

## A9 BIBLE STUDY: I CORINTHIANS #10

*Scripture of Lesson: I Corinthians 11: 1~34*

### 1. On order between men and women: v. 1-16

Apostle Paul explains the order or hierarchy between men and women, between men and Christ and between Christ and God. In verse 3 he states that *“the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.”* In Hebrews 5:8 we read about this relationship between Christ and God.

*Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.*

Christ is the Son of God who subjected Himself to the will of the Father through obedience. So we see clearly the example of Christ. From this example every man should learn to be obedient to the teachings of Christ so that Christ becomes the head, the king and the Lord. Although non-uniformed men do not wear hats, Christian men should make it plain to everyone around them that Christ is their king and Lord.

What about the hierarchy between man and woman? Paul states clearly that *“the head of the woman is the man.”* Paul exhorts all wives to be submissive to their husbands as to the Lord in Ephesians 5: 22-23;

*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.*

Contemporary western values have departed from this traditional Christian family value system. However, we are reminded that this order of family life has not changed as far as God is concerned. Paul clarifies the theological reason why women are subject to men in his letter to Timothy;

*Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control. [I Timothy 2: 11-15]*

Paul, however, valued the ministry of female evangelical workers and was appreciative of their labor. Women labored alongside of male ministers in God’s ministry from the first century. They play a huge role in a church life, as Sunday school teachers, day care workers, care givers, service providers and helpers of the ministry in general, although some denominations allow women to be ministers.

*And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life. [Philippians 4:3]*

Paul’s direction that Christian women wear either long hair or covering, such as hats, as a symbol of their subjection to men. That explains the western cultural tradition of ladies’ hats and the Catholic women’s veil over their heads during a mass.

*Discussion topic:*

*a. Most churches do not require believing women to wear long hair or hats in church services. What are your thoughts on this cultural change?*

*b. Discuss the women’s liberation movement and apostle Paul’s stance on men over women.*

### 2. Lord’s Supper [Communion]: v. 17-34

In verses 20-22 Paul reprimands Corinthian Christians about the way some of them are creating divisions and causing discord because of the way they eat the Lord’s Supper. In the early first century churches it was a custom for Christians to eat a meal together on Sundays, either before the worship service or afterwards. And the supper was of ‘pot luck’ style so that each came bringing some dishes from their homes. Apparently some believers who were well-to-do people came early and ate the supper among themselves before the poor believers arrive, thus ‘shaming them that

have not.' [v. 22] This type of discriminatory and divisive behavior was harmful to the harmony of the church. Therefore, apostle Paul exhorts them to correct this undesirable behavior.

In verse 23 Paul reminds the Corinthian Christians that the instruction on the Lord's Supper/ Communion, which he had delivered to them when he had been with them in Corinth, came directly from the Lord. And he repeats the words of the Lord when He instituted the Lord's Supper as recorded in Matt 26, Mark 14 and Luke 22.

*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; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 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." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. [v. 23-26]*

Verse 26 tells us the time-limitedness of the Lord's Supper as until the Lord's second coming. We are reminded that this is an ordinance of the Lord to perform as a remembrance of His death for our sins. The ceremony is not just eating bread and drinking wine as a meal. It is a solemn ceremony where we meditate on the great sacrifice the Son of God made on our behalf. His body was broken so much through beating, flogging, wearing a crown of thorns, carrying the cross to Calvary, being nailed to the cross with nails driven on hands and feet, and being pierced on the side with a spear.

When a meal is ground to make a loaf of bread, the original shape of the grains is gone. Likewise, Jesus' body was so much broken that no trace of the Son of God could be identified in His body. "This is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." And the wine in a cup represents the blood that was shed on the cross as propitiation of our sins. Therefore, it is the new covenant -- that God will not remember our sins any more because of this once for all sacrificial blood of His Son shed on the cross. And He had to do it once for all;

*For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. [Hebrews 7: 26-27]*

Apostle Paul exhorts the Christians to examine themselves before taking part in the Communion.

*Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. [v. 27-29]*

What does it mean to eat and drink in an 'unworthy manner'? What makes us unworthy of taking part in the communion? Two possible conditions could be considered as unworthy:

First, when a believer takes part in the communion without believing the efficacy of the Lord's death and His shed blood for his salvation, this person would be taking part in it in an unworthy manner. God does not extend salvation to unbelievers. Rev 21: 8 includes the 'unbelieving' to be thrown into the hell fire on the Day of Judgment.

Second, a dishonest and lying soul must not take part in the Lord's communion. When a person is not willing to follow Christ but desires to be a part of the church for personal gain or other ulterior motives, he/she is polluting the fellowship and dishonoring the Lord's sacrifice.

Therefore, each one taking part in the communion must examine one's heart and motives, repent of sins and wrongful motives and be renewed prior to taking part in the communion. Taking part in the communion is both a personal and public act to acknowledge his/her faith in the saving power of the Lord's sacrifice and his/her solemn commitment to live for Christ only.

*Discussion Topics:*

*a. Do you examine yourself before taking part in the Lord's communion?*

*b. Have you ever been guilty of taking part in the communion in an unworthy manner?*