



Session 9

11:1-34

In this chapter, Paul shows us how our selfish actions can negatively affect an entire community. The Corinthians struggled to turn away from their self-centered attitudes during corporate worship, and it kept them from seeing the bigger picture.

As believers, we have to remember that God's desire is for us to be unified as a church and to walk in selfless living. When we take certain ordinances for granted, or make selfish decisions during corporate worship, it only distracts our brothers and sisters in Christ while dividing us in the process.

1. "Follow My Example"

The Corinthians struggled with clinging onto cultural norms, like eating meat sacrificed to idols. Paul spends time explaining their liberties in Christ, but he also knows they need a real-life example to follow.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1.

Paul doesn't want the Corinthians to imitate him because he thinks he's perfect. But he knows that they need an example. **What does it mean to imitate someone?**

What are some examples from your life where either you've imitated someone or someone has imitated you?

How important is it for you to have a mature Christian in your life to ask questions or seek advice from? Who do you have in your life that would be a good example to follow as you mature in Christ?

When we imitate someone's actions, we can either find ourselves making progress or moving backward based on how they live and the decisions they make. **If someone tried to imitate you, what would they do? How would they talk? How would they treat their friends and family?**

What could you do this week to live a life worth imitating?

2. Peek at the Greek: Head

The word *kephale*, which we translate as "head," is one of the most confusing and hotly debated terms in the New Testament. While there are several ways to interpret Paul's use of *kephale*, it's important to note what he is *not* saying.

Read 1 Corinthians 11:3.

Some read 1 Corinthians 11:3 as an outline of hierarchy in terms of access—the Father, Jesus, husbands, then wives. In other words, some think that wives only have access to Jesus through their husbands. This idea is in direct conflict with the rest of Scripture, which says all Christians have access to God through Jesus.

Read John 14:6; Romans 8:31-39; Ephesians 2:14-18; 3:10-12; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 10:19-25.

What do these verses say about Christians' access to God? In what ways do these verses confirm that Paul isn't establishing a hierarchy in terms of access to God?

The Bible is clear that every Christian—male or female—has direct access to God through Jesus. While this passage is still difficult to interpret, we can stand on the fact that we all follow the same God, have the same Spirit in us, and serve the same body of Christ. **What difference does it make to you to know that you can talk to God at any time?**

If you're struggling to understand the beginning part of chapter 11, reach out to a pastor or trusted Christian friend this week and talk to them about it. And talk to God about it—he can handle your questions.

3. Self-Examination

The Corinthians were lacking a sense of self-examination, which is why Paul needed to remind them of how to partake in the Lord's Supper properly. We can be a lot like the Corinthians, moving through the routine of things like prayer, taking communion, or reading our Bible without reflecting on our life.

Regularly examining our hearts, actions, and attitudes, is part of our Christian work—not just during communion or on Easter Sunday. We find the command to examine ourselves in many places of the Bible.

Take a moment and read these verses: Psalm 139:1-5; Lamentations 3:40; Romans 12:3; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 6:3-5.

After reading these verses, what are some similarities that you noticed? What do these verses say about the importance of self-reflection?

In what ways can a consistent attitude of self-reflection benefit our relationships with other Christians? What steps can you take to be reflective in your daily life?

What areas of your life have you been avoiding due to guilt or fear? What can you do this week to face this area and give it to the Lord?

As hard as it is to deal with our own problems, it's important and necessary. Take a moment to reflect on these verses. Write down a few ways you can incorporate the practice of self-examination during each day