

1 Corinthians

Chapter 10:23 - 11:16

May 26, 1996

- **1 Corinthians Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Ungodly divisions result from man's wisdom.
- Chapter 2 Carnal man cannot understand our Spiritual God.
- Chapter 3 All Christians will have their labors tried by fire.
- Chapter 4 Boasting in our leaders puffs up and destroys fellowship.
- Chapter 5 Maintain the purity of the Church.
- Chapter 6 Do not dispute before the world and do not partake in sexual immorality.
- Chapter 7 Principles of marriage
- Chapter 8 The responsibility of liberty
- Chapter 9 Those who preach the Gospel should live from the Gospel
- Chapter 10 You cannot partake of the Lord's table and the table of demons.
- Chapter 11 Propriety in corporate worship and communion

- **1 Corinthians 10:23 - 11:16**

- **Introduction & Review**

The primary teaching of the prior three chapter has been the proper understanding of eating meat once sacrificed to idols. In this final set of verses, which we will cover today, Paul drives home the primary points and considerations.

- **Exposition**

1 Corinthians 10:23-11:16

²³ All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.²⁴ Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.²⁵ Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake;²⁶ for "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness."

- Paul concludes his discussion on this topic by reiterating that we are at liberty to enjoy the gifts of God. It is no sign of righteousness to treat blessings as though they were curses. This is not super piety but rather simple ingratitude. Notice that we have liberty to enjoy all things (except those things which are specifically prohibited) even those things which are not beneficial. Wisdom should dictate that we abstain from those things which are not helpful. But we are at liberty nonetheless to receive some unhelpful things as blessings.
- The key to this liberty is to flee from thinking that our liberty gives us a license to injure the conscience of our weaker brothers. We are to consider our rights to liberty of lesser importance than our brother or sister's conscience.

²⁷ If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake.²⁸ But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness."²⁹ "Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience?³⁰ But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks?

- Paul makes a very pragmatic application of the proper use of liberty. If an unbeliever invites you to eat at his house don't feel like you must decline the food just because it may have been offered to idols. However, if your accepting the invitation stumbles the conscience of a caring brother, then decline the food. But your decline of the food isn't because your conscience now agrees with his conscience, but rather because you fear you may be causing the brother to stumble. Paul is not teaching here to change the conscience but rather to forego the food so as to maintain order.
- Paul intimates that perhaps he was being spoken evil of for partaking in things which he received as a gift from God.

³¹ *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*³² *Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God,*³³ *just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.*

- The principle which under-girds all of the teaching on this topic is that we are to do all that we do for the glory of God. This reveals such a marvelous truth of Christianity; we are able to glorify and worship God is all that we do. In Christ, we are not given a list of five things by which we may please God. Instead, we are able to receive all things with thanksgiving. And, if I do so in truth, I am able to please God and we do not have grounds for imposing our conscience upon something which brings glory to God. However, this is not to say that any activity that we deem to be worship is truly worship.

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

² *Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.*³ *But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.*⁴ *Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.*⁵ *But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved.*

- As Paul moves on to another topic he introduces this section by beginning with an indicative statement; Christ is the head of man and man is the head of woman. This hierarchy which God has created was established at the beginning of creation and is a theological truth which surpasses cultural opinion.
- Paul establishes that it is appropriate for men and women to pray in such a way that they display their position with the hierarchy that God has created. If we compare this instruction with 1 Cor 14:34, we have an apparent conflict of instruction. However, clearly in these verses Paul gives instruction on how a woman should properly pray in public.
- Next Paul moves on to the subject of head coverings. Keep in mind that it would be wrong for us to explain away these verses as simply cultural and it would be equally wrong to apply them without consideration of culture at the time of the writing. But it is very important to note that the reasons for these commands are theological, not cultural.

⁶ *For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.*⁷ *For a man indeed 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 is not from woman, but woman from man.*⁹ *Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.*

- A woman who dishonors her head is the same thing as a woman who shaves her head. A shorn woman was a particularly shameful thing in Corinth because this was common practice of the prostitutes who worked at the Temple of Aphrodite. Paul states here how disgraceful a thing it is for a woman to dishonor her head.

¹⁰ *For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.*¹¹ *Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord.*¹² *For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.*

- We don't really know what this first verse is saying. It is possible that it refers back to the time of the Nephilim referred to in Genesis 6 or some have speculated that it simply means that the angels are looking on and are trying to understand God's plan of salvation.
- After having given instruction about the headship of a man over his wife, Paul is careful to balance his instruction by stating that being a man is not superior or better than being a woman. While the first woman came from Adam, all subsequent men have come from the women. As we know from Galatians, in Christ we are all one. Men do not have a superior salvation than the women. But in God's hierarchy, the husband is the head of his wife.

¹³ *Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?*¹⁴ *Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?*¹⁵ *But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering.*¹⁶ *But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.* NKJV

- Paul appeals to a simpler and perhaps more clear explanation for this principle. He contends that we all know that it is a disgraceful thing for a man to have long hair and it is a glorious thing for a woman to have long hair. This becomes a how much more argument in that we know this to be true at this natural level how much more true is the same principle at a spiritual level.

Please note that Paul is not attempting to define long and short. There is not an official Christian hair length. By there nature the terms long and short are relative-long or short compared to what? I think from the context, there are two possibilities for understanding the comparison. Either the women should have longer hair than the men or more specifically the wives should have longer hair than their husbands. Regardless, notice that long hair for the woman is her covering and it is a glorious covering. What this means is that our hair styles are declaring Spiritual things which we should be careful to declare in a proper manner. Ladies should have a sign of authority on their head and the man should not.