

BRIARCLIFF CHURCH

Small Group Study Guide: 1 Corinthians

Week of October 20 (Week 12)

1 Corinthians 11: Head Coverings and Communion



1 CORINTHIANS 11: SUMMARY

“All of chapters 8, 9, and 10, including 11:1, deal with the subject of the Christian's relationship to food sacrificed to idols. The four principles that Paul taught were these: Balance your knowledge with love (ch. 8). Balance your authority with discipline (ch. 9). Balance your experience with caution (10:1-22). And balance your freedom with responsibility (10:23-33)” (Thomas Constable, *Dr. Constable's Notes on 1 Corinthians*).

“In chapter 11, Paul addresses two departures by the Corinthians from his teaching since he left the church three years earlier. These teachings he calls ‘traditions’ (1 Cor. 11:2). The first ‘tradition’ related to man-woman relationships within the assembly of believers. At the time Paul established his churches he laid down important principles governing such relationships. The second ‘tradition’ was the procedure to be followed in remembering the death of the Messiah at the thanksgiving meal (1 Cor. 11:23).” (Paul Barnett, *1 Corinthians*, 193).

OBSERVING & APPLYING THE TEXT

1 Corinthians 11 pose a “Principle versus Culture” situation that needs careful navigation. The following principles is a helpful way to navigate the challenge of chapter 11.

- Everything must be done for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31)
- No “stumbling block” must be placed in the way of the gospel for any person (1 Cor. 8:9)
- Christians should seek the benefit or building up of other Christians rather than of themselves (1 Cor. 8:1).

I. Use our ever-changing culture to point to the never-changing hope of the gospel (11:2-6)

1. According to 1 Cor. 11:2-6, what is the cultural implication of head covering?

2. What is Paul's theological argument with regard to "head" and "head covering"?

Reflection:

- There is a God-given order within creation as regards men and women. Men and women are to worship with an orderliness that reflects the order of creation.
- Cultural standards are relevant to worship practices. We should take cultural norms into account when applying the gospel in a specific culture.
- We must develop cultural awareness and sound biblical thinking in order not to impose cultural standards as biblical standards in worship (Richard L. Pratt Jr. *1 & 2 Corinthians*. 619-20).

II. In all situations, pursue the glory of God (11:7-10)

3. In verses 7-10, what does Paul say man and woman are created for?

III. Our joy and identity are found in community (11:11-16)

4. In the preceding verses, Paul presents a distinction between man and woman. What does Paul say about woman and man in verses 11 & 12?

Reflection: “*On the difference between gender equality and gender sameness:* In matters of gender, equality is arguably one thing; sameness is arguably another. But can this argument become manipulative, to erode away “equality” on one side, or on the other side to compromise “differences”? Mutual respect may be enhanced by an acceptance of difference in the light of God’s way of ordering creation, that is, giving it a structure with boundaries” (Anthony Thiselton, *1 Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 178).

IV. God’s revelation of himself is in the context of community (11:17-34)

5. Why does Paul say, “I do not commend you” (v. 17) regarding the Lord’s Supper? Read verses 17-22.

6. According to verses 23-26, what is the significance of partaking the Lord’s Supper?

7. What is Paul’s instructions in partaking the Lord’s Supper? Read verses 27-34.

Reflection:

- The Lord’s Supper is to focus on the church’s unity in Christ. We must “get right” with our fellow believers before we partake of the Lord’s Supper.
- In the Lord’s Supper we proclaim the gospel and honor Christ and his sacrifice. We should not focus so much on ourselves during the supper, but on Christ and what he has done for all believers and the church. (Richard L. Pratt Jr. *1 & 2 Corinthians*. 671-72)

PRAYER

PRAYER GUIDE October 21-25, 2024 Read 1 Corinthians 11

Monday: 11:1 *“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”* Lord, help me as a believer, Christian leader, parent, employer, employee, or retiree to live each day as a follower of Christ that is worthy of imitation by others in such a way that if they were to imitate me, they would be following Christ.

Tuesday: 11:2-3 *“Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. ³ But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.”* Lord, help us to clearly understand the created order of headship and subordination in the family and the church. Help us to learn from Christ who also submitted to the headship of God the Father.

Wednesday: 11:11 *“Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; ¹² for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.”* Reflect on how God uniquely created man and woman to complement each other and are interdependent. Their roles are different in function and relationships, but not in spirituality or importance.

Thursday: 11:26 *“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”* As we partake the Lord’s table, may we constantly be reminded of our redemption from sin and damnation and the glorious future that awaits us when Christ returns.

Friday: 11:27-29 *“Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.”* To examine oneself in partaking the Lord’s Supper is more than a personal, introspective remembrance. It should lead us to reflect on our relationship to one another as fellow Christians as well as to recall Calvary. Thus, it would involve behaving in a loving and unselfish way toward our fellow Christians, as well as being appreciative of the significance of the Lord’s body and blood.