

1 Corinthians Chapter Eleven: Tearing Down the Body of Christ Brings Judgment

Opening Question: In what way did Paul desire the Corinthians to be imitators of him and how were the examples in this section proof that they were not imitating Paul?

Key Takeaways:

1. The Corinthians were judging Paul and disregarding his apostolic authority.
2. The Corinthians had no regard for the consequences of tearing down the body of Christ.
3. The Corinthians were experiencing the temporal judgment of God for their disregard of authority and for tearing down the body of Christ.
4. Paul desired the Corinthians to follow his example by following the “traditions” (instructions in sound doctrine) that they had been taught by Paul.
5. The “traditions” were to be evaluated based on the sound teaching of the Scriptures.
6. Submission is foundational to the Christian life and submitting to those God has placed in authority is submitting to God.
7. Satan’s enticement from the beginning was to reject God’s authority.

Discussion Questions:

1. Read 1 Corinthians 10-12. How does Paul’s point in chapter 11 fit into his argument in the chapter before and after? Remember everything Paul says is to make one unified point and no verses are to be understood in isolation.
2. Look back through 1 Corinthians 1-12 and discuss specifically how and why the Corinthians were being judged by God?
3. What is Paul’s overarching principle, manifest in specific examples in the Corinthian church, that applies to every believer?

Practical Application:

1. Recognizing that the body of Christ is all believers in all places in all times, read 1 Corinthians 10-12. Reflect on the relationship of members of the body of Christ to the other members and the relationship to the Lord's supper. How does this reality deepen your understanding of the significance of the Lord's supper?
2. Consider the idea of submission to authority by reading the following passages: Luke 2:51; 10:17,20; Romans 8:7, 20; 10:3; 13:1,5,22;5:5. How is God's authority proclaimed throughout these verses? How does this inform your understanding of your own submission?
3. The Corinthians were not being judged by God for judging but for the way that they were judging. In fact, their lack of judgment of the brethren in chapter 5 causes Paul to judge him. Paul explains in chapters 5 and 6 that judgment is a necessary part of life in the body of Christ because we all need correction, but it must be done by God's standards. What is the ultimate role of church discipline? Who benefits? What happens when sound judgment is neglected within the church as it was in Corinth? Read Matthew 18 and identify the correct way to approach church discipline and read Galatians 6:1-5 to recognize the ultimate goal of church discipline.

Closing Prayer:

Father, Help us to be people who consistently build up Your body. Give us wisdom to judge correctly according to Your Word, and hearts that seek the good of others above ourselves. May our attitudes and actions bring glory to You and strengthen Your church. Amen.