day did not generally go out in public with loosed, flowing hair
- Flowing hair is not the precise opposite of the man's activity in 11:4 and the context does not demand a precise opposite
- Comparing 11:4 & 7 makes "outer covering" far more likely

While there's much we don't know, the following things are true...

1. The action of the women in this text was deliberate and brought shame on "her head"
2. The action of the women was to break down or blur distinctions between genders
3. Paul was dealing with public worship not everyday living
4. The principle is that women are to pray and prophesy in such a way that they do not subvert male authority in the church
5. Paul certainly affirms women can pray and prophesy within the congregation

6. This text allows women to share God's truth in more informal forms of speaking within a gathered worship context such as singing the Word, sharing verses of Scripture, sharing Bible based testimonies, etc.
7. Paul elsewhere restricts women from serving as elders, pastors, or chief teachers of the congregation (1 Timothy 2:12)

Paul also wrote something quite interesting in this verse when he penned the words, **for that is even all one as if she were shaven** (Grk. Xurao) which means sheared. He seemed to be pointing out that in some way to be “uncovered” makes her one in the same with others (presumably women) that were shaven. William Pratt explains, “To convince dissenters of his view, Paul drew a connection between women having their heads uncovered and having their heads shaved. [Women] who did not cover their heads in worship brought shame to their [heads] as though their head[s] were shaved. Here Paul may have referred to the custom in the first century Mediterranean world that having heads shaved in disgrace punished adulterous women. One can only imagine the shame this practice brought to women. If these women were married, it would also have brought much dishonor to their husbands.” (Pratt , 349)

THINKING ABOUT GOD'S WORD

- What does it mean to follow Paul as he followed Christ? How does this help us define discipleship?
- Explain how Galatians 3:28 promotes equality in Christ without doing away with distinctions within the body of Christ.
- For what did Paul praise the Corinthians? Does this section of Scripture sound like praise to you? Why or why not?
- Was Paul for or against traditions? Which ones did he mention?
- In what ways can certain traditions help the church fulfill its calling?
- What did the Corinthians incorrectly believe was true because the kingdom of God had begun in them through salvation?
- What things do you struggle with now because you thought salvation would make them all better?
- What does it mean to be a “head”? What do the various “heads” in this passage have in common? Why did Paul use this metaphor?
- Do you think Paul was teaching us many things about “headship” in this text or just making one or two points? What dangers might we run

into when we attempt to draw inferences which Paul did not specifically mention?

- In what way is Christ the head of man? How is man the head of woman? How is God the head of Christ?
 - How is the term “head” used in the Old & New Testaments? How do we know its precise meaning in a certain text?
 - Why did Paul bring up “order” in the text? Is it meant to be a “bad thing”? Explain.
 - In what parts of his argument did Paul appeal to culture? In what parts did he appeal to Scripture? How does recognizing these differences help you determine which portions of Paul’s teaching are the binding principles and which are the nonbinding applications?
 - Explain how significant it was that Paul based his overall theological argument in creation. Where else is this done in the Bible? Why?
 - How does the relationship between the Father and the Son help us realize that “headship” is not a negative deal?
 - In what ways do the Father, Son & Spirit differ? How are they equal?
 - In what ways do Jesus and mankind differ? How are they equal?
 - In what ways do men and women differ? How are they equal?
 - What is New Testament prophecy & how is it different from teaching?
 - What things do we learn about gathered church worship in our text specifically related to women?
 - What was some of the gender confusion going on in this text?
 - Why did Paul need to make distinctions between the male role and the female role?
 - In what way did the Corinthian women bring shame upon themselves? Do you think they recognized this when it was happening?
- (FAM) Does being under the authority of someone mean you’re less valuable or less equal?
- (FAM) How does the relationship between God the Father and Jesus model both equality and distinction?
- (FAM) Explain how different roles or functions do not mean more or less equality/value for either gender?
- (FAM) Draw a picture of men and women worshipping God together as a church family.
- (FAM) What is authority? Who created it and why is it important?
- (FAM) Who are authorities in your life?
- (FAM) What does it reveal about you when you honor authorities?

“6 FOR IF THE WOMAN BE NOT COVERED, LET HER ALSO BE SHORN: BUT IF IT BE A SHAME FOR A WOMAN TO BE SHORN OR SHAVEN, LET HER BE COVERED. 7 FOR A MAN INDEED OUGHT NOT TO COVER HIS HEAD, FOR AS MUCH AS HE IS THE IMAGE AND GLORY OF GOD: BUT THE WOMAN IS THE GLORY OF THE MAN. 8 FOR THE MAN IS NOT OF THE WOMAN: BUT THE WOMAN OF THE MAN. 9 NEITHER WAS THE MAN CREATED FOR THE WOMAN; BUT THE WOMAN FOR THE MAN. 10 FOR THIS CAUSE OUGHT THE WOMAN TO HAVE POWER ON HER HEAD BECAUSE OF THE ANGELS. 11 NEVERTHELESS NEITHER IS THE MAN WITHOUT THE WOMAN, NEITHER THE WOMAN WITHOUT THE MAN, IN THE LORD. 12 FOR AS THE WOMAN IS OF THE MAN, EVEN SO IS THE MAN ALSO BY THE WOMAN; BUT ALL THINGS OF GOD.”

➤ **While men and women serve different roles, we were created to always need each other**

Paul continued in 11:6, **For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.** Whatever was going on in that culture, Paul made it clear that for a woman to not cover her head was equivalent to having her head shaved. Just so we do not get confused by these cultural references, let us clearly restate the issue... Paul wanted the Corinthians to continue the tradition of honoring their created, God-given roles while realizing their equal value as one in Christ. Unfortunately, people have interpreted this text to mean all sorts of other things which sadly demean the value of women in the gathered church assembly. Some groups today even mandate the women in their assembly wear head coverings or wear their hair up in a “bun”. Others think this means women must be slavish, thoughtless subordinates to men which was nowhere close to Paul's point. His point was so tied to cultural norms and not blurring gender distinctions that literal obedience here seems entirely ridiculous for the church body today. We simply need to heed to the principles of headship which he taught.

In 11:7 Paul went on to write, **For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, for as much as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.** Here we are given more insight as to the foundational theology of why this whole passage was written. It was not about the men or the women at all but about humans embracing their differences and thereby bringing **glory** to (Grk. Doxa) or conveying a positive view **of God!** Why should men have NOT covered and women SHOULD in the Corinthian context? It simply

reflected God's glory in creation. It reminds us we each have a redemptive role in pointing humanity back to our source...God wants His glory to be on display through us at all times whether it be at times when we are gathered together for a purpose or when we are scattered about our daily lives for other reasons.

HOW MEN AND WOMEN COMPLETE EACH OTHER

Let's deal with the statement **for as much as he is the image and glory of God**. In what way was this true? Most likely Paul was referring to Adam's special status (glory) as God's image bearer because he was created first (see 11:8). As we read the creation account in Genesis, we learn God made Adam directly from the dust. Then God made Eve from Adam's body. So Paul went on to write, **but the woman is the glory of the man**. Man does not "get the glory" as if he created woman. God alone gets the glory because He created her from the side of His male creation.

This truth is further reinforced in 11:8-9 which states, **For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man**. The **woman is the glory of the man** simply because she was created for his sake. Genesis 2:18 plainly explains, "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet (suitable helper) for him". The male creation is not complete without the female creation. NOW we're on to the bigger picture here!

Eve was called Adam's "suitable helper" which means "aid" rather than "subordinate" or "slave" as some think. The phrase "suitable for" also means "corresponding to" or "mirror image of". Didn't Adam call Eve "wo-man" because he realized she was equally human? She was the glory of his image in a very special way because by joining him, humanity could begin to function in all the ways God intended (though they fell into sin). The woman made it possible for the man to fulfill the command God gave in Genesis 1:22, 28 to multiply and the command in Genesis 2:15 to dress and keep the garden.

What did Adam do when God created this suitable helper for him? **HE BROKE INTO A SONG OF REJOICING** (see Genesis 2:21-25). Does this not give us some idea of the joyous, complementary relationship which should exist between men and women? Men and women should be delighted that God created the other to complete them. Sadly, our sin nature keeps us from seeing and admitting the glory of this. Women are a creation men cannot live without and vice versa. 11:8-9 and 10:32 seem to indicate the existence of one means

praise and honor to the other. So in all we do as we worship together, should we not seek to magnify this important truth of the created order?

LIMITING FREEDOMS TO REFLECT GOD'S GLORY

In 11:10 Paul gave instruction to the Corinthian women when he wrote, **For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.** The reference to the **angels** (Grk. Aggelos) is difficult to understand but really does not change the overall point of the text one way or the other. Remember when Paul brought up the angels in 1Corinthians 4:9? There he wrote, “For I think that God has set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men”. Whatever else it means, we are to remember angels are watching humanity and just like us they are not all-knowing and are able to learn more about their Creator from observing God's dealings with His entire creation.

Therefore, Paul told the women of Corinth **to have power** (Grk. Exousia) or exercise authority **over their physical heads**. He desired women to act responsibly and on their own in the matter of head coverings. It was not a matter of physically covering their heads but rather being self controlled. Once again, Paul consistently proclaimed freedom in Christ alongside an exhortation for believers (in this case women) to use it wisely and in ways which promote the gospel.

As men and women participated together in worship there must have been some women who were arguing for the right to pray or prophesy without the customary head covering or hairstyle. This was more likely some historical situation in Corinth. Paul encouraged the women to conduct themselves during public worship in ways which affirm and support male leadership in the church body. Once again, we conclude women are encouraged to pray and prophesy (see description above) when the church is gathered for worship so long as not to blur or abandon the glorious distinctions of God's created order.

Paul hammered home how men and women need each other in 11:11-12 when he wrote, **Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.** As we have already stated, believing men and believing women are dependent on each other. Both men and women are from God. Man was made from dust, woman was made from man and afterward all humans were born from woman. Even in this new kingdom age where we are all in Christ, gender distinctions are still important to convey God's glory. That's why God made distinctions.

RESISTING THE ISOLATION MENTALITY

There were two very important points being made here. First, neither men nor women are independent from each other. Paul restated that women are not independent of men (**neither the woman without the man**). A woman's authority (11:10) was always meant to complement man's, so she must not think of herself as an autonomous being. Sadly, our sin nature leads men & women toward isolating self from the necessary community in which God intended us to dwell and grow. Next, Paul added the interesting twist that men are also not independent of women (**even so is the man also by the woman**). Men must not think their headship implies independence from or superiority over women. Their dependence on women is a qualifies their roles as "heads". This is clear in a marriage passage such as Ephesians 5:21-33.

Notice Paul's interesting explanation. He brought up their interdependence based upon simple biology. While it is true woman was created from man's side, it is equally true man forever after that event is born of woman (see similar language in Matthew 11:11 & Luke 7:28). Every male human being has a mother (sadly science is trying to attack this too), and this fact of biology ensures against any man thinking he is free from any obligation to honor women. Does not the principle of honoring mothers (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16) imply men ought to have high regard and honor for women?

One final point worth considering in regard to headship in this passage is seen in Paul's comment, **all things [are] of God**. Paul seemed to want his readers to know both men and women have a direct relationship with God. Women are not dependent upon men to mediate between them and God just as children are not dependent upon their parents to do such. Men, women and children have equal access to God through one mediator, Jesus Christ (see 1Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 8:6, 9:15, 12:24). No human depends upon the mediation of another human in their relationship with God. Wives worship and honor God directly because "there is neither . . . male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28-again refer to the introduction for context).

THINKING ABOUT GOD'S WORD

- In 11:6-12, what main point was Paul trying to get across?
- Why is it important to have a good handle on the different roles and distinctions between men and women?

- What are some ways people have misinterpreted Paul's point regarding covering one's head in a worship gathering?
- Should we celebrate the differences in gender? How did Adam respond when God created Eve?
- Why is the understanding that we were made “for each other” and not “independent of each other” important? How does this thought process play out in the church family?
- What roles do women play in our church’s gathered worship times? Do they pray? Do they prophesy? Do they hold ordained offices? Are they honored? How do the men and women in our church feel about the roles women play in public worship?
- How does our community perceive our church in terms of Christ's value to us and our love for one another?
- How is our culture similar to and/or different from that of Paul’s world? Do we tend to accommodate to culture or defy it? Are we justified in doing so?
- In what ways could our church change in order to better honor God, each other and the gospel in our gathered worship times?
- How are our church's worship practices similar to or different from those of other churches? Why do they differ? You might need to have a conversation with one of the pastor/elders.
- What was the purpose of men not covering and women covering their heads in Corinthian worship gatherings?
- Explain how woman is the glory of man?
- How do men and women complete one another? Why is it important men and women learn to complete rather than compete?
- What did Adam do in Genesis 2 when he realized what God had done by creating Eve?
- What keeps us from seeing the glory and beauty of the complementary relationships of men and women?
- What is Paul's reference to angels intended to remind us of?
- Why are gender distinctions still applicable in the new age of Christ?
- In what ways do you try to be independent from others? Why is this not truly helpful?
- Do you struggle to value or honor those of the opposite sex? How might this text help you change?
- How can every individual human have a direct relationship with God?
- Does anyone need a human mediator in their relationship with God?
- (FAM) What are some ways men and women need each other?
- (FAM) What are some ways you have seen men and women celebrate each other? Encourage each other?

(FAM) How do we honor each other in our gathered worship times?
(FAM) When roles get confused, what kind of problems can occur?
(FAM) What are the roles of each person in your family? In what ways do you need each other?
(FAM) In what ways does your family need the church family and in what ways does the church family need your family?

“13 JUDGE IN YOURSELVES: IS IT COMELY THAT A WOMAN PRAY TO GOD UNCOVERED? 14 DOES NOT EVEN NATURE ITSELF TEACH YOU, THAT, IF A MAN HAVE LONG HAIR, IT IS A SHAME TO HIM? 15 BUT IF A WOMAN HAVE LONG HAIR, IT IS A GLORY TO HER: FOR HER HAIR IS GIVEN HER FOR A COVERING. 16 BUT IF ANY MAN SEEM TO BE CONTENTIOUS, WE HAVE NO SUCH CUSTOM, NEITHER THE CHURCHES OF GOD.”

➤ **Each Believer must personally wrestle with God's truth in Scripture**

Paul continue in 11:13 by writing, **Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray to God uncovered?** Here Paul asks them to make a sound judgment. This is an important, biblical concept to consider. Even Paul whose authority should not have been questioned, did not want his churches blindly following his every word. He wanted them to use the Scriptures and Holy Spirit within them to THINK or **Judge in themselves** (Grk. Krino). The issue for them to consider was whether or not it was **comely** (Grk. Prepo) or becoming for **a woman pray** (Grk. Proseuchomai) **to God uncovered** (Grk. Akatakaluptos) or unveiled. Based upon the theological foundation Paul had just laid out to them, the Corinthians should have come to Paul's same conclusion.

In 11:14 Paul made a common sense appeal when he wrote, **Does not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame to him?** The term “nature” meant much in Greek thinking (remember that's where Corinth was). We need to realize Paul did not mean that nature proves men must have short hair and women must have longer hair. In fact, if we want to get technical, nature teaches us both men and women would have long hair if we let our hair grow. One other thing to consider is Acts 18:18 which indicates Paul may have worn long hair for a time as part of a vow. This also reminds us of the Old Testament Nazarite vow in which men who were set apart for God's service were forbidden to cut their hair (see Numbers 6).

By using the term **nature** (Grk. Phusis) Paul was simply referring to the way things were in Corinth at that time. We can infer men generally had short hair then and women generally had long hair. However, we must realize this statement was NOT an appeal to creation. Despite what some think, the Old Testament says nothing in general about the relative length of hair. In fact, Absalom's handsome description in 2Samuel 14:25-26 was praised and included the mention of much hair. It appears long hair was generally viewed by biblical writers as praiseworthy, not disgraceful.

Then in 11:15 we read, **But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.** Glory is like a distinction or honor. Long hair does not give her glory but distinguishes her splendor as a woman (like a natural phenomenon). A woman's long hair is a kind of covering. In other words, her flowing hair when let down is a natural cover. Having her hair put up does not seem to be Paul's concern. Since she was given long hair as a covering, then she was to be covered when praying or prophesying.

In 11:16 we read, **But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.** This helps us understand Paul was not giving the Corinthians a command but rather an encouragement to keep a church custom of their day. What was the point? So they, as God's people, did not blur the glorious distinctions between men and women which God had placed upon them to reflect His magnificent glory. Most likely by writing **if any seem to be contentious** (Grk. Philoneikos), which means fond of strife, Paul was addressing the women who were tossing the custom aside on the basis of being free and equal in Christ.

To write, **we have no such custom** (Grk. Sunetheia) reminded the local Corinthian assembly of the much larger assembly to which they belonged (something Paul had to do often). Paul meant that he and other church leaders (**we**) as well as the other **churches of God** had no other practice than having women cover their heads in public worship. The widespread practice of the church should have caused dissenters at least to hesitate over their objections and certainly not be contentious over it. Yet as we have repeatedly stated, the concern was how the church conveyed the gospel and specifically the glory of God through the order in which God created men and women with their different yet complementary distinctions.

THINKING ABOUT GOD'S WORD

- What did Paul mean by, “Judge in yourselves”? How should one go about this?
- Do you spend adequate time exploring the truths you are taught? Explain your scripture study process.
- What did Paul mean when he referenced nature?
- What naturally happens to human hair in terms of its length?
- How does the Bible generally view the idea of long hair on men? Is this what you have been taught? Explain.
- Who was Paul addressing as the “contentious” in Corinth?
- Why did Paul bring up the other churches of God? How was this meant to help the Corinthians? How does it help you?
- Restate Paul's overall concern in laying out this theological argument regarding headship and covering?
- At the end of this passage, Paul appealed to the practice of the “churches of God” to support his point. Is this type of appeal feasible today? Why or why not?
- How does this passage function in Paul's larger argument in this letter? Is it just an isolated bit of teaching, or does it somehow flow from what he said before it, and lead into what he said after it? What indications can you find in the passage to support your conclusions?

“17 NOW IN THIS THAT I DECLARE TO YOU I PRAISE YOU NOT, THAT YOU COME TOGETHER NOT FOR THE BETTER, BUT FOR THE WORSE. 18 FOR FIRST OF ALL, WHEN YOU COME TOGETHER IN THE CHURCH, I HEAR THAT THERE BE DIVISIONS AMONG YOU; AND I PARTLY BELIEVE IT. 19 FOR THERE MUST BE ALSO HERESIES AMONG YOU, THAT THEY WHICH ARE APPROVED MAY BE MADE MANIFEST AMONG YOU. 20 WHEN YOU COME TOGETHER THEREFORE INTO ONE PLACE, THIS IS NOT TO EAT THE LORD'S SUPPER. 21 FOR IN EATING EVERY ONE TAKES BEFORE OTHER HIS OWN SUPPER: AND ONE IS HUNGRY, AND ANOTHER IS DRUNKEN. 22 WHAT? HAVE YOU NOT HOUSES TO EAT AND TO DRINK IN? OR DESPISE YOU THE CHURCH OF GOD, AND SHAME THEM THAT HAVE NOT? WHAT SHALL I SAY TO YOU? SHALL I PRAISE YOU IN THIS? I PRAISE YOU NOT.”

➤ **It is important to always remember that a church gathering is a celebration of our unity in Christ**

Various reasons have been proposed as to why Paul wrote this part of the text. Some think the Lord's Supper had become too common of a

meal, some believe people were substituting the bread and cup for common food, some say the Corinthians were taking a magical view of the elements, etc. However, none of these can really be supported by the text. When we look at 11:22, 33-34 we can see Paul's concern was abuse of the supper and despising the church by shaming the poor within their body. There was not equal value placed up every member of the local congregation and yet they were celebrating a meal (the Lord's Supper) which symbolized their unity and equality in Christ.

We should also keep in mind what we have learned already in this Corinthian letter. All sorts of religious meals were served in that day (see chapters 8-10, especially 10:16-22). It is likely the Lord's Supper was eaten along with these meals (see Acts 2:42, 46, 20:7, 11; Jude 12). The rich hosted meals in their homes and many served meat which was sacrificed to idols. In these meals, distinctions were made between who sat where (dining room verses outer rooms). Paul did not want these distinctions carried over to the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

It was not the food that was the issue but rather losing the meaning and significance of the meal. Notice Paul's argument is in the form of what we like to call a “sandwich” where 11:17-22 form the “top bun” and 11:33-34 form the “bottom bun”. The key verse is 11:29 which reveals to us the issue...lack of discernment regarding the Lord's body. What does this mean? 11:33 tells us they failed to **tarry** for those in the body. And as we learn many times in Scripture, an abuse of the body, is an abuse of Jesus, the head of the body (see Acts 9:5). Paul already stated the body was the church symbolized by the bread (see 10:17). 11:24 tells believers this supper is to be eaten in memory of Jesus.

Paul began in 11:17 by writing, **Now in this that I declare to you I praise you not, that you come together not for the better, but for the worse.** Paul felt their church gatherings were harming rather than building them up. Paul said they **came together not for the better** (Grk. Kreitton) meaning useful or advantageous, **but for the worse** (Grk. Hetton) meaning destructive. The key idea is of **coming together** (Grk. Sunerchomai) and is repeated 5 times in 17-22 & 33-34 and simply means to assemble. While the Corinthians did gather together, they totally missed the point of why God wanted them to gather. They were God's new people and their gatherings should have reminded them of that and built them each up in the security of the Gospel.

The exact problem is raised in 11:18 when Paul wrote, **For first of all, when you come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.** In 1:10-12 Paul mentioned other divisions in the church centered around quarrels,

jealousy and certain leaders. Here, however, the issue seemed to be treating each other inequitably. From the previous argument in 11:1-16, it should be easy for us to ascertain what was going on. The statements, **I hear that** and **I partly believe it** reveal Paul had gotten this info second hand. Notice Paul confronted the believers with it and left room for the chance his facts about the exact nature of their division were not entirely accurate.

11:19 reveals the reason Paul readily believed divisions existed. Paul wrote, **For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.** Theology was at the root of his belief in this matter. He knew the words of Jesus (Matthew 10:34-37, 24:9-13) who said there would be a sifting process in the last days within the church. Amazingly, through the evil of divisions, God is able to work out His will in the church whereby genuine believers are distinguished from false converts. The presence of divisions within the church is a way God separates the sheep from the goats (see Matthew 25). While this comment seems to be rather simple, it reminds us true faith is seen not just in correct doctrines but also in godly behavior towards others in the church.

In 11:20 Paul returned to the primary issue of divisions when he wrote, **When you come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.** First, let's notice he names the meal, **The Lord's Supper** (Grk. Kuriakos Deipnon) which is the only time this name is used in the New Testament. It simply means a formal supper belonging to the Lord or more specifically consecrated to or in honor of the Lord. This is Jesus' meal eaten in His presence, along with His body, in His honor. Again, the issue is when they **come together into one place** which refers to their gatherings as a church body for the purpose of joint worship activities (seen in chapters 11-14). They were bringing in their social distinctions such as they would have in their homes, Paul wrote, **this is not to eat the Lord's Supper.**

With Paul's next words, we get a clearer picture of what he meant by **divisions** (18) and why their particular meal ceased being **the Lord's Supper** (20). In 11:21 Paul wrote, **For in eating every one takes before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.** It seems Paul was upset because the Corinthians were not celebrating the essence of the Lord's supper but rather were acting as though they were having a bunch of individual dinners in one location. It was just like the Corinthians were eating meals in their own homes with no regard for anyone else! They missed the point that they were

gathered together with other believers and supposed to be partaking in a special meal which signified their union with each other.

By saying, **one is hungry and another is drunken**, Paul emphasized they were selfishly “hogging” the bread and the cup. Notice how Paul referred to the elements of the meal (the bread & the cup) in their extremes, **hunger & drunkenness**. Other believers were either being denied food and drink or gorging themselves on them. We notice Paul was clearly concerned with both hunger and drunkenness within the church body. Some also wonder if perhaps the Corinthians were eating something like a “potluck dinner” alongside the Lord's Supper. There are indications of this in the text and if that is true, Paul did not seem concerned about it. His focus was that they remembered their union with one another in Christ especially when together.

Once again, the big problem was the Corinthians were **shaming** (Grk. Kataischuno) or humiliating by dishonor **those who have not** (Grk. Echo) meaning those who did not own or possess many material things. In 11:22 Paul wrote, **What? have you not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise you the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.** Notice some DID have **houses to eat and drink in**. Perhaps this was written to highlight the fact others DID NOT have homes because they were poor. It comes as no surprise to any reader that Paul had absolutely no praise for them in this matter.

While those in the earlier verses brought shame upon their “heads”, here we find richer believers bringing shame upon poorer believers. This shows how small and unimportant the church was in the eyes of some. These rich folks simply showed up as part of their social agenda and had no care or concern for anyone but themselves. In Christ, our social distinctions (and any other personal agendas) must come to an end especially when we are gathered together for the express purpose of celebrating our union and equality in Christ. When we gather together our care for one another proves whether or not such spiritual union has truly taken place. A true believer is not just one who partakes in the sacred meal (or whatever religious service) but one who partakes in the sacred duties of caring for the poor, especially within the household of faith (see Galatians 6:10).

THINKING ABOUT GOD'S WORD

- Was food Paul's issue in regards to the Lord's Supper? Explain.
- What does God generally want churches accomplishing at gatherings?

- What does it mean to not discern the Lord's body? What did Paul say the Lord's body is?
 - How did Paul find out about the Corinthian divisions? Explain how he carefully approached the subject with them.
 - How does God use division in the church to work out His will?
 - What is the Lord's Supper?
 - What was Paul trying to convey when he wrote “one is hungry and another is drunken”?
 - Does the Bible say it is wrong to have a regular meal at the same time the Lord's Supper is celebrated? Explain.
 - How was the issue surrounding the Lord's Supper in Corinth similar to the issue of “shaming heads” which Paul discussed earlier?
 - Explain the mindset we should have in regards to personal agendas when we are gathered together as a church body. Be specific.
 - Paul felt their coming together as a church was doing more harm than good. What is an example of this in this text?
 - In what ways were some of the Corinthians abusing the Lord's supper? What was the real issue?
 - Paul said “heresies” could actually be a good thing. What are heresies and how could they possibly be good?
 - The gospel eliminates social distinctions (it matters not who is rich or poor). In what ways do social distinctions play a role at Landmark?
 - Are there times when you look down on someone because they seem to always be struggling with the same thing...finances; cleanliness, etc...? How can we love and teach at the same time?
- (FAM) When we hear info second hand, what are some ways we could address it with the individual?
- (FAM) What are some ways you and/or your family could put others before self when the church is gathered together?
- (FAM) Draw a picture of the Lord's Supper.
- (FAM) Do you tend to socialize only with those in our body who are similar to yourself? How could this change?
- (FAM) How might we do more harm as a church rather than good?
- (FAM) What are some good things we can do for our church family?
- (FAM) Do you consider people who are poorer as equal to yourself? If not, why? How do you generally view them?
- (FAM) If God is the one who gives wealth, does it make sense for us to look down on others who don't have as much as we do? Explain
- (FAM) In what ways can we show unity and love to believers who are different than us?

“23 FOR I HAVE RECEIVED OF THE LORD THAT WHICH ALSO I DELIVERED TO YOU, THAT THE LORD JESUS THE SAME NIGHT IN WHICH HE WAS BETRAYED TOOK BREAD: 24 AND WHEN HE HAD GIVEN THANKS, HE BROKE IT, AND SAID, TAKE, EAT: THIS IS MY BODY, WHICH IS BROKEN FOR YOU: THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME. 25 AFTER THE SAME MANNER ALSO HE TOOK THE CUP, WHEN HE HAD SUPPED, SAYING, THIS CUP IS THE NEW TESTAMENT IN MY BLOOD: THIS DO YOU, AS OFT AS YOU DRINK IT, IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME. 26 FOR AS OFTEN AS YOU EAT THIS BREAD, AND DRINK THIS CUP, YOU DO SHOW THE LORD’S DEATH TILL HE COME.”

➤ **The Lord’s Supper is a Visible Gospel which Should be Celebrated Often as a Reminder**

In 11:23-24 Paul brings the focus back to Jesus and the actual tradition which Jesus instituted (notice these traditions were apparently known even before the New Testament was finished). Paul repeated the words of Jesus (see Matthew 26:17-30, Mark 14:15-26; Luke 22:11-20) when He wrote, **For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered to you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.** The ideas of **receiving** (Grk. Paralambano) and **delivering** (Grk. Paradidomi) are of great interest to us as believers. They are meant to convey the idea of discipleship where the teacher (in this case Paul) dispenses certain teaching and examples to his students (in this case the Corinthians). This was a very important part of Jewish traditions as well as a necessary practice in the church past and present.

Paul reminded his readers of Jesus words to His original disciples that the **bread** (Grk. Artos) was representative of His **body** (Grk. Soma) **which was broken** (Grk. Klao) for them as the substitute for man's sins (Romans 5:6-8; 2Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13). It was not literally the flesh of Jesus but rather symbolic. The reason they were to eat the **bread** (and drink the cup) was to **remember Jesus** and specifically the gospel of His salvation. **Remembrance** (Grk. Anamnesis) is never just mental in Scripture but also includes action (i.e. God's people built altars, sacrificed, etc....see Exodus 13:9).

Paul went on to mention the cup in 11:25-26 when he wrote, **After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do you, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this**

bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till he come. What strikes us is the phrase **when he had supped** (Grk. Deipneo). The accounts of the very first Lord's Supper teach us Jesus and His disciples sat down to celebrate and share the passover meal. This meal had been celebrated for centuries by the Jewish people to commemorate God passing over Egypt and protecting the children of those whose doorposts were covered by the blood (see Exodus 13).

So if we're reading this correctly, at the beginning of their full meal, Jesus took the bread and gave it special significance and then at the end of their full meal (or at least after part of it) Jesus took the cup and gave it special significance. This is another reason why we believe the Corinthians could have been eating a normal meal at the same time when they took the Lord's Supper. Our text does not necessarily endorse or condemn such an action, so while we can say it is acceptable but not required, we will not comment any further.

Now let's turn our attention to the significance of **the cup**. Paul reminded his readers that Jesus said **this cup is the new testament** (Grk. Diatheke) or covenant **of my blood** (Grk. Haima). In Exodus 24:8 we learn that blood is associated with the making of a covenant or promise between God and man. Jesus' comment here also combined a thought from Isaiah 53:12 where He is the Lord's servant and poured out His soul as the bearer of the sins of those who are in Him. When Jesus mentioned the **New Testament** this was a direct reference to the new covenant foretold in Jeremiah 31:31. It is the blood of Jesus which "seals the deal" on the new covenant. Again we see all Scriptures are designed to reveal the person and character of Christ (see Luke 24).

As we read the words, **as oft as you drink it**, it seems clear this Supper of the bread and the cup is to be repeated as an ongoing remembrance of Christ's work indicating His church needs the continued spoken and visible, constant reminder of the gospel. There does not seem to be a prescribed number of times we should celebrate this supper. However, given it is such a great reminder of the gospel, it seems wise to celebrate it as often as possible.

Paul said the Lord's Supper **shows** (Grk. Kataggello) or visibly proclaims **the Lord's death** (Grk. Thanatos) **until He comes** (Grk. Erchomai) or until Jesus visibly shows himself again. The Lord's Supper is not primarily about individuals (our salvation, status, rights, distinction, etc.) but about our Savior and our equal union with Him. Sadly, church history is full of examples where God's people have made the Supper about other things than this. Jesus' death was not the end of the fallen world but rather it signified the beginning of the end.

Paul's words were surely given to remind the Corinthians that while the new kingdom had arrived, they had not yet fully arrived in it (4:1-8; 6:1-6). They were one people of God then and there was also a future of change ahead for them. Therefore, the Lord's Supper is meant to be far more than a time of introspection and personal reflection. We do not consume the meal solely for our individual benefit but to remind us to live together as the new people of God for the benefit of others.

THINKING ABOUT GOD'S WORD

- Was the early church aware of the Lord Supper tradition? Explain.
 - Who instituted the Lord's Supper and when?
 - What do the words receiving & delivering mean to disciples of Jesus?
 - What is symbolized by the bread and the cup in the Lord's Supper and why are believers supposed to eat it?
 - What does the idea of “remembrance” mean in Scripture?
 - What does the phrase, “when he had supped” seem to indicate was taking place when they celebrated the first Lord's Supper? Explain.
 - What did Jesus mean by “this cup is the new testament of my blood”? What does this statement help us realize about the Scriptures?
 - How often does the Bible say churches should celebrate the Lord's Supper?
 - Explain how the Lord's Supper is a visible gospel.
 - Why is it important to realize the Lord's Supper is far more than an introspective, personal event? How might churches celebrate it in ways which miss this point?
- (FAM) What is the Lord's Supper about? What does it show us?
- (FAM) Who should celebrate the Lord's Supper?
- (FAM) Draw a picture of your family celebrating the Lord's Supper.

“27 WHEREFORE WHOEVER SHALL EAT THIS BREAD, AND DRINK THIS CUP OF THE LORD, UNWORTHILY, SHALL BE GUILTY OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF THE LORD. 28 BUT LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF, AND SO LET HIM EAT OF THAT BREAD, AND DRINK OF THAT CUP. 29 FOR HE THAT EATS AND DRINKS UNWORTHILY, EATS AND DRINKS DAMNATION TO HIMSELF, NOT DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY. 30 FOR THIS CAUSE MANY ARE WEAK AND SICKLY AMONG YOU, AND MANY SLEEP. 31 FOR IF WE WOULD JUDGE OURSELVES, WE SHOULD NOT BE JUDGED. 32 BUT WHEN WE ARE JUDGED, WE ARE CHASTENED OF THE LORD, THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE CONDEMNED WITH THE WORLD. 33 WHY, MY BROTHERS,

WHEN YOU COME TOGETHER TO EAT, TARRY ONE FOR ANOTHER. 34 AND IF ANY MAN HUNGER, LET HIM EAT AT HOME; THAT YOU COME NOT TOGETHER TO CONDEMNATION. AND THE REST WILL I SET IN ORDER WHEN I COME."

➤ **The Lord's Supper is Designed to Cause us to Think About the Body of Christ**

Paul went on in 11:27 to write, **Wherefore whoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Guilty** (Grk. Enochos) means liable or under obligation. What does it mean to **eat and drink unworthily** and to **be guilty of the body & blood**? This question has already been answered in the text. The Corinthians were **guilty** of shaming the poor in their congregation by not celebrating their unity with one another. Instead, they came to their church gathering as individuals with personal agendas and little concern for the rest of their body. Then they partook of the Supper which was meant to proclaim the exact opposite of their behavior! This was a huge error.

So how does the church correct or even avoid such error? In 11:28 Paul gave the solution when he wrote, **But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.** Rather than turning this phrase into some kind of weird, introspective prayer time before chugging the elements of the Supper, we should stop to examine the larger contrast Paul is making. The idea of **examining** (Grk. Dokimazo) is that we put ourselves to the test. The tiniest amount of examination would help the Corinthians to realize their behavior did not match the point of their Supper. Those who were thinking nothing of others in their midst were eating and drinking a lie. God wanted that to stop and for them to begin caring for one another (see also Isaiah 1:14-17). Paul said after one examines himself in relation to the church body, **LET HIM EAT** (Grk. Esthio) **of that bread and drink of that cup.** Notice the result of the examination was not to forbid the eating of the supper. Far too many people miss this point and make it extremely difficult for anyone to “qualify” for this sacred event. Our qualification is that we are “in Christ” and our obligation is to remember the union which this celebration represents each time we partake of it.

Paul picks up on this thought in 11:29 where he wrote, **For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.** To be **guilty of the body and blood** brings to mind both elements of the Supper and simply reminds us that to conduct ourselves like the Corinthians is to trample on the true

nature of what these elements symbolize. Paul wrote that **eating and drinking unworthily** (Grk. Anaxios) or in an unworthy manner equals **not discerning** (Grk. Diakrino) or thinking properly about **the Lord's body** (Grk. Soma). This is what is meant by **eating and drinking damnation** (Grk. Krima), judgment or condemnation **to himself**.

When you do not consider the unity of the body when partaking in the celebration specifically meant to display that unity, you make a mockery of the whole event. Paul wanted the Corinthians to discern the Lord's body which in Paul's mind was the church (see 10:17). Certainly body refers to the body of Christ on the cross however in the context of this meal Paul made it clear it symbolized the united body of believers.

In 11:30 Paul wrote about some results of this error. He stated, **For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep**. A number of people among them were weak, sickly and dead! What a strange view of the church. Notice again how Paul's focus is not on the individual participants but rather the entire church body. Apparently there was an unusually high number of sickness and death in the church of Corinth and Paul attributed this to disregarding their union with one another in Christ. Again, you cannot mess with the body of Christ without royally upsetting the Head of that body, Jesus Christ the Lord.

Before concluding his point, Paul wrote a slightly more positive note and gentle reminder in 11:31 when he stated, **For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged**. To avoid divine judgment, use the judgment God's given you! But what kind of divine judgment is in view here? The answer is found in 11:32 where Paul wrote, **But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world**. The judgment is not the eternal fires of Hell but rather the **chastening** (Grk. Paideuo) **of the Lord**. **Chastening** is a corrective word used of parents who train up their children and is also used to describe how God trains up or matures His children whom He loves (see Hebrews 12). This understanding aligns with the purpose Paul mentioned **that we should not be condemned** (Grk. Katakrimo) **with the world**. Quite simply, when believers who belong to God begin to think and behave like people who do not belong to God, rest assured our jealous and relentless God will get us back on a better path. He loves us enough to correct us rather than let us continue in the things which lead only to death (see Romans 6).

We must be careful not to commit the same atrocities as the Corinthians. They took a Supper which was to encourage and assure the sinful, weak and poor of their equal union with Christ and His body and turned it into an event which further shamed and alienated their

brothers and sisters in Christ! Once again, we should not be working harder and harder to keep people away from the table. The only prerequisite for partaking should involve whether or not a person is a true believer. Then partaking should be their constant reminder and security of who they are in Christ and what He has called them to be to one another and the world.

This truth is made clear in 11:33 where Paul wrote, **Wherefore, my brothers, when you come together to eat, tarry one for another.** **Wherefore** connects what was about to be written to all Paul wrote thus far. Paul was finally (or clearly) stating his point. **My brothers** (Grk. Adelphos) is a phrase of tenderness and oneness which we should expect to see after all Paul has written. This discussion of the Lord's Supper concluded with the statement, **when you come together to eat, tarry** (Grk. Ekdechomai) **one for another.** The believers in the Corinthian church were to receive, accept and wait for one another. Paul urged believers to exercise what he considered to be standard, basic and minimum Christian hospitality (see Romans 12:13) by welcoming or receiving one another when they come together for any purpose, especially to celebrate the meal representing their equal union.

Finally, Paul took a shot at those who violated the meal. He wrote in 11:34 **And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that you come not together to condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.** For those who desired to gorge themselves or selfishly consume the things related to the gathered church assembly (i.e. had their own agenda), they were to do that kind of thing on their own time. Paul did not want the gathering of Christ's church resulting in **condemnation** (Grk. Krima) or judgment (again referring to the divine and loving correction already described above). God will not settle for a church which does not practice hospitality through genuine care and concern for the other believers in their midst. We have no clue what Paul meant by **the rest will I set in order when I come** because this was written to the Corinthians and we have no record of what took place. We should simply be grateful for what we have actually received in writing realizing our Almighty Creator was under no obligation to communicate with us at all.

THINKING ABOUT GOD'S WORD

- What does it mean to be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord?
- What does it mean to eat and drink the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner? How can this be avoided?

- Explain the idea of examining oneself before eating and drinking the Lord's Supper and specifically how this is meant to encourage rather than forbid believers from partaking.
 - What do we learn from the phrase many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep?
 - What does it mean to judge ourselves in relation to the Lord's Supper?
 - In what way did Paul mean the Lord would chasten believers? What was the purpose?
 - Explain Paul's point for this entire chapter which is found in 11:33.
 - What was meant by, "If any man hunger, let him eat at home"?
 - What did Paul indicate were the main points of coming together for the Lord's supper? What are we to remember?
 - Without proper care for one another, Paul pointed out many in the church body could be weak, sick and possibly die. What are some ways we can better care for our Landmark family?
 - The Lord's supper is meant to show unity rather than to cause separation. Are there ways in which we take the elements at Landmark that indicate more of a separation rather than unity? Explain.
- (FAM) What is the point of the Lord's supper and in what ways were the Corinthians celebrating it wrong?
- (FAM) What are some ways we can show love and care for people in our church?
- (FAM) How does loving and caring for others help us take the Lord's supper properly?
- (FAM) How and why does God correct His children?
- (FAM) Study Hebrews 12 and discuss how parents could be more like God when they discipline their children.
- (FAM) Draw a picture of God's people caring for each other.

What's your mission? The Mission of Landmark is Christ's mission... "To reach all nations and generations with the gospel and lead them on Christ's mission for God's glory." (Mt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 1Co 10:31; Rev 5:9)

Note: As with any teaching, if you have any questions or concerns about this lesson, please direct them to the speaker in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1. (Years of learning and study of a variety of sources have gone into this guide for the benefit of the student and not to the glory or gain of the writer(s). As such, no claim could really be made to originality. Every effort to give proper credit will be made at the end of the series)