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1 Corinthians 11
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By Dan Maines

1 Corinthians 11

1 Corinthians 11:1

Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

† Paul sets himself forth as an example only insofar as he imitates Christ.

† The standard is always Christ, never man alone.

1 Corinthians 11:2-3

Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and

hold firmly to the traditions, just as I handed them down to you. But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

† Paul affirms order within God's design, reflecting divine authority.

† This order does not diminish value but establishes responsibility.

† Tertullian (On the Veiling of Virgins 7) reflected on headship and modesty, showing early church application.

1 Corinthians 11:4-6

Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head. But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for it is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved. For if a woman does not cover her head, have her also cut her hair off, but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head.

† The head covering symbolized authority and honor in worship.

† Paul appeals to cultural signs that reflected spiritual truths.

1 Corinthians 11:7-9

For a man should not have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of man. For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man, for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.

† Creation order is Paul's basis for headship, not culture alone.

† Genesis 2 establishes the woman's creation as a helper for man.

1 Corinthians 11:10

Therefore the woman should have a symbol of authority on her

head, because of the angels.

† Angels witness worship, so order and reverence must be upheld.

† Worship reflects cosmic realities beyond the assembly itself.

1 Corinthians 11:11-12

However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman, and all things originate from God.

† Equality and interdependence balance headship.

† Both genders are needed, each dependent on the other under God.

1 Corinthians 11:13-15

Judge for yourselves, is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does even nature itself not teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her as a covering.

† Nature and custom teach differences in appearance between men and women.

† Hair itself is given by God as a natural covering, complementing the practice of veiling.

1 Corinthians 11:16

But if anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor have the churches of God.

† Paul affirms unity of practice across the churches, discouraging strife.

† Worship should not become a matter of contention.

1 Corinthians 11:17-19

Now in giving this instruction I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better, but for the worse. For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you, and in part I believe it. For there also have to be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you.

† Their assemblies had become occasions for division, not edification.

† Even factions reveal who is truly faithful.

† Josephus (Wars 4.147) described similar factions in Jerusalem that revealed hearts under pressure.

1 Corinthians 11:20-22

Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, for when you eat, each one takes his own supper first, and one goes hungry while another gets drunk. What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What am I to say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I do not praise you.

† Selfishness corrupted their observance of the Lord's Supper.

† The poor were shamed, contradicting the gospel of unity.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you, do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

† Paul recounts the Lord's institution of the Supper.

† The elements signify Christ's sacrifice and the new covenant.

† Participation proclaims His death and covenant fulfillment until the end of the old covenant age.

1 Corinthians 11:27-29

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy way, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a person must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For the one who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not properly recognize the body.

† The Supper requires self-examination and reverence.

† To partake unworthily is to despise Christ Himself.

1 Corinthians 11:30-32

For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number are asleep. But if we judged ourselves properly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

† Some Corinthians suffered discipline for their irreverence.

† God's judgment of His people is corrective, not condemning.

1 Corinthians 11:33-34

So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If anyone is hungry, have him eat at home, so that you do not come together for judgment. As to the remaining matters, I will give instructions when I come.

† The Supper must be observed with love, unity, and order.

† Fellowship meals should not overshadow the sacred remembrance of Christ.

How it applies to us today

† 1 Corinthians 11 calls us to honor God's order in worship, respecting His design.

† It warns against selfishness and division in the body.

† The Lord's Supper must be observed with reverence, unity, and discernment.

† Christ's sacrifice remains the foundation of our fellowship and hope.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

Source Index

† Tertullian, On the Veiling of Virgins 7 - headship and modesty

† Josephus, Wars 4.147 - factions in Jerusalem

† Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho 117 - Christ in the Supper

† Clement of Rome, 1 Clement 34 - order and reverence in worship

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