

## 14. More Teachings and Admonitions in 1 Corinthians

*PROBLEMS WITH BEHAVIOR AND CORRECT WORSHIP  
1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-11:34*

### “Keep the Commandments” (hymn no. 303)

Keep the commandments; keep the commandments!  
In this there is safety; in this there is peace.  
He will send blessings; He will send blessings.  
Words of a prophet: Keep the commandments.  
In this there is safety and peace.

## Structure and Subjects of 1 Corinthians

(review and emphasizing this lecture's topics)

- **Opening Formula (1:1-3)**
- **Thanksgiving (1:4-9)**
- **Body (1:10-16:18)**
  - Factions (1:10-4:21)
  - **Moral Misbehavior (5:1-11:1)**
    - Problems of Sex and Property (5:1-6:20)
    - Problems of Marriage and Celibacy (7:1-40)
    - Christian Freedom and Its Abuse (8:1-11:1)
  - **Correct and Incorrect Christian Worship (11:2-14:40)**
    - The Veiling of Women (11:2-16)
    - The Lord's Supper (11:17-34)
    - Misunderstanding and Misusing Spiritual Gifts (12:1-14:40) [NEXT LECTURE]
  - Doctrinal Correction: the Nature of the Resurrection and its Application to Christians (15:1-58)
  - Housekeeping: Collection for Jerusalem Poor, Paul's Plans, Commendations (16:1-18)
- **Conclusion (16:19-24)**

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## Moral Misbehavior

“... KNOW YE NOT THAT YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST WHICH IS IN YOU, WHICH YE HAVE OF GOD, AND YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN? FOR YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE: THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY, AND IN YOUR SPIRIT, WHICH ARE GOD'S.”  
(1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20)

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## Concern and Sin over Things of This World

### Problems of Sex and Property (5:1–6:11)

- *Seemingly unrelated, cases of sexual immorality share a concern with this world and its desires with property and other legal disputes. Both likewise need to be judged to avoid desanctifying the body of Christ (sc. the church)*
- **The Case of Incest (5:1–5)**
- **The Purity of the Church (5:6–8)**
- **Sexual Immorality Must Be Judged (5:9–13)**
  - “With such an one no not to eat”: suspension of table fellowship is probably within the context of church activities, in particular the sacrament
- **Legal Cases: Lawsuits against Believers (6:1–8)**
  - Connection with preceding material: from Church “courts” to the world’s courts
- **Standards of the Kingdom (6:9–11)**
- **Glorify God in Body and Spirit: Chastity in the Body of Christ (6:12–20)**

## The Cleansing and Sanctifying Power of Jesus

### Standards of the Kingdom (6:9–11)

- “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (*malakoi*), nor abusers of themselves with mankind (*arsenokoitai*), Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” (6:9–10)
- “. . . Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes (*malakoi*), nor homosexual offenders (*arsenokoitai*), nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.” (6:9b–10 NIV)
  - There is still continued debate about the Greek terms *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*, but they **clearly refer to sexual behavior and not to predilections, tendencies, or struggles with same sex attraction**
  - On of the Bibles few direct references to homosexual behavior (see the allusion in Genesis 19:4–5; prohibitions in Leviticus 18:22, 20:13, and Romans 1:26–27; and the possible counsel for celibacy suggested by Matthew 19:12)
- “And such were some of you: **but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.**” (6:11)

## Glorify God in Body and Spirit (6:12–20)

- Paul argues that Christians can maintain chastity in the body of Christ—that is, sexual purity among members of the church—by glorifying God in the body as well as the spirit (6:12–20)
  - *While this passage deals with principles that are clearly applicable to believers in every age, **this dichotomy between body and spirit is also important for understanding some specific philosophical issues facing the church at Corinth in the time of Paul***
- **Countering Corinthian Slogans:** Paul’s summation of Christian ethical standards begins **by quoting and countering certain statements from their earlier letter to him and then adding his clarifications**
  - “All things are lawful unto me,’ but **all things are not expedient: ‘all things are lawful for me,’ but I will not be brought under the power of any.’**
    - *The JST confirms that Paul did not teach that all things were lawful*
  - “Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them.’ Now **the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.”** (6:12–13)
    - *Christian “spirituals” thought that “God shall destroy both it (the body) and them (the meats)” because ultimately all physical things would come to an end.*
    - *Paul responded strongly that **the body was not only good, it was expressly “for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.”** He continues by reminding the Corinthians that God really raised up the body of Jesus in the resurrection—a point to which he returns in chapter 15*

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## Chastity in the Body of Christ

### Glorify God in Body and Spirit (6:12–20)

- Because the resurrection would raise the Corinthians’ bodies, sins involving the body, particularly sexual sins, were particularly serious since they **as a body (not just individuals)** are the temple of God (6:14–18)
  - “**Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be!**” (6:15 NAS; *diatribe style of argumentation*)
  - “**Flee from sexual immorality.** All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but **he who sins sexually sins against his own body.**” (6:18 NIV)
- **Our Bodies are Temples**
  - “What? know ye not that **your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price:** therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (6:19–20; cf. 3:16–17; also 1 Peter 1:18–19)
    - *Typical Exposition: **Our Bodies are temples and hence we must keep them pure***
    - *Stricter exegesis: “Your (pl.) body (sing.) is the temple (sing.) of the holy Ghost,” seemingly referring to **the church as the body of Christ***

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## Understanding Paul's Time and Culture Specific Counsel

Some of the most difficult to understand teachings in 1 Corinthians—such as his teaching on marriage and celibacy and his views on the veiling of women, etc.—can be better understood and applied by following these three steps:

- **1. Consider the occasional situation (exegesis)**
  - Remember the cultural differences of this period
  - In particular, consider the group Paul was having difficulty with in 1 Corinthians: *the “wise guys” or “spirituals” who rejected the importance of the physical body and flouted contemporary social customs*
- **2. Look for the lasting principles behind Paul's occasion-specific direction**
  - *Chastity, modesty, and other eternal principles apply in both Paul's time and ours*
- **3. Only then try to apply the principle (not necessarily the practice) to our time and occasion (exposition)**
  - *For this use the spirit and the teaching of modern apostles and prophets*

## Problems of Marriage and Celibacy (7:1–40)

- **General Principles of Marital Intimacy (7:1–7)**
- **Advice to Specific Groups (7:8–16)**
  - *Particular direction to mixed-faith marriages*
- **Maintenance of the Status Quo: the Life the Lord Has Assigned (7:17–24)**
- **The Unmarried and Widows (7:25–31)**
  - *Reasons for Avoiding Marriage in View of the Impending Crisis*
- **Marriage, Celibacy, and Anxiety (7:32–35)**
  - *Particular context of first century Corinth and spiritual extremists?*
- **Advice to Engaged Couples (7:36–38)**
- **Advice to Widows Regarding Remarriage (7:39–40)**

## General Principles of Marital Intimacy (7:1–7)

- Topic raised by an earlier Corinthian question: “**Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: ‘It is good for a man not to touch a woman.’**” (7:1)
  - Confirmed by the JST: “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me, **saying**: ‘It is good for a man not to touch a woman.’”
- **Corinthians ascetics were so negative in their view of the body that they claimed that men should not even be intimate with their wives**
  - “**The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband.**” (7:3 NRSV)
  - KJV’s “due benevolence” also rendered “marital duty” [NIV] and “what she has the right to expect” [NJB]
- **Paul instead taught that physical intimacy was not only appropriate but expected in marriage**
  - “For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.” (7:4 NRSV)
  - Chastity (working definition): Sexual relations are between a husband and wife only; one does not have the right to engage in sexual activity with others or alone

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## Advice to Specific Groups (7:8–16)

- **To the Unmarried and the Widowed: Better to Marry than to Burn!**
  - “I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. **But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn**” (7:8–9; note the JST “than that any should commit sin”)
    - *Paul was probably a widower, or at least alone while on his mission*
- **To the Married: Regarding Divorce and Separation**
  - “And unto the married I command, yet not I, but **the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled (katallgētō) to her husband:** and let not the husband put away his wife.” (7:10–11)
    - *katallgētō comes from the same verb meaning “to atone!”*
  - “But to the rest speak I, **not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away . . .** For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife . . .” (7:12–14)
  - “But **if the unbelieving depart, let him depart.** A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, **O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?**” (7:15–16)
    - *Some scholars propose a scenario where Paul himself might have been separated—if his wife was the daughter of stringent Pharisees, perhaps she did not believe or perhaps they insisted upon a separation, and Paul, not willing to divorce her, had not remarried*

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## Reasons for Avoiding Marriage in View of “the Impending Crisis” (7:25–31)

- **The Unmarried: Reasons for Avoiding Marriage in View of the Impending Crisis (7:25–35)**
  - “Now concerning virgins [or people remaining virgins], I have no command of the Lord, but I **give my opinion** as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy. ***I think that, in view of the impending crisis, it is well for you to remain as you are.***” (7:25–26 NRSV; KJV “present distress”)
    - The emphasis here is on those not yet married.
    - **The “present distress” could be present or impending persecution; feared or imminent trouble; or the tribulations expected with the Parousia**
    - “Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.” (7:27–28)
- **“Celibacy” as a function of service or necessary state during a particular call**
  - “But I speak unto **you who are called unto the ministry**. For this I say, brethren, the time that remains is but short, that ye shall be sent forth unto the ministry. Even they who have wives, shall be as though they had none: ***for ye are called and chosen to do the Lord’s work.***” (7:29 JST)
    - think of modern missionary work!

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## Marriage, Celibacy, and Anxiety (7:32–35)

- **Serving the Lord without anxiety**
  - “I want you to be free from **anxieties** (*amerimnous*, KJV “without carefulness”). **The unmarried man is anxious (*merimna*, KJV “careth”) about the affairs of the Lord**, how to please the Lord; but **the married man is anxious (*merimna*, KJV “careth”) about the affairs of the world, how to please his wife** . . . I say this for your own benefit, not to put any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and unhindered devotion to the Lord.” (7:32–35 NRSV)
    - ***Living a life free from anxiety and worry was a goal of much of Greek philosophy in this period***
    - ***Paul, too, wanted Christians to live “without carefulness,” that is without anxiety***
    - ***The philosophically-minded Christians in Corinth—the “wise guys” or “spirituals”—were so anxious about serving the Lord that they rejected much of this life, including marriage***
  - Thus rather than necessarily opposing the single man’s service to the married man’s preoccupation with pleasing his wife, **Paul frames the discussion of both within a discussion about “anxiety”—while both are good things, should they cause unnecessary concern or anxiety that inhibits other service?**
    - Paul certainly does underscore that singles have great opportunities to serve while warning the married not to ignore service of the Lord

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## Advice to Widows and Engaged Couples (7:36–40)

- **Advice to Engaged Couples (7:36–38)**
  - “If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married.” (7:36 NIV)
  - “*If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his fiancée, if his passions are strong, and so it has to be, let him marry as he wishes; it is no sin. Let them marry.*” (NRSV)
- **Advice to Widows Regarding Remarriage (7:39–40)**
  - “*A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is*—and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.” (7:39–40 NIV)

## Christian Freedom and Its Abuse (8:1–11:1)

- **Food Offered to Idols (8:1–13)**
- **Paul’s Renunciation of Apostolic Rights (9:1–23)**
- **Dangers to Those Strong in Faith (9:24–10:22)**
  - Need for Self-Discipline (9:24–27)
  - Warning of the Wilderness Generation (10:1–13)
  - Table of the Lord and the Tables of Demons (10:14–22)
- **Concluding Statement of Principles: Do All to the Glory of God (10:23–11:1)**



## Becoming a Stumbling Block to Other Believers

### Food Offered to Idols (8:1–13)

- **Almost all meat in the Greek world was slaughtered and butchered in association with sacrifice**; little was burned, the rest was sold in the markets (10:25 KJV “shambles”)
- “Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that ‘all of us possess knowledge.’ **Knowledge puffs up**, but **love builds up**.” (8:1 NRSV)
  - *The “knowledgeable” Christians thought that since they knew the idols did not represent real gods, it did not matter . . .*
  - “Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, won’t he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? **So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge.**” (8:9–11 NIV, countering the claim for superior knowledge of some factions)
- **What are more serious examples of how we must be aware of the impact of our actions on the perceptions of others?**

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## Concluding Statement of Principles

### Do All to the Glory of God (10:23–11:1)

- **“None of the trials which have come upon you is more than a human being can stand.** You can trust that God will not let you be put to the test beyond your strength, but **with any trial will also provide a way out by enabling you to put up with it.**” (10:13 NJB)
  - The word translated “temptation” in the KJV (*peirasmos*) actually means test or trial
- **“All things are lawful for me,’ but all things are not expedient: ‘all things are lawful for me,’ but all things edify not.** Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth.” (10:23–24)
  - “wealth” is not in the Greek text but was supplied by the KJV translators
  - **“All things are lawful,’ but not all things are beneficial. ‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things build up. Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other.”** (NRSV)
- **“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” (10:31)**

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## Correct and Incorrect Christian Worship

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*“BE YE FOLLOWERS OF ME, EVEN AS I ALSO AM OF CHRIST. NOW I PRAISE YOU, BRETHREN, THAT YE REMEMBER ME IN ALL THINGS, AND KEEP THE ORDINANCES, AS I DELIVERED THEM TO YOU.” (1 CORINTHIANS 11:1-2)*

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## Correct and Incorrect Christian Worship (11:2-14:40)

- **The Grooming of Men and the Veiling of Women (11:2-16)**
- **The Lord’s Supper (11:17-34)**
  - Abuses at the Lord’s Supper (11:17-22)
  - The Institution of the Lord’s Supper (11:23-26)
  - Dangers of the Ordinance: Partaking of the Lord’s Supper Unworthily (11:27-34)
- Misunderstanding and Misusing Spiritual Gifts (12:1-14:40, next lecture)
  - Many Gifts One Spirit (12:1-11)
  - One Body and Many Members (12:12-31)
  - The Gift of Love (Charity: 13:1-13)
  - Gift of Prophecy and Tongues (14:1-25)
  - Orderly Worship (14:26-40)

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## Men's Grooming and Comportment (11:3-4, 7, 14)



- Jews, Greeks, and Romans all had standards that were sometimes different regarding the covering of one's head, particularly in the context of religious worship, so cultural expectations and genders rules were clearly a factor in Paul's advice

- **Jews and Roman men covered their heads when praying and sacrificing. Greeks uncovered their heads**

- **"Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered (kata kephalēs echōn), dishonoureth his head . . ." (11:3)**

- "having his head covered" actually means "having something hanging down from the head (kata kephalēs echōn)", which can be taken as referring to **long hair on a man, which in Roman eyes was a sign of effeminacy and blatant sexuality, often homosexuality.**

- Paul's direction to men may actually have been an issue of grooming rather than dress



- "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, **if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?**" (11:14)

- Men, who felt that they demonstrated their rejection of false religions by blithely participating in pagan feasts and perhaps demonstrated their freedom from moral restrictions by libertine behavior, **may also have flaunted counter-culture dress and grooming.**

- **Philosophers were known to have long hair "because they could not be bothered with it!"**

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## The Veiling of Women (11:2-16)



- **Most women in the ancient world had longer hair and covered their heads in public**—exceptions included some pagan priestesses and prostitutes

- **Were some Corinthian Christian women blatantly disregarding customs—both Christian and pagan—regarding modesty?**

- The Corinthian intellectual and "spiritual" elite that felt that they were living beyond the world's standards

- **Cynics were known for flaunting societal expectations**

- Women, whom the Christian message had liberated and empowered in so many ways, **may have sought to demonstrate this independence by boldly uncovering their heads during worship**

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## Applying Paul's Counsel

- **While some of Paul's counsel and direction is time and culture-specific, some points, however, reflect more eternal principles**
  - *How do we avoid distracting others when praying and worshipping while properly showing modesty and respect for God?*
- **What about gender relations?**
  - "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." (11:3)
    - There is a divine order for things (sc. the modern Proclamation on the Family), **but its application and experience must be governed by love and Christ-like principles**
    - Some of the only controls against abuse of a man's "presiding role" are proper love of and appreciation for women
  - "***In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.*** For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. **But everything comes from God.**" (11:11-12 NIV)

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## The Lord's Supper (11:17-34)

Correct and Incorrect Christian Worship (11:2-14:40)

- **Abuses at the Lord's Supper (11:17-22)**
  - The "sacrament" was part of a larger communal meal; ***the rich would feast together before inviting the poor to join them***
- **The Institution of the Lord's Supper (11:23-26)**
  - Paul's account is probably the earliest written in the New Testament!
  - "***For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.***" (11:26)
- **Dangers of the Ordinance: Partaking of the Lord's Supper Unworthily (11:27-34)**
  - "For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, ***eat and drink judgment against themselves.*** For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died." (11:29-30)

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