

## Worksheet 9: 1 Corinthians 11:2–34

**Introduction:** In this chapter, Paul turns from the problem of idol food to two other problems within the Corinthian church. The first of these appears in 11:2–16, and the second in 11:17–34.

Producing a coherent interpretation of 11:2–16 has provided a historic challenge, leading some (but not all) interpreters to despair whether such a task is even possible. Part of the difficulty is that the passage uses several key terms without explanation and assumes knowledge of first-century cultural practices. Those customs are no longer obvious, nor is it clear how the passage ought to be applied within our own times. These uncertainties should inspire both caution and careful reflection as we seek to glean what we can from Paul's instruction.

In the remainder of chapter 11, Paul is clear. He seeks to correct errors in the Corinthian's practice of the Lord's Supper, and begins by explicitly identifying the nature of the problem at hand (11:17–22). After describing the problem, Paul reminds the Corinthians of the essential elements of the original meal which instituted the practice of communion (11:23–25) and exhorts them to "proclaim the Lord's death" by practicing valid communion "till He comes" (11:26). As he concludes his discussion of this topic, Paul provides practical guidelines for self-examination prior to participating in the Lord's Supper (11:27–34).

### Abbreviated Outline<sup>1</sup> (current passage in bold):

- I. Introduction (1:1-9)
- II. Response to Oral Reports (1:10-6:20)
  - A. A Proper Perspective on Christian Ministers and Ministry (1:10-4:21)
  - B. Immorality in the Church (5:1-13)
  - C. Disputes Between Believers (6:1-11)
  - D. Limitations on Freedom in Christ (6:12-20)
- III. Responses to a Letter from the Corinthians (7:1-16:4)
  - A. Matters related to Sex and Marriage (7:1-40)
  - B. Matters related to Idol Feasts (8:1-11:1)
    - 1. Food Offered to Idols (8:1-13)
    - 2. Paul Foregoes Rights of Apostle (9:1-27)
    - 3. Food Offered to Idols (continued; 10:1-11:1)
  - C. Matters related to Christian Worship (11:2-34)**
    - 1. Gender Distinctions in Worship (11:2-16)**
    - 2. Behavior During the Lord's Supper (11:17-34)**
  - D. Matters related to Spiritual Gifts (12:1-14:40)
  - E. Matters related to the Resurrection (15:1-58)
  - F. Matters related to the Relief Offering (16:1-4)
- IV. Conclusion (16:5-24)

---

<sup>1</sup> The complete outline is available on the Meadowlands Baptist Church website ([www.meadowlandsbaptist.ca](http://www.meadowlandsbaptist.ca)). Adapted from Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, The Cross, and The Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Academic, 2009), 482–483.

**Interpretation:** *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. What brings shame to men (v. 4) and women (v. 5) in praying or prophesying?

---

---

---

2. What reason does Paul give in vv. 8–9 for his statement that “woman is the glory of man” (v. 7)?

---

---

---

3. What does Paul appeal to as evidence in 11:13–16 to answer his question, “is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?” (11:13)?

---

---

---

4. What is the problem that Paul describes in 11:18? How does this undermine the significance of communion?

---

---

---

5. If the church at Corinth was not eating the Lord’s Supper (11:20), what were they doing (11:21)?

---

---

---

6. How does 11:22 identify those who would be “hungry” in 11:21?

---

---

---

7. What is the message proclaimed by the proper practice of the Lord’s Supper (11:26)? How do the statements of 11:23b–25 proclaim this message?

---

---

---

8. What does 11:27–32 tell us about the severity of error in the practice of communion?

---

---

---

**Application:** *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

9. Review 11:17–34 and develop a list of self-examination questions to use before taking the Lord’s Supper.

---

---

---

---

10. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

---

---

---

11. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

---

---

---