

From Attendance to Worship
The Journey to Deep – Part 4
1 Corinthians 11

Well, this week we are in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, which is easily one of the most contentious passages of Scripture in the entire Bible. Paul says things in this chapter that just cause tensions in the room to rise. He says things like, “Man is the head of woman.” (It’s easier to write it in a letter than it is to say from the pulpit. Can I just point that out?) He says things like, “Man was not made for woman, but woman was made for the man.”

But remember, we are on this “Journey to Deep,” and as I said at the beginning of this series, this journey is going to require a lot out of you. Some of the things we’re considering here are things we don’t always talk through; we don’t always think through. So I’m asking you not to come and to sit as an audience but to think of yourselves as students where together we are learning and studying from God’s Word.

Hebrews chapter 5, verses 13 and 14 says, “*...a person who is living on milk isn’t very far along in the Christian life...*”, and “*solid food is for those who are mature...*” (TLB, NLT).

Now if you haven’t been in church for a while, or you aren’t accustomed to studying the Bible in much depth, it may feel a little bit like you’re choking as we’re going through some of this material. That’s okay. Somebody next to you will do the Heimlich maneuver! We’ll keep moving through it. But there is some pretty meaty stuff here. We are chewing on some solid food.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 11 Paul talks about a marker of maturity being *worship*: that you don’t think of yourself as just an *attende*, but you think of yourself as a *worshiper*. This has a lot of potential to deepen us in the faith, but worship is often dismissed as nothing more than just singing some songs in a church building. But what is going to happen is Paul is going to stretch our definition of worship in a way that is going to challenge all of us.

We’re actually going to pick up at the end of chapter 10. Paul is answering different questions that the church wrote him about how they should be living as Christians in their culture. So we have a challenge. We need to appropriately and correctly interpret this passage of Scripture and apply it to where we are living today.

And when you read this New Testament letter and then try to interpret Scripture, you need to first look for a principle. You can write that in your notes. **A principle is “a truth that is *transcultural and universal*.”** In other words, it’s just as true for us today as it was for the church in Corinth 2,000 years ago. There is a principle.

But there is also, often, especially in New Testament letters, an application. **An application is simply “an example of the principle being lived out in the *context of culture.*”** And sometimes the application changes.

So the challenge is to correctly identify the principle, understand what it meant to the readers in the 1st Century, and then correctly apply it to living as Christians today. **So we’re going to look at three different principles of mature worship starting in chapter 10.**

I. PRINCIPLE #1: GLORIFY GOD ALONE.

The first principle is: *Glorify God alone.*

In chapter 10, verse 31, Paul says, *“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”*

Paul gets to the heart of worship. Worship is not about hymns and choruses. It’s much bigger than singing and clapping and raising hands. There is much more to it than that. Worship is truly *who you are*—who you are on the inside. It’s not so much what happens within these walls, but it’s who we are on the outside—outside of these walls. We come together and our lives overflow in worship.

In Isaiah chapter 1 God is confronting some of His people on the worship that they are giving to Him, and He says, “Your worship is making me sick. The songs you are singing make me sick. Your prayers make me want to turn away.” And a few chapters later in Isaiah God reveals why: It’s because *“you honor me with your lips, but your hearts are far from me”* (Isaiah 29:13). Worship is to be a lifestyle.

So Paul writes to the church in Corinth that whatever you do, it is to be an act of worship. Whatever you do, you do it for God’s glory. And if you’re not, with your life, giving glory to God outside of these walls, then when you come to church, you’re not worshipping; you’re just attending.

There is a growth spurt that takes place in the life of a believer when we start to understand that living the Christian life is not something that just happens for one hour a week inside a building with a cross on it. Worship is not just this drawer in the dresser of life; rather, worship is the dresser that all the drawers of life fit into. It’s not a drawer we just open for one hour a week and then shut it again. Many of you grew up with that understanding of faith. You go to church to worship. So, you sit and you listen to a sermon that you don’t really understand and you’re pretty bored but you think, “It’s okay. It’s going to be over soon, and I won’t have to do it again for another week.” And Paul redefines worship and says, “No, it’s who you are all the time. Everything you do is an act of worship.”

So when we come to church we don't come to church to worship; we come worshipping to church. This is a place of worship, but your home is also a place of worship. You start to think of it that way. Your work is a place of worship. The stadium...*the stadium* is a place of worship. The movie theatre is a place of worship. And if you can just start to see...everywhere you go...if you could start to see it as a place of worship, then everything can be done for the glory of God. We saw this a few weeks ago where Paul said, "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit." That means wherever you are, it's church.

So how can you tell if you're a worshipper or if you're just attending? There are a few questions in your notes.

First is the question of worship. **The question of *worship* is, "Who or what is in the position of *glory* in your life?"**

Who are what do you glorify?" Maybe you glorify yourself, or maybe it's your spouse, or maybe it's a hobby, or maybe it's a job, or maybe it's money. Who are what do you glorify?

Now here is how you find that. **Here's the question of *glory*: Who or what do you sacrifice for?**

You show me what you sacrifice for, and I'll show you what you glorify. Some people sacrifice their family for their house because their house is their glory, and that's what you do for your glory: you sacrifice for it. Some people sacrifice their family for their job because their job is their glory, and that's what you do for your glory. Or maybe you sacrifice your marriage for your kids because your kids are your glory. Or you sacrifice your marriage for golf because golf is your glory. Or you sacrifice money and time for some kind of an addiction because that addiction is your glory. That is what we do for glory: We sacrifice for it. So Paul asks the question, "Is God in the position of glory in your life? Are you sacrificing for Him?"

One of the five fundamental beliefs of the Reformation was ***Soli Deo Gloria***, "For the glory of God alone". And this is not a song that we sing for church. It's much more than that. It is a life song. *Soli Deo Gloria* should be your life song—that everything you're doing is for the glory of God.

I read this week that Bach and Handel, whenever they would finish a musical manuscript or a musical composition, they would write *SDG—Soli Deo Gloria*, "To the glory of God alone." *Soli Deo Gloria*—here is what that means in our lives. That means whenever we have to choose between God and something else, God always wins. God always wins.

A while back I was talking to a young couple who were going through some financial struggles, and they had gotten into some credit card debt. As we were talking she confessed, "You know, I just..." and she kind of smiled. She said, "I've just got a shopping problem." And

she went on to talk about how she needs to get it under control and how the internet makes it just so easy. Then she ended it again with the statement, “I’ve just got a shopping problem.” And I said, “You know, you really need to change how you think of this. You don’t have a shopping problem as much as you have a worship problem. Shopping is not your problem. The problem is that you’re sacrificing to the wrong thing. You’re worshipping the wrong thing. You’re sacrificing money. You’re sacrificing your marriage. You’re sacrificing the future of your family on the altar of shopping. You’re giving glory to the wrong thing. What you need to do is say, ‘I’m going to worship God, and so I’m going to sacrifice shopping for God’s glory.’” So it’s *Soli Deo Gloria* even at the shopping mall.

Some of you say, “Well, I’ve got a drinking problem” or “I’ve got a pornography problem.” Not so much. You really have a worship problem. You’ve put the wrong thing in the position of glory in your life. So you’re sacrificing money and time for this addiction, but really you need to sacrifice those things for the glory of God. It’s got to be *Soli Deo Gloria* even in front of the computer.

Some of you, like me, say, “Well, it’s just that I’ve got an eating problem. It’s just this area of my life. I need a little bit more self-discipline.” It’s not so much an eating problem as it is a worship problem. And we need to, when we open the refrigerator, say, “*Soli Deo Gloria*,” “For the glory of God alone.”

You see, the principle here is God gets the glory. The application? Pretty easy. Everything. “Whatever,” Paul says. Whatever you do, you do it for God’s glory. So it’s *Soli deo Gloria* all the time in every way.

God will not share your glory. I was visiting the website of a sister congregation the other day and I was reading through some prayer requests they had posted on their prayer list webpage. And as I looked through them, I realized that every request that was being made to God had the potential to rob Him of His glory. One person was praying for a future spouse—that God would send someone special into their lives. Someone else was praying for a better paying job. Someone else was praying for a house to sell so they could move into a bigger house. A couple was praying that they could get pregnant and have a baby. And all these requests are fine. They’re good. We should go to God with these requests. But you need to ask yourself the question: “Am I asking for these things so that God can be glorified in my life?” You see, God is not going to say “yes” to something that will rob Him of His glory. He is not in the habit of handing out idols.

So you say, “God, here is my request, and if you grant this request, you answer this prayer, I will give you even more glory. I will be sure that this person causes me to give you greater glory.” “If you allow our house to sell and we move into a bigger house, then that house is not going to be used for my glory. That house is going to be used for your glory.” And you start to see everything through this lens of *Soli Deo Gloria*. Everything is an act of worship.

Everything is an opportunity to glorify God. It's not who you are one hour and fifteen minutes a week within this building. It's who you are 24/7.

II. PRINCIPLE #2: SUBMIT TO GOD'S AUTHORITY.

Principle #2 of worship is found in chapter 11. Here it is: Do you *submit* to God's *authority*?

Chapter 11, verses 1-16 are just...this is a pretty uncomfortable passage. If you've read ahead then some of you probably have these knots in your stomach, because you're on the defensive to some of these words that Paul writes. Others of you wish that we'd just kind of skip over this and write the whole thing off as just being this, you know, cultural teaching that doesn't apply to us today. But there are these principles here that we need to understand.

So chapter 11...we're going to look at verse 3. Paul writes, *"Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."*

Did he just say that? Did he just say the head of woman is man? There is some debate on whether or not Paul was married. I'm thinking he never was married because his wife never would've let him say that! "The head of woman is man"?

Now before you label Paul a misogynist pig, I think it is important that we make some observations...besides the obvious...and that is Scripture is inspired by God. It's God-breathed. There are a few observations I want to make.

First, a *philosophical* observation. I want to look at a couple of extremes philosophically and then we'll see how we land as a church.

First, there is the *male chauvinism* philosophy that men are better than women. Women aren't as smart or capable as men. Aristotle popularized this view by teaching that women were morally and mentally inferior to a man and that a woman was somewhere between an animal and a man.

Now, as the husband of a very capable wife and the father of a wonderful daughter, this makes me angry. But imagine how God must feel, for every woman is His daughter. This is one philosophy.

The second philosophy is *radical feminism*. Radical feminism would say women are better than men. With men in charge, the world has been ruined. The only way to fix it is to let women be in charge. Radical feminism.

As a church we mostly fall under a theological view called *complementarianism*. This is really important in understanding gender roles. Complementarianism... Listen. It maintains that men and women are equal. They're equal in value; they're equal in worth. It teaches that men and women are equal image bearers of God. It's not more important or less important. It's equal. But that there are roles that are different. That we were made complementary to one another in how we are to function within the home and within the church.

Secondly, there is a *theological* observation I want to make here, because Paul is using some Trinitarian language to help us understand the complementary roles between a husband and a wife. Just so you know, the words *man* and *woman* could also be translated *man* or *wife* in this passage.

A working definition of the Trinity would be: “The one God exists in three *persons* in one *substance* (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).”

Now here is the important point to make. Here is what Paul is saying. That in the Trinity there is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Are they all equal? Yes, all of them are equally God. They are all one. Father, Son, Holy Spirit—they are all God. They are all part of the Godhead. They're equal. But they have different roles, and we see that in Scripture. And Paul is using this as a way to help us understand the roles of a man and a woman. He explains that God the Father had authority over Jesus. Now this in no way was demeaning or offensive to Jesus. He submitted to the authority of God the Father. Now did that make Him any less God than God the Father? No, they were equal in their Godhead. They were equal in value, equal in worth, but they have a difference in roles.

The Holy Spirit is called “the Helper” and the word is *paraclete*, and that was His role. Now does that make Him less God than God the Father or God the Son? No, they are equal, but they have different roles.

So here is the concept: They are equal in divinity, but they are *complementary* in *responsibilities*.

Paul says this is the way to think of the relationship between a husband and a wife in the home, between a man and a woman within the church. There is equality but there are also complementary roles and responsibilities.

So he kind of gives this flowchart of authority within the home and within the church, and says, “Well, here is God and here is Jesus; and here is the husband and here is the wife.” And Paul says, “The head of a man is Jesus,” and he challenges a husband to understand your authority is Jesus Christ. Husbands, you are not the boss. You're not the king. The Bible does not teach that you are the ruler. No, you answer to someone and it's Jesus Christ.

Husbands, you're not the ultimate authority. You are to be following after Jesus, and as you follow Jesus then you lead like Jesus. And when you lead like Jesus then it makes it so much easier for your wife to follow like Jesus.

You see, I think we've got this passage wrong. The gender that should be most uncomfortable in reading this is not women; it is men. Because, men, you are being called to take the lead. You are being held responsible for your family.

I was rereading this week about the first man and the first woman, Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden. And Eve was the first to take the bite of fruit. It would seem that sin entered the world through Eve. After all, she was the first one to disobey. But that's not what the Bible says. The Bible says in Romans 5 (v. 12) that sin entered the world through one man. Well, wait a second! Eve did it! She did it first. No, the Bible says sin entered the world through one man, Adam. Why? Because Adam is responsible for Eve. He was being held responsible for the spiritual health of his household.

If you look at that passage in Genesis 3, the great sin of man emerges. Here is what it says. It says, *"When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her..."* (Her husband *who was with her.*) *"...and he ate it"* (v. 6).

He's just there. Adam is with her. I've always kind of pictured him doing something else in the Garden and he wasn't there. If you've ever seen it portrayed, that's usually how it is portrayed—just Eve there with the serpent. But that's not what the Bible says. The Bible says Adam was with her...but he doesn't do anything. He just keeps sitting there. That describes a lot of men that I know. Just kind of sittin' there. He doesn't say something. He doesn't do something. He just...he's just with her.

When called and charged with leading their family, this is how many men respond. They just hang out...and they stay late at the office. They take their days off and go play golf. When they get home, they turn on the game or they go work on the car in the garage. When charged with following hard after Jesus and leading intentionally, they just decide just to be there. I'm telling you, the reason most women bristle at these words of Paul is simply that they have never been led by a real man. I could point you to all kinds of women who would say, "Hey, I don't have any problem with this passage." I'll tell you why. Because somewhere along the line they had a dad, or they have a husband that led like Jesus.

And, women, you are being called to be under authority like Jesus. It was good enough for Jesus. Jesus was willing to be submissive to God the Father. And when your husband is trying to follow Jesus and lead his family, I want to just encourage you to be supportive, to make him believe he can do it, to let him know that you're in his corner. It is not a time to be

critical. You hear this message; it's not a time to get in the car and say, "Why can't you lead our family like that?" Nothing will clip the leadership wings of a man more quickly than criticism. Criticism drills a hole in the leadership tank of your husband, and it drives him to passivity.

So Paul says to husbands, "Listen, you lead like Jesus," and to wives, "You follow like Jesus." And the point being made here is that since God the Father and God the Son are united—they're equal but they're different—that husbands and wives are equal but different. It's not better or worse. It's not more important or less important. It's not more valuable or less valuable. It's different.

In verses 8 and 9 he says something else that tends to raise the red flag. He says, *"For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man."*

And, again, that just...women can feel demeaned by it. "What do you mean I was made for man?" Well, when Adam was created God looked around and He said, "Well, there is no suitable helper for him." So he created Eve. Now this is not a position of weakness. It is the recognition of value and worth because she was needed. She was needed. And when you're needed, that is the recognition of value. It is the recognition of worth.

I will be the first to say I *need*...I need my wife. I need my wife. There is no more telling example than when one of us leaves town. Now when I leave town for a few days, I come back, and the house is more organized. Things are more structured. When they were young, the kids would always seem to be calmer. When she leaves town for a few days, it just falls apart. I'm in a fetal position somewhere just waiting for her to come back. There are pizza boxes and McDonald's wrappers all over the kitchen. I don't know how to French braid and when my daughter was little her hair would just be everywhere. I get tense and that made or makes the kids and everyone around me tense. And I'm just like, "Please, honey, come home! I need you!"

So Paul is saying, "Listen, there is equality here, but the roles and responsibilities are different." And in this section, he gives an application. Remember, there is a principle which is universal, transcultural, and the application speaks to how that principle is lived out in the context of culture. So he gives an application.

Look at verse 4. He says, *"Every man who prays or prophesies... (The word prophesy here just simply means "giving a word from the Lord.") ...with his head covered dishonors his head. And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is just as though her head were shaved"* (vv. 4-5).

Okay. We usually just kind of skip over that and we keep reading because it just doesn't make much sense to us. But Paul is saying, "Listen, if you're a leader in this church, women, don't cut your hair off and shave your head like the women in the City of Corinth who are rejecting their femininity and trying to look more masculine. And don't wear your hair all down, but keep it covered because the women who are prostitutes in the temple—that's how they wear their hair. They just wear it all down and it's not covered." It would be like us saying today, "Listen, if you're going to get up and be a leader in the church in some way, then don't wear a miniskirt and a tube top! Don't do that!" There should be a difference in how you look. There should be a difference in how you carry yourself. That's what Paul was saying. You see, Corinth was a sexually perverted city, and modesty was a huge problem—not unlike the world we live in today. So Paul says to the Christian women in Corinth and to Christian women in Cherokee, "Your appearance and the way you dress should separate you from the world that you are living in."

Then he says to men, "Men, don't cover your head." Well, why? Well, because that's what the women do. Don't look like a woman. Don't do that. Be a man. So Paul is calling men and women to submit to God's authority in their roles as husband and wife, as man and woman, and this is an act of worship.

You see, for some of you, some of this teaching is very difficult. It is definitely solid food and you're having a hard time swallowing it. When we only obey God in areas that are agreeable and comfortable, that is not truly submission. Submission is where we say, "God, I am going to put myself under your authority even when it seems counterintuitive. Even when it feels counter-cultural, I am still going to submit to you." And that obedience is an act of worship.

First Samuel 15:22 says, *"Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams."*

So obedience and submission to God's authority is an act of worship.

III. PRINCIPLE #3: HONOR THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS.

Then, quickly, let me share with you one more principle of worship: Worship is honoring the *sacrifice of Jesus*.

Paul confronts these Christians in their approach to Communion. Basically, they would gather together for a meal before Communion. It was kind of a potluck meal, but people were bringing food for themselves and not sharing it. You have some people who are well off bringing steak and lobster, and you have other people who don't have much and they're bringing Ramen noodles; and they're not sharing them with one another. So they come to the

Communion table and there is just a lot of division between the haves and the have not's. Then a lot of people were bringing wine to this potluck meal before Communion and before church, so they're coming to the Lord's Table intoxicated. It basically turned Communion into happy hour. Paul is not okay with this, so he talks to them about how serious the time is as they worship. Look at verse 23:

*For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night 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, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in **remembrance** of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you **proclaim** the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to **examine** himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.*

We see that we honor the sacrifice of Jesus by *remembering* and *proclaiming* His death.

We remember and we proclaim His death. That is what is to happen every week when we gather for Communion. It's that we push pause on everything else that's happening, and we remember the death of Christ. It is, perhaps, the most important part of your entire week—the brief moment when we remember the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Then we honor His sacrifice by *examining* our lives.

Paul warns about taking Communion in verse 27 in "*an unworthy manner.*" He says, "Look, you're bringing judgment on yourself if you're treating lightly the sacrifice of Jesus Christ."

In verse 20 he says (paraphrased), "Some of you are being judged for this. You are weak and you're sick because you're not taking this seriously. You're not repenting of your sins. You're not examining your lives during this time of Communion." And some of you just need to let that communion kit remain unopened (or let that tray pass right on by) if you haven't examined yourself, if you're not remembering and proclaiming the death of Christ.

So Paul calls this church to not just gathering together and attending every week, but to be true worshippers where they give God glory alone; they submit to His authority, and they honor the sacrifice of Jesus.