

1 Corinthians Chapter 11

NKJV Notes by Pastor Bob Caldwell

Head Coverings (Verses 1-16)

v.1 Imitate Me - This verse is the concluding statement of chapter 10. Paul is asking that his example of denying personal freedoms for the sake of relating to as many people as possible be followed. This would also relate to his example of dealing with the common struggles with temptation. (v.12-14)

v.2 I Praise You - Paul takes this opportunity to commend these believers before he addresses the next question that had been sent to him by these people.

Remember Me - Paul affirms his gratefulness in the fact that they had in general looked to him as a reference point in answering issues of doctrine and how those truths should be lived out in their culture.

Traditions - "paradosis" (Gk.) This word refers to that which has been passed along by teaching. There were evidently many areas of doctrine that they had accepted and Paul here hopes to build upon this a proper way to deal with their confusion about the role of women and the Lord's Supper in this chapter.

v.3 The Head - This was a way to ascribe authority of one over another.

Man Is Christ - Paul makes clear that ultimate authority over mankind and specifically the men in the church is Christ. (Matt. 28:18; Phil 2:10-11)

Head of Woman - Here Paul affirms the social order of God giving authority to the man. This does not contradict the equality of woman and men as stated in Galatians 3:28, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" and 1 Peter 3:7, "husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered." It is a difference in roles but not value. That is why it also says in this verse that Jesus who is equal with God (John 1:1-3) in His role as Savior lived in submission to the Father.

Head of Christ - Jesus clearly acknowledged this aspect of His relationship with the Father. (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38) He however also affirmed his equality with the Father in stating, "If you've seen me you've seen the Father," (John 14:9) and claims the name of deity "I Am" (John 8:58)

v.4 Dishonors His Head - In v. 4-7 Paul deals with the cultural message conveyed by the way a woman's head was veiled or unveiled in public. Paul is seeking to apply the same principle to this issue as he had in the eating of meat sacrificed to idols. (10:23-33) What Paul does here is point to the cultural disgrace it would be for a man to appear as a woman in church praying or prophesying.

v.5 Head Uncovered - As Paul sought to do in regards to respecting the culturally issues surrounding meat sacrificed to idols he is now seeking to do in regards to how women appeared in church. Women priestesses would uncover their head when they prophesied or prayed in idol temples as did also women who were considered immoral. Paul is seeking to have women in the Corinthian church not follow their practice since it would identify them either with something that could be misinterpreted.

Were Shaved - This was considered an act of shame and was done to slave women and also women caught in adultery.

v.6 Let Her Be Covered - Paul asks these women to give up what may be allowable as a Christian because their acceptance before God was not based upon outward forms, however, Paul's concern is to not see things done that culturally would convey the wrong message about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

v.7 Glory of God - Both sexes are said in Genesis 1:27 to be the image of God. However, God created man first (Gen.2:7-8) and gave him the authority to rule the earth God had made. After the fall part of the curse saw not only that man would survive on the planet by hard work "sweat of the brow" but that the woman "would be ruled by man." (Gen. 3:14-20)

Glory of Man - This points to the fact that Eve was created from the rib of Adam and is to be a glorious expression of man.

v.8 Woman For the Man - Paul refers to the fact that man was created first and that the woman was called to be a helpmate.

v.9 Woman For Man - This refers to the statement in Genesis 2:20 that conveys the help Eve would provide for Adam. This word for helper used here is often used of God as a way to describe what God also brings to both man and woman.

v.10 Symbol of Authority - The veil a woman wore identified her as in relationship to her father or to her husband.

Because of the Angels - There is much speculation on this verse. The simplest approach seems to be that Paul says that women should wear the symbol of respect to God's order in human society because angels are in fact present in the dimension of the spirit as the believers gather together. Paul believes these angelic beings should see in God's people a respect for God's order that is perfectly lived out in the existence of heavenly beings in heaven.

v.11 However - Before Paul goes any further on this issue he seems to realize he had better dispel any false interpretation of what he said. Paul knew human nature well. He knew some would take this concept and use it as a weapon to treat women with inferiority and disrespect.

In the Lord - The scriptures are clear in teaching the equality of men and women before God in Christ. Thus Galatians 3:28 states that in Christ "There is neither male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." The scriptures teach that God has ordained a different role in life for the male and female which is obvious in our physical makeup, different roles in the birth of a child, etc. but different roles does not mean the woman or man is better or of greater value.

Independent - Paul points out that there is a God given dependency of the two sexes for each other as another example of their equality.

v.12 Through Woman - Paul now gives an example of this inner dependency as seen in the first woman coming from Adam's rib but ever since then all men have come from the womb of a woman.

Judge - Paul believes he has common sense on his side in regards to respecting the cultural issues surrounding the wearing of a veil in public meetings.

v.14 Even Nature - Paul now looks to the perception of cultures around the world that it is a natural occurrence for men and women to appear different from each other.

Long Hair - It has been the standard custom for men to wear shorter hair than women as a way of distinguishing the difference of the sexes.

v.15 A Woman - The hair of a woman is customarily seen as one of the beautiful virtues of woman.

A Covering - Paul sees the long hair worn by women as nature's way of conveying the concept of having a covering, a sign that represents a respect for the different roles of the male and female.

v.16 Be Contentious - Paul closes this issue by addressing those who may still not agree with his position. He informs them that "we" the Jews, and all the churches that he is aware of have the same view in regards to this cultural sign that respects the God given distinctions of the role of men and women in society.

Conduct At The Lord's Supper (Verses 17-22)

v.17 Nor Praise You - Paul moves on to the next issue that had come to his attention in regards to the life of this local church. The way they were conducting communion had become a source of much trouble.

v.18 Divisions - The divisive nature of this church could be seen in many of the issues Paul had addressed.

v.19 Must Also Be - Paul admits that conflicts and divisions will inevitably occur because there will be godly and ungodly people who often attend the same local church.

Who Are Approved - The issues that come up and the way they are reacted to will often reveal who the true believers are and who among the believers has a solid relationship with Christ.

v.20 Not to Eat - What the communion service had become was not anything that God would recognize as a sincere act of worship. What was common in the early church was to begin with what was called a love feast or supper, which was followed by the taking of the bread and cup as Paul describes in v. 21-23.

v.21 Own Supper - Rather than sharing the food that was brought for the love feast each family or each group of friends would eat independently of the others. Thus the rich brought lots of food with wine but did not share it with those who because of poverty had very little food.

Is Drunk - This was not uncommon in the feasts held at the temples in honor of idols. Tragically some of these believers had brought this practice into their Christian life.

v.22 Have Houses - Paul bluntly asks them to keep their selfish and drunken behavior at home and not shame the poor and behave in a way that brings shame upon the entire church family.

Instruction Of The Lord's Supper (Verses 23-26)

v.23 Received From the Lord - Paul, as an apostle, had seen the Lord and had direct encounters with Jesus after his conversion. It was most likely in this way that he received revelation on this issue. (2 Cor. 12:7)

Delivered to You - Paul knows that it is not enough to denounce what is wrong, he must also provide solid teaching to direct them in what is right.

Same Night - Paul reminds them of the total contrast of what was going on the night of Jesus' betrayal and the selfish drunken environment of their "Lord's Supper."

v.24 This is My Body - The bread represented the body of Christ that was given for us upon the cross as a substitute for the death penalty due all who have sinned.

v.25 My Blood - Blood represents the life of a person. That Jesus gave up His life for our life is represented in the cup of wine taken in communion.

Remembrance of Me - The purpose of communion is to worship and honor Jesus Christ as we reflect upon what He has done for us in saving us from the eternal punishment of death and separation from God.

v.26 Proclaim - Communion's purpose is to celebrate what Jesus' death did for us until He returns to complete the results of our salvation when we will rule and reign with Him for a thousand years and inherit the full and complete benefits of our salvation.

Examine Yourself (Verses 27-34)

v.27 Unworthy Manner - This would refer to the practices referred to in v.20-22.

Guilty - Paul sees those who treat the Lord's Supper with irreverence and sin are sharing in the same attitudes of those who brought about the crucifixion of Christ.

v.28 Examine Himself - Every believer should search his own heart to be sure in fact he is a believer, and that his life and behavior is not bringing shame to the name of Christ. (v.22)

v.29 Judgement to Himself - The judgement referred to seems to be that which is described in v.30. Here it refers to those temporal chastenings of God upon His children because of their sin not damnation of the soul in hell.

v.30 Weak and Sick - This refers to physical ailments but may include inner troubles as well that are a result in a disrespect for what Jesus did for us in giving His life for our sins.

Many Sleep - This refers to death. This image is used because of the appearance of a dead body similar to that of a sleeping person. The death of Ananias and Sapphira is an example of this extreme measure of God chastening His people. (Acts 5:1-11) It should be noted however, this does not refer to what some call soul sleep. We are told in 2 Cor. 5:8 and Phil 1:23 that to be absent from the body at death is to be present with the Lord.

v.31 Judge Ourselves - Paul refers here to the wise process of searching our hearts in the light of the Holy Spirit.

Not Be Judged - By the process of allowing for an honest acknowledgment and change in our life in regard to the sin, we will not be judged for those sins of accountability at the believer's judgement seat of Christ. (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor.5:10)

v.32 Chastened By the Lord - The scriptures make it clear that those God loves He disciplines. (Heb. 12:5-10) This is different than punishment because it's end goal is to correct our lives not to be a payment for our sins. Jesus has already paid for our sins on the cross.

With the World - The disciplines of God are used by God to keep us from going back to a sinful world that would result in sharing in it's ordained judgment from God.

v.33 Wait For - Paul advises that they all come at the same time and share together in the meal equally.

v.34 Eat at Home - Paul advises that the purpose of the Lord's Supper is not as feast but as an act of worship. Therefore, if your main motivation is in eating the food, go home. If you go ahead and eat with impure motives and irreverence, Paul warns that you are inviting the disciplines referred to in v. 30-31.

The Rest - Paul realizes that some aspects of this issue as well as others is best dealt with in a face to face discussion.