

# 1 Corinthians

CHAPTER 7:25-11:16

Companion Bible Study



St. John's  
Vancouver



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# Study 13



## 1 Corinthians 7:25-40

In addressing yet another concern of the Corinthian church, Paul continues to apply the principle of 'remain as you are' but now in the context of those who are betrothed. As is culturally appropriate for the time, Paul is addressing men since they are the ones who make the primary decisions in these matters, but alternates instructions to both male and female.

Paul notes that his comments advising against marriage are not from the Lord but his own opinion. He sets out his reasons but equally states that getting married is not a sin. His focus on serving the Lord without distraction is behind his opinion.

## 1 Corinthians 7:25–40

**1 Cor. 7:25** Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgement as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy. **26** I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. **27** Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. **28** But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. **29** This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, **30** and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, **31** and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

**32** I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. **33** But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, **34** and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. **35** I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

**36** If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. **37** If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. **38** So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better.

**39** A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

**40** Yet in my judgement she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

### Notes:

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## STEP 1: What Does It Say?

**A** Pray

**B** Look Closely

This step is for marking the text and looking at the words and phrases for any:

- Repetitions and contrasts
- Commands and promises
- Connecting words:  
*for, therefore, but, so that*

**C** Look Structurally

This step is for looking at the whole passage and how the ideas are grouped together. Ask:

- What is the flow of thought?
- Give each group a heading
- What does this tell you about the authors' emphasis?

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**D** A Few Questions to Consider

1. Who is Paul specifically addressing in this passage?
2. How does this section link with 7:1-24? What similar misunderstanding is Paul correcting?

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## STEP 2: What Does It Mean?

### **A** Look at the Context

This step is for linking your observations together to get at the purpose(s) of the passage.

- Read the passage before and after. How do they impact the meaning of the immediate text?
- Are there themes from the whole book or letter that are in your passage? What do they add to the message of the whole book?
- Are there OT or NT passages to be looked up?
- Big bible themes?
- What do you think the original intention of the passage was?

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### **B** A Few Questions to Consider

1. Multiple times Paul notes that in choosing marriage, they have not sinned. Why is this important for the Corinthians to hear?
2. What is Paul's main concern for the Corinthians? Why is this important?

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### **C** Stop to Pray

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### STEP 3: What Does It Reveal?

**A**

This step is for considering the timeless truths of the passage in light of the gospel. Here are some questions you could ask:

- What does it reveal about God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
- What aspects of the gospel are we being reminded of?
- What is revealed about our sin? The world?

**B**

#### A Few Questions to Consider

1. How does 7:29-31 help to clarify Paul's statement in 7:35?
2. Paul promotes freedom in this passage, but not at any cost. How does Paul make this point in 7:39-40?

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**C**

What's the Main Idea?

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## STEP 4: What Does It Mean for Me?

A

**This step is for responding in faith. Here are some questions to ask:**

- How are these revealed truths going to change the way I live?
- Is there a sin to confess?
- A promise to claim?
- An example to follow?
- A command to obey or knowledge to embrace?

B

**A Few Questions to Consider**

1. What areas in my life compete for my attention and keep me from being focused on the Lord?

2. Our personal circumstances differ from each other. Despite this, how can we encourage one another to remain faithful to our calling in Christ?

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# Study Notes

## 1 Corinthians 7:26

There is some disagreement amongst scholars as to what Paul is referring to, such as a famine, persecution or some other unnamed distress. It is agreed, however, that it is not an apocalyptic reference.

## 1 Corinthians 7:29–31

These verses may seem unfeeling on Paul's part but this is not the case. Paul is appealing to perspective, that believers should not be unduly preoccupied with their earthly circumstances. The use of the terms 'the appointed time has grown very short' and 'for the present form of this world is passing away' points to Paul's understanding that life is temporary and not that Christ's return is imminent.

## 1 Corinthians 7:38

Paul is clearly against asceticism (a severe form of self discipline for religious purposes) and he is a cheerleader for those who are single. Both the married and the unmarried person are to be encouraged positively.

## 1 Corinthians 7:39

The Greek phrase for 'only in the Lord' is short and does not say she must marry a Christian. However, in light of the context and Paul's concern that marriage can be difficult, even between Christians, why would a widow marry someone unsympathetic to her faith and thereby make life harder? If she is giving her undivided attention to the Lord, marrying a non believer would be unthinkable.

# Study 14

## 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

'Now concerning' brings us to a new topic raised in this letter, but a topic that may have been part of an ongoing conversation; food sacrificed to idols. In a society where it was the social norm to eat meals in a temple or a location associated with idols, not attending would mean to cut oneself off from their social circles. These social occasions would have included various festivals or personal celebrations, all of which included making sacrifices to idols. Additionally, meat sold in the markets would have come from a surplus of offerings that the priests were simply unable to consume. Paul addresses how this reality connects with our freedom in Christ and how we are to love one another.

## 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

**1 Cor. 8:1** Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up. **2** If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. **3** But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

**4** Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.”

**5** For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”— **6** yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. **7** However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. **8** Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. **9** But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. **10** For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? **11** And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. **12** Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. **13** Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

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**D** A Few Questions to Consider

1. In 8:1, Paul appears to refer to a previous conversation with the Corinthians about knowledge. What point does he make about knowledge and how does he contrast this with love?
2. What is the most important revelation made about love in these opening verses? Why does this matter?

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## STEP 2: What Does It Mean?

A

### Look at the Context

This step is for linking your observations together to get at the purpose(s) of the passage.

- Read the passage before and after. How do they impact the meaning of the immediate text?
- Are there themes from the whole book or letter that are in your passage? What do they add to the message of the whole book?
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- Big bible themes?
- What do you think the original intention of the passage was?

B

### A Few Questions to Consider

1. In 8:4-6 Paul affirms the theological principle that guides the 'knowledgeable' Corinthian. What is it?
2. How has this principle been misapplied?

C

### Stop to Pray



## STEP 3: What Does It Reveal?

A

This step is for considering the timeless truths of the passage in light of the gospel. Here are some questions you could ask:

- What does it reveal about God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
- What aspects of the gospel are we being reminded of?
- What is revealed about our sin? The world?

B

**A Few Questions to Consider**

- What is the risk to both the believer and to their brother or sister in Christ of applying 'knowledge' without love? How serious does Paul say that this is?
- How does Paul's statement in 8:13 drive home the importance of the opening three verses?

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C

**What's the Main Idea?**

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## STEP 4: What Does It Mean for Me?

A

**This step is for responding in faith. Here are some questions to ask:**

- How are these revealed truths going to change the way I live?
- Is there a sin to confess?
- A promise to claim?
- An example to follow?
- A command to obey or knowledge to embrace?

B

**A Few Questions to Consider**

1. How does this passage challenge me to keep the great commandment? (Matthew 22:37-39) Why can it sometimes feel more difficult to 'love your neighbor as yourself' than to love God?
2. How willing are we to stop doing something we consider to be a non-issue for the sake of another Christian's conscience?



# Study Notes

## 1 Corinthians 8:3

The very idea of salvation comes from God and he initiates it. Therefore what matters is not our knowledge of God but his knowledge of us. In sum, this knowledge “draws sharp boundaries that set them apart from worshipers of false gods. Those who love God and are known by God may not dally in the shrines of other gods.” (*1 Corinthians*, David Garland, pp. 370-71)

## 1 Corinthians 8:4-6

“The knowledge that ‘an idol is nothing in the world’ probably provided a theological justification for some Corinthians to think that they could attend feasts in idol temples with impunity.” This knowledge is over simplistic. Paul, “while sharing the rational view that idolatry is ‘nothing,’ thinks it inconceivable for someone who is a member of the body of Christ... to participate in their cult and thus communicate with demons.” (D. Garland, 373). See 10:18-22.

# Study 15



## 1 Corinthians 9:1-23

Chapter 9 sounds at first like an abrupt change from chapter 8 where Paul was talking about food sacrificed to idols. Like a skilled debater he begins by making a strong argument on behalf of himself. First he establishes the fact that he is a true apostle and then goes on to make an airtight case for his rights. But his argument takes a turn at verse 12 (“Nevertheless”) and we realize that he hasn’t been advocating for himself after all. He’s using himself as an example of how the gospel transforms our lives.



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**D** A Few Questions to Consider

1. Notice the number of times Paul uses the word "I". Why is Paul putting the focus on himself? What evidence does he give for his apostleship?

2. The word "right" appears multiple times. Why does Paul go to such lengths to establish his rights? How does his direction change when he says 'nevertheless' in verse 12?

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**B**

### A Few Questions to Consider

1. Why has Paul laid down his right to receive financial support for the sake of the Corinthians? How might accepting financial support have been an “obstacle”?
2. The Corinthians have a real attachment to their “freedom.” Paul explains that though he is free, he has become a servant to all. How does he do this and why?

**C**

### Stop to Pray



### STEP 3: What Does It Reveal?

A

**This step is for considering the timeless truths of the passage in light of the gospel. Here are some questions you could ask:**

- What does it reveal about God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
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- What is revealed about our sin? The world?

B

**A Few Questions to Consider**

1. Paul says he would rather die than give up his “boast” of not accepting support. Why is this so important to him?
2. What are the blessings of the gospel we share as believers?

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C

**What’s the Main Idea?**

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**A**

**This step is for responding in faith. Here are some questions to ask:**

- How are these revealed truths going to change the way I live?
- Is there a sin to confess?
- A promise to claim?
- An example to follow?
- A command to obey or knowledge to embrace?

**B**

**A Few Questions to Consider**

1. Are we passionate to “win” others to Christ? How can we become “all things to all people” in order to win them for Christ?
2. How does it affect the Body of Christ when we hold on to our rights? What happens when we lay them down for each other?



# Study Notes

## 1 Corinthians 9:12

In Corinth monetary support contributed to a leader's public prestige and status. In our culture we tend to approve of people who refuse compensation but to the Corinthians it would have been seen as a sign of weakness.

## 1 Corinthians 9:16

Paul's "woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" recalls Acts 9:15 when the Lord laid claim to him as "my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel," a calling He reinforced while Paul was in Corinth (Acts 18:9-10).

## 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

In these verses Paul describes himself as being neither "under the law" nor "outside the law" but "under the law of Christ." Given the context, the "law of Christ" probably means living according to the pattern of Christ, the One who identified with us and gave up his life for us in love. (For more see 1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 2:5-8, Galatians 6:2, Mark 10:43-45)

# Study 16



## 1 Corinthians 9:24-10:22

Paul describes his life of self-control and perseverance by comparing it to athletes. Like them he disciplines himself with the goal of receiving the prize and not being disqualified. He goes on to illustrate the possibility of being disqualified in spite of great blessing from the Lord by recounting Israel's failure in the wilderness. He then hits hard on the reasons the Corinthians should flee any association with idolatry.



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**D** A Few Questions to Consider

1. How were the Israelites blessed by the Lord? What were their failures? What were the consequences?
2. Note the repeated word, "participation." Where do those participations happen and how?

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## STEP 2: What Does It Mean?

**A**

### **Look at the Context**

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- Are there themes from the whole book or letter that are in your passage? What do they add to the message of the whole book?
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**B**

### **A Few Questions to Consider**

1. What connections did Paul make between the Corinthians and the Old Testament Scriptures? How are they (and we) meant to read them?
2. Compare and contrast the meals Paul mentions. What's the same and what's different? Why are they mutually exclusive?

**C**

### **Stop to Pray**



## STEP 3: What Does It Reveal?

**A**

**This step is for considering the timeless truths of the passage in light of the gospel. Here are some questions you could ask:**

- What does it reveal about God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
- What aspects of the gospel are we being reminded of?
- What is revealed about our sin? The world?

**B**

### **A Few Questions to Consider**

1. What part does the fear of the Lord have in Paul's warning and in our lives? How should we understand his jealousy?
2. Paul says that the Corinthians (and we) are those "upon whom the end of the ages has come." What is the significance of that? What is our prize?

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**C**

**What's the Main Idea?**

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# Study Notes

## 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Paul's use of athletic examples would resonate with the Corinthians. Athletes throughout Greece converged in Corinth to compete in the Isthmian Games every two years and winning was one of the highest honors in their culture.

## 1 Corinthians 10:1-2

God parted "the sea" to allow Israel to escape slavery in Egypt and begin the journey to the land of promise. "The cloud" traveled with them as a sign of his presence and protection (Exodus 13:17-14:30). The Cloud and the Sea were both acts of God's redemption which Paul says "baptized" the people "into Moses." He probably means that these experiences united them to Moses as the one God chose to be the instrument of their redemption (Exodus 3:1-12, Acts 7:35, 36).

## 1 Corinthians 10:3

The Lord provided food (manna) for the Israelites to eat and water from a rock for them to drink (Exodus 16:13-18, 17:6). It was "spiritual" in the sense that it was miraculous and spoke of God's power and presence.

## 1 Corinthians 10:4

When Paul says the rock traveled with them he probably means the Lord himself went with them and continued to provide them with water. When he says "that Rock was Christ," it gives us a clue to how to read the scriptures as those "upon whom the end of the ages has come". All through the history of God's people Christ was both present and previewed in ways we can now understand more fully in light of his ultimate redemptive work.

## 1 Corinthians 10:7-10

References to Israel's failures in the wilderness can be found throughout the scriptures. Their idolatry is recounted in Exodus 32:1-6, their sexual immorality in Numbers 25:1-9, putting the Lord (Christ) to the test in Numbers 21:5,6 and grumbling against the Lord in Numbers 14:2, 36; 17:10. For a heart-rending poetic account read psalm 78.

## 1 Corinthians 10:13

Paul is countering the sense of "specialness" in the Corinthians church when he says the temptations they are facing are "common to man." They are facing the same temptations Israel faced in the wilderness; the same temptations faced by humanity in general.

## 1 Corinthians 10:20

Paul is clear that idols do not exist but demons do and that participating in pagan sacrifices places the Corinthians in partnership with Satan's hostility to the Lord and his purposes.

## 1 Corinthians 10:22

We tend to think of jealousy as a petty vice but the Lord's jealousy is holy and pure. He is abounding in steadfast love for his covenant people and in response he expects them to be faithful and exclusive in their love for him. Idolatry is the ultimate betrayal of that covenant love.

# Study 17



## 1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1

In the ongoing discussion over eating food sacrificed to idols, Paul seeks to realign Corinthian priorities. Divisiveness this time relates to meat from food markets and eating habits in private homes, especially among unbelievers. Paul continues in his application of principles from earlier chapters as he identifies the real issue: “Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor” (1 Corinthians 10:24). He ends this section and challenges the Corinthians, and readers today, to do all to the glory of God, imitating Christ, so that many may be saved.



# STEP 1: What Does It Say?

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**D** A Few Questions to Consider

1. Why is Paul contrasting "lawful" with "helpful" and "building up?" How do we reconcile 10:23 with 10:29-30?
2. The word "conscience" is repeated throughout - what does it mean here? Whose consciences are involved?

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## STEP 4: What Does It Mean for Me?

**A**

**This step is for responding in faith. Here some questions to ask:**

- How are these revealed truths going to change the way I live?
- Is there a sin to confess?
- A promise to claim?
- An example to follow?
- A command to obey or knowledge to embrace?

**B**

**A Few Questions to Consider**

1. What is like “eating meat sacrificed to idols” in our present context, particularly as it relates to being among unbelievers? How does “doing all to the glory of God” inform how to navigate these situations?
2. It is challenging to imagine trying to please everyone in everything we do (10:33). How might this be unhealthy? How does imitating Christ correct this?



# Study Notes

## 1 Corinthians 10:23

Look back at chapter 6 and notice Paul once again returning to the theme of what is “lawful” as opposed to what is helpful. In this chapter, it was in the context of sexual immorality.

## 1 Corinthians 10:25-29

The word “conscience” is repeated several times, pointing us to an inner compass of right or wrong (see Romans 2), a sense of conviction, and self-awareness of “moral confidence.” It is connected to the idea of having confidence in Christ over the association with idolatry.

## 1 Corinthians 10:25

Earlier, Paul is more explicit when the eating of food occurs in the setting of pagan temples and religious rites, it is less clear in meat markets or in someone’s home. The point is, there would be no connection, unless brought up by others, between being a follower of Christ and the associations of food sacrificed to idols.

# Study 18



## 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

The theme of the Corinthians' new-found freedoms in Christ continues in this section. Paul is addressing or explaining how, in the context of public worship, these 'freedoms' are being misapplied and result in behavior that dishonors one another and directs focus away from giving glory to God. The specific issue in this high context culture\* involves head coverings and/or hairstyles of men and women and how their appearance sends a powerful message, resulting either in shame or honor. Care and caution are required as readers work through this passage and seek to understand its implications today.

*\*A high context culture is a culture that communicate in ways that are implicit and rely heavily on context.*

## 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

**1 Cor. 11:2** Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. **3** But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. **4** Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, **5** but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. **6** For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. **7** For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. **8** For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. **9** Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. **10** That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. **11** Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; **12** for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. **13** Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? **14** Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, **15** but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. **16** If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.

## Notes:

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# STEP 1: What Does It Say?

**A** Pray

**B** Look Closely

This step is for marking the text and looking at the words and phrases for any:

- Repetitions and contrasts
- Commands and promises
- Connecting words:  
*for, therefore, but, so that*

**C** Look Structurally

This step is for looking at the whole passage and how the ideas are grouped together. Ask:

- What is the flow of thought?
- Give each group a heading
- What does this tell you about the authors' emphasis?

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**D** A Few Questions to Consider

1. What connection is Paul making between actual "heads" and relational "heads" in these verses? That is, how does what we do with one affect the other?
2. In one sentence, how would you state the main issue being faced? What verses point you to this conclusion?

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## STEP 2: What Does It Mean?

A

### Look at the Context

This step is for linking your observations together to get at the purpose(s) of the passage.

- Read the passage before and after. How do they impact the meaning of the immediate text?
- Are there themes from the whole book or letter that are in your passage? What do they add to the message of the whole book?
- Are there OT or NT passages to be looked up?
- Big bible themes?
- What do you think the original intention of the passage was?

B

### A Few Questions to Consider

1. List the different expectations Paul has for men and women in this passage? What are the shared expectations?
2. How does the "Nevertheless" in 11:11-12 shape our understanding of the whole passage?

C

### Stop to Pray



## STEP 3: What Does It Reveal?

**A**

**This step is for considering the timeless truths of the passage in light of the gospel. Here are some questions you could ask:**

- What does it reveal about God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
- What aspects of the gospel are we being reminded of?
- What is revealed about our sin? The world?

**B**

**A Few Questions to Consider**

1. Note that Paul uses a framework for what is “proper” in worship (11:13), leading to dishonor/disgrace or honor/glory. Why is this significant?

2. How does the setting — public worship — shed light on the emphasis in this passage? What should be the priority of Corinthian men and women?

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**C**

**What’s the Main Idea?**

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# Study Notes

## 1 Corinthians 11:2

It would be more accurate to say, "I give you full credit for..." but Paul is not actually praising the Corinthians. "The traditions" likely refer primarily to the whole body of Paul's teaching, most importantly God's Word.

## 1 Corinthians 11:3 – "Head"

Here Paul is establishing the premise that everyone has a head and what individuals do with their physical heads in worship, reflects negatively or positively on their metaphorical head. This is not a theology of gender but a correction of practice in worship that would tarnish the church's reputation. Further, "head" denotes one who is preeminent and although it may result in authority or leadership it is not linked to obedience or submission. Our case in point is Christ's relationship with God as his "head" (Garland). Further comment can be found in the note on chapter 11:11-12.

## 1 Corinthians 11:3

The Greek words for "men" and "women" used in this passage can also mean "husband" and "wife," depending on context. To translate "woman" as "wife" in this section would leave us questioning if unmarried women are to keep their heads uncovered in worship. Given the context, the answer is no.

## 1 Corinthians 11:4-9

**Cultural context:** At this point in its history, Corinth is heavily influenced by Roman culture and societal norms and it was Roman pagan practice for men to pull their toga up over their heads during pagan acts of worship. Although not the concern for Paul in this section, it goes without saying that the image of a man worshiping Christ with his head covered would be shameful. In turn, culturally speaking, respectable women covered their heads in public and during public acts of worship, but not privately in the home. A publicly uncovered head would suggest a sense of sexual promiscuity or sexual looseness. A shaved head would indicate public shaming for disgraceful behavior.

### **Theological significance: *in the image of...***

Paul is not saying that only man is created in the image of God. In the context of Genesis 1, man as male first comes on to the scene and manifests the image of God. This is then extended in Genesis 2 by the creation of woman out of man. Woman is both 'other' than man as male and yet equally reflects or manifests what man is. (Thistleton 2000) So, as man is the reflected glory of God, so the woman is the reflected glory of man. Therefore, by wearing a covering in public worship, the woman 'cloaks' man's 'glory' which in turn directs worshipers to focus on the glory of God alone.

The issue Paul is correcting here is the behavior of women during public acts of worship. It appears that due to their new found freedom in Christ, some women might have considered it unnecessary to cover their heads during worship especially as this would have taken place in a private home. However, in light of the honor/shame culture, it remains important for women to wear a covering so as not to cause shame to her metaphorical 'head.' Men equally are not to bring shame on their metaphorical 'head' by covering their physical 'head'.

### **1 Corinthians 11:5**

Paul envisions that both men and women pray and prophesy during public gatherings for worship. This is supported in the parallel comment about men in verse 4. Further, if it were not public then head coverings would not be an issue.

### **1 Corinthians 11:10 - "...because of the angels."**

Despite much debate this most likely points to the importance of appropriate decorum during worship with angels acting as observers or guardians of reverent worship.

### **1 Corinthians 11:11-12**

Paul offers a caveat to the seeming emphasis on women's secondary place in creation. Man and woman cannot exist without the other; there is mutual interdependence. True human relationality means respecting the other person - yet God orders the world.

### **1 Corinthians 11:14-15**

These verses are not focusing on hair but on the issue of gender differentiation and its expression through cultural codes such as hair or dress. Cultural codes depend on shared conventions and social norms therefore, "nature itself" here most likely means, "what is custom." Note here that there is no reference for this behavior being, in and of itself, sinful. Our context again shows Paul's focus: contentious behaviors in the church.

Be imitators  
of me, as I  
am of Christ.

*1 Corinthians 11:1*



