



TEACH ME
THE BIBLE PODCAST

STUDY GUIDE

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CHAPTER

11

1 CORINTHIANS

Divisions in the Church



1 Corinthians: Chapter 11

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The Story: Understanding the “Big Story” (30 min)

Old Testament: Walk Through the Broad Story (27 min)

Timeline: New Testament Beginnings (35 min)

Letters: Paul’s Writing to the Churches–Part 1 (30 min)

REVIEW

In chapter 11, Paul turns back from his illustration that God has always judged disobedience (chapter 10) to the issue at hand: the divisions in the church of Corinth. They have no regard for authority (this is seen throughout their assembly) and no regard for the body of Christ. Thus, they are rejecting authority and tearing down the body with no regard for the consequences. Thus, they are under the threat of, and in fact are experiencing, the temporal judgment of God.



1 Corinthians: Chapter 11

MONDAY

Listen to the Chapter 11 podcast.

TUESDAY

Traditions – In many protestant churches today, “tradition” has taken on a level of disdain. The word translated “tradition” in 1 Corinthians 11:2 simply means “instructions” or “traditional teachings” as in something that has been taught for a long time. In the New Testament there are clearly wrong “traditions” or things that had been taught for a long time that the believer was to reject (e.g., Matt. 15:2, 3, 6; Mark 7:3, 5, 8, 9, 13; Gal. 1:14; Col 2:8). However, there were also traditions that the believers were exhorted to follow (e.g., 1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6). There is nothing inherently good or evil in a tradition. Instead, each “traditional teaching” must always be evaluated to see if it is in accordance with the teachings of Scripture. However, if one does not know “sound teaching” then how can one evaluate a “traditional teaching?” Our desire here at TMTB is to equip you so that you know what is “sound doctrine.”

Take another look at Matthew 15:2, 3, and 6; Mark 7:3, 5, 8, 9, and 13; Galatians 1:14; and Colossians 2:8. Can “traditions” be destructive? If so, what are some things that you identify in these passages that are common throughout?

Now, look at 1 Corinthians 11:2 and 2 Thessalonians 2:15 and 3:6. Can “traditions” not only be constructive but even commanded? In reading these three verses, what are some things that you recognize as necessary to understand the difference between “destructive” and “constructive” traditions? In other words, what does one need to know to determine the difference?

WEDNESDAY

At the core of the Serpent’s enticement back in Genesis 3 is the rejection of God’s order and authority. As God, He is the sole determiner of order and authority. And in the end, all who contradict His revealed order and authority will be judged. However, at the core of our rebellion is a rejection of His declared order and His authority to proclaim it so. “You’re not the boss of me” is not a sentence that has to be taught to a toddler. That rebellion is in their hearts. They were born with it. They inherited it from Adam. In 1 Corinthians 11:3 Paul states, *“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.”* The concept that Paul introduces here is one that he will return to in chapters 14, 15, and 16. The concept is “submission.” It is a concept that we all struggle with and rebel against because deep in our hearts is the rebellion that “you aren’t the boss of me.” Thus, “being subject to” is a foundational part of the life of the believer. When we submit to those that God has put in authority, we submit to His authority. The opposite is also true!



1 Corinthians: Chapter 11

Look up the following passages and make a list of the things that are “in submission to other things”: Luke 2:51; 10:17, 20; Romans 8:7, 20; 10:3; 13:1, 5; 1 Corinthians 14:32, 34; 15:27, 28; 16:16; Ephesians 1:22; 5:21, 24; Philippians 3:21; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5, 9; 3:1; James 4:7; 1 Peter 2:13, 18; 3:1, 5, 22; 5:5. Now, do you see God’s order and authority proclaimed throughout? Are we free to choose and pick which one’s we would like to follow?

THURSDAY

The Lord’s supper is a “tradition” that is not very well understood. Paul’s point throughout this letter to the Corinthians is that they are all members of one body. In fact, that point is going to be made explicitly by Paul in the next chapter, chapter 12. While several points could be correctly emphasized in reference to the Lord’s supper, one specific point is being made by Paul in this passage. The Lord’s supper, among other things, is a physical representation of Christ’s literal body and blood which was given for the church. Remember, the church is Christ’s body, a temple. In chapter 3:16-17 Paul states, *“Do you all not know that you all are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you all? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you all are.”* Remember back in our discussion in chapter 3 it was pointed out that all of the “you’s” in Paul’s letter are plural. The problem is that there are divisions in the body and there shouldn’t be. Moreover, God judges those who are dividing and tearing down the body of Christ. But, we’ll leave that discussion for tomorrow. For today, just be reminded that part of the Lord’s supper is the celebration of our unity in the body of Christ. The love for the brethren is the love for Christ’s body. It is the love for Christ Himself.

Read chapters 10-12 of 1 Corinthians again and reflect on the relationship of the members of the body of Christ to its other members and that relationship to the Lord’s supper. How does this reality deepen your understanding and significance of the Lord’s supper?

FRIDAY

As stated yesterday (go back and read yesterday’s devotional if you missed it), God judges those who are dividing and tearing down the body of Christ. However, as Paul explained through chapters 5 and 6, sound judgment of the body of Christ is to begin within the body of Christ. Thus, church discipline is not a bad thing, but a very constructive part of the ministry within the church. All of us need correction. All of us need exhortation. However, if sound judgment is neglected within the church (as was the case in the Corinthian church), then God judges. It is for this reason that Paul explains, *“For this reason many among you all are weak and sick, and a number sleep. But if we judged ourselves rightly, 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.”*

Read Matthew 18 and keep in mind that the passage is about church discipline. What is always the goal of church discipline? Who benefits? (Are you sure, think through that last question carefully...maybe even read Galatians 6:1-5). So, how valuable is church discipline to the body of Christ? And, what is the correct procedure to follow that is spelled out in Matthew 18?