

LESSON 17: 1 CORINTHIANS 10:23-11:34

All For the Glory of God (cont'd)

1. What principles should guide your behavior as a Christian (vv. 23-33)? Why may your actions, but not your conscience, be subject to another's conscience?
2. Compare verse 33 with 9:22. What does Paul mean when he writes, "even as I try to please everybody in every way?" Can you really please everyone in everything?

When You Gather Together...

1. The word "head" can mean either "chief" or "ruler," or "source" and "origin" (like the "head" of a stream). What do you think Paul means by "head" (v. 3; see also Ephesians 1:21b-22; 5:22-23; Colossians 1:18; and 2:10.) What is his argument from creation (vv. 3-11; see also Genesis 2:21-23; 3:16)?
2. Paul's teaching that "the head of a woman is man" has caused controversy in the church in our day. How does "the head of every man is Christ" and "the head of Christ is God" help you understand the meaning of "the head of a woman is her husband" (v. 3)?
3. At the time when Paul wrote this letter, head covering symbolized the difference between the sexes. Why do you think Paul writes that "every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head" (vv. 4; see also vv. 7, 14)?

4. Why do you think Paul writes that “every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head” (v. 5; see also vv. 5-10; 14-15). Based on this passage, how were “moral” women expected to wear her hair and go about in public in Paul’s time? What identified a woman as immoral? What do clothes, make-up, hair styles, jewelry, and body language say about another person? What should a believer seek to exhibit in these outward expressions?

5. How then should appropriate relationships between men and women in the church be expressed (see Ephesians 5:21)?

6. What does it mean to say that man is the image and glory of God (vv. 7-9; compare Genesis 1:26; 5:1; 9:6)? And what in turn does it mean to say that woman is the image of God and the glory of man (see also Genesis 2:21-23; 1 Timothy 2:13). How do verses 11-12 balance verses 7-9? Contrast Paul’s teaching about men and women with that of our present society’s. How are we to understand the apostle’s words in verse 16, declaring that “we have no other practice – nor do the churches of God”?

7. At the time this letter was written, communion was celebrated during a common meal or “love feast,” and Paul now addresses the problem of improper conduct at these meetings (vv. 17-22). In verse 17 he declares that “in the following directives I have no praise for you.” Why (compare with v. 2)? How do you think the Corinthians Christians would have described their get-togethers? What abuses had crept into this celebration?

8. What is the purpose and significance of the Lord’s Supper (vv. 23-26)? What does the bread mean to you as a believer in Christ? The cup?

9. Why then should the believer avoid participating in the Lord’s Supper in an “unworthy manner” (vv. 27-30)?

10. How can the believer participate in a “worthy manner” (vv. 28, 33-34)? What should the believer who participates in the Lord’s Supper remember (vv. 24-25) and proclaim (v. 26)? Why is self-evaluation before participating in the Lord’s Supper important?