

Verse 11-12: 1 Cor 11:11-12

11 Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. 12 For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.

Paul is saying something profound here, that is that “we need each other.”

1 Cor 11:13

13 Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

“prayer” is the first and most important thing we can do in the presence of God.

14 Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? 15 But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering.

The word “nature” in verse 14 according to the Greek word study dictionary is the constitution and order of God in the natural world.

Nature - instinct or an innate sense of what is normal and right.

Rom 1:26 & 27 Paul describes the deviation of the natural use of the body into that which is against nature, that which is unnatural.

Our natural desire will be for the member of the opposite gender.

So Paul asks the question in verse 14, Does not even nature itself teach you,

- Teach us what?

That a man having long hair is a dishonor to him.

In Corinth:

- men having long hair was a disgrace
- much having short hair was disgraceful.

1 Cor 11:16

16 But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

Paul is saying, don't become legalistic over trivial matters.

There was disorder and division in the church of Corinth.

But one of the things the early church did do that was consistent

- they participated in
- the breaking of bread from house to house.

That meant they'd have meals together,

- After their meal, they'd partake in communion together.

1 Cor 11:17-22

17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. 19 For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. 20 Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. 21 For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

It's interesting that in the two letters Paul wrote or the two that we have,

- he gives more correction than he does praise.

In this section Paul has nothing good to say about their practice of the Lord's supper.

Some of the wealthier,

- when serving food served the better to the guests of greater status.

Those were the few that occupied the triclinium:

- (a couch extending around three sides of a table used for reclining at meals).

The others who were considered of less importance (slaves, the poor) were served in the atrium

- (rectangular patio around which a house is built or the central room of a home).

Pliny the Younger was the first-century Roman governor of Bithynia once complained about how some were treated at the home of a wealthy man:

“I happened to be dining with a man, though no particular friend of his, whose elegant economy, as he called it, seemed to me a sort of stingy extravagance. The best dishes were set in front of himself and a select few, and cheap scraps of food before the rest of the company. He had even put the wine into tiny little flasks, divided into three categories, not with the idea of giving his guests the opportunity of choosing, but to make it impossible for them to refuse what they were given. One lot was intended for himself and for us, another for his lesser friends (all his friends were graded), and the third for his and our freedmen”.

(*Letters* 2.6, quoted by Murphy-O'Connor 1983:159-60)

17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when you come together as a church (when you're meeting in large gatherings), I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.

Earlier in this letter Paul spoke of divisions. (chapters 1 & 3.)

It's hard to imagine a congregation of people meeting and at the end of the day they were worse off than when they arrived.

Acts 2:42

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Acts 2:45

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

Now Paul says that he finds it hard to believe that there are still divisions in the church.

Paul says, in part, I believe it.

Communion was intended to remind the church of the sacrifice that Jesus made for believers, and it was also a way of bringing believers together in unity, not in division. However, there were some serious issues taking place in the church.

Paul in this last section alone mentions the words "come together" 5 times.

In verse 17 he says they "come together" for the worse,

- Verse 18, when they "come together" as a church, there is division
- Verse 20, they "come together" not to eat the Lord's supper
- Verse 33, when they "come together" to wait for others to show up
- Verse 34, he talks about letting people eat at home lest they "come together" for judgement.

So Paul is emphasizing that there were problems in the body when they came together.

He says in verse 19:

19 For there must also be factions (A party or a group that is often contentious or self-seeking: clique) among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.

Jesus said in regard to those causing problems or offenses:

Matt 18:7

Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

Causing offenses against others: it's as if we're setting the trigger on a trap and entrapping animals when the spring is released.

Luke 17:1

Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come!

Don't be the person that is causing problems.

Verse 19b - those who are approved may be recognized among you.

How do we know if someone is approved?

1 John 2:18-19

18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; FOR IF THEY HAD BEEN OF US, THEY WOULD HAVE CONTINUED WITH US; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that NONE OF THEM WERE OF US.

This is how we know those who are approved, they will continue running the race!

Factions in the church are often started by those that are miserable.

We want to be a church that is united, not divided.

We want you to get something

- that you're not getting in the world,
- and that's the love of Jesus.

Divisions and factions can be a cancer in the church.

David and Absalom: Absalom plotted to revolt against the throne.

2 Sam chapters 3, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19

Paul's point is that factions and divisions are really bad.

The Corinthians were more about being served rather than serving.

1 Cor 11:20

Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper.

*Now there was trouble at the Lord's Table.*

The Lord's Supper for the Corinthians had become

- more of a social occasion exposing
- the class differences in the church (11:17-22).

The rich were eating all of the choice foods and they were sending the scraps out to the courtyard to the poor slaves.

Paul immediately established the fact that they were participating in the "love feast" or "agape feast" and in communion but they really weren't practicing the love of the love feast.

21 For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

Sharing meals in a common place had become the norm and partaking of the Lord's supper had become nothing more than a drunken party.

Notice how Paul opens verse 22, What! What are you guys thinking! Do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing?

We represent not only our family, but we represent ourself and the church as well.

Next Paul reminded the Corinthians of the purpose and historical roots of this memorial meal (11:23-26) and showed how to restore it to its intended function (11:27-34).

1 Cor 11:23-26

23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;

1 John 1:5-7 (cross reference)

Paul says that he's delivering to us that which he received. We have that same responsibility and that is to deliver the Lord's message to others.

In these coming few verses Paul is speaking about instituting the Lord's Supper.

In the next section of this chapter we'll see that

- they were taking communion in an unworthy manner.
- We'll see that next week.

For now, Paul is delivering to them what he received of the Lord, nothing more, nothing less.

24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it (the bread) and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

The first time Jesus instituted communion

- he and the disciples were celebrating
- the Passover in the upper room.

The Passover meal was a meal in remembrance of

- the nation of Israel's deliverance
- from the bondage of Egypt.

The only way to avoid judgement of death

- sacrifice a spotless lamb
- cover the doorpost with the lambs blood
- then eat the lamb.

And anything left was to be completely consumed, burned up.

The Lord declared that those covered by the blood of the lamb

- would escape judgement when the angel of death saw the blood on the doorpost

Jesus is the Lamb of God and takes away the sin of the world,

He's the one that delivered Israel from the hand of the Egyptians

- and set them free.

When we partake of the elements

- we look back and remember what He has done.
- We remember for whom He died, and it's for us!

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

The Lord's Supper gives the believer

- a look backward to the Cross
- a look forward to the crown