**As we make our way to the great “Love Chapter” (I Corinthians 13), we have seen how a lack of love can break fellowship and limit church growth in many ways. Chapter 11 presents two more. A church that lacks Christian love is insensitive to the culture and customs of others, and it is insensitive to the needs of others, even as it tries to worship the Lord. This chapter starts with one of the most difficult and challenging passages of Scripture in the New Testament. In it, Paul addresses certain problems with the WORSHIP SERVICES of the Corinthian church. It also involves one of the more controversial topics in the 21st century church, touching on the matters of gender-specific roles, “headship” and submission. It specifically focuses on the behavior of certain men and women in the 1st century Corinthian church who were disregarding their cultural practices relating to their appearance; specifically, the length of their hair (11:14-15) and the wearing of a veil.**

**In light of the other profoundly serious problems facing the Corinthian church, we might ask ourselves why such a matter merits mention. But, as we have seen in the previous chapter, even the eating of certain foods could have an impact on the testimony of a Christian and the spread of the Gospel. Keep this in mind as we discuss these passages: Paul’s desire for the church is to reach as many unsaved people as possible, and any questionable behavior on the part of a Christian might offend them. A church that desires to grow should therefore be sensitive to the culture of the lost people that it is trying to reach, without becoming the “fashion police”.**

**This chapter also contains one of the most well-known passages of Scripture (verses 23-34). It is read in many churches prior to the serving of the Lord’s Supper (Communion). It was written to address yet another of the “abuses of love” that was going on in the church at Corinth. Specifically, there were extremes of behavior during their so-called “love feasts” that resulted in a DISORDERLY Communion service. This DISPLEASED the Lord, to the extent that some were severely judged for their misconduct.**

1. **Read verse 1. Some Bible scholars feel that this verse belongs at the end of Chapter 10, but it also works as an introduction to this new chapter. What important lesson on CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP do we learn from this verse?**
2. **Read verse 2. For what TWO things did Paul generally praise the Corinthian believers?**
3. **Read verses 3-7. This long passage relates to worship – “praying” and “prophesying” or preaching. It starts with a description of the order (hierarchy) in the church. What is this order, as Paul describes it? (v. 3) Answer: “The head of every is ; the head of the is the ; and the head of is .” (Read Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6-7; 9-11; 14-19)**
4. **When praying or prophesying (speaking under inspiration of the Holy Spirit), what should a man in the Corinthian church NOT do? (v. 4) Answer: He should not have his head .**
5. **When praying or prophesying in the Corinthian church, what should a woman NOT do? (v.5) Answer: She should not have her head .**
6. **In the Corinthian culture, a woman without a head covering, was no different than a woman who had her hair (v. 6)**
7. **Why should a man not have his head covered during worship? (v. 7) Answer: A man is the and of God. (Read Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7; Psalm 8:3-5)**
8. **Read verses 8-10. What TWO statements does Paul make concerning the origin of man and woman? (Read Genesis 2:7-8;18;21-23)**
9. **What reason does Paul give for why a woman ought to have “power” (Greek *exousia* – authority, power) on her head? (v. 10) Answer: “because of the “. (Read Genesis 19:1-2, 10-13; Hebrews 13:2)**
10. **Read verses 11-16. In what ways do men and women depend on each other “in the Lord”? (v. 11-12) Answer:**
11. **Paul asked the Corinthians to “judge” (decide) for themselves if it was “comely” (suitable or proper) for a woman to pray to God “uncovered” (unveiled). What answer to this rhetorical question did he expect? (v. 13)**
12. **According to Paul, what did “nature itself” teach the Corinthians? (v. 14-15) Answer: If a man has hair, it is a to him, but if a woman has hair, it is a to her.**
13. **What was Paul’s answer to anyone who was inclined to disagree with him in this matter? (v. 16) Answer: There was no other in the churches of God.**
14. **At the time that Paul wrote this letter, the church had grown from its birthplace (Jerusalem) through the eastern part of the Roman Empire. Its membership consisted of people from the Jewish, Greek, and Roman cultures, which had similar customs and fashions for men and women. Since then, the church has reached nearly every corner of the world, with a much wider diversity of family roles and fashions for men and women. Should the church try to impose its first-century fashion and culture on today’s culture, OR should the church try to accommodate our present diversity in culture and fashion, as long as accommodation doesn’t compromise the truths of the Scripture?**
15. **Read verses 17-19. Paul opened this chapter with praise for the Corinthians. Now his attention turns to a serious problem with the way that they observe the holiest of Christian worship practices: the Lord’s Supper (Communion). When this church “comes together” to observe it, what is the problem? (v. 17) Answer: Paul states that they “come together not for the , but for the “.**
16. **What did Paul hear about this church when they came together? (v. 18) Answer: He heard that there were among them. Did Paul believe this report?**
17. **Why did Paul feel that these “heresies” (differences) served a useful purpose? (v. 19) Answer: Such issues (make manifest) those Christians whose conduct pleases God (“those who are approved”)**
18. **Read verses 20-22. How would you “rephrase” what Paul said to the Corinthians in verse 20?**
19. **What “disorderly” behaviors did Paul describe in verse 21?**
20. **With what FOUR questions did Paul challenge and reprove the Corinthian saints? What answer did he provide for the fourth question? (v 22)**
21. **Read verses 23-26. One of the “ordinances” (Chapter 11 verse 2) that Paul passed on to the Corinthian church (which he founded) was that of the Lord’s Supper, which he briefly describes in this passage. What are we supposed to LOOK BACK AT as we receive Communion? (v. 26)**
22. **What are we supposed to LOOK FORWARD TO as we receive Communion? (v. 26)**
23. **Read verses 27-32. “Wherefore” ties this passage to the previous one. What happens to a person who takes Communion “unworthily” (in an unworthy manner – NIV, RSV; in a way that is unworthy – Amplified)? (v. 27) Answer: that person “is of the and of the Lord”. (Matthew 27:21-25; Acts 5:27-31)**
24. **What should a person do BEFORE receiving the Lord’s Supper? (v. 28) Answer: a person should him/herself.” See also James 4:8-10; I John 1:8-9; I John 3:1-3)**
25. **If a person “eats and drinks unworthily”, what have they done to themselves, and why? (v. 29) Answer: They eat and drink ( Greek “krima”; judgement) on themselves, because they have not (distinguished) the Lord’s body.**
26. **Were there any CONSEQUENCES of the disorderly way in which the Corinthians were conducting Communion? (v. 30) Answer: . If yes, what were those consequences? Answer: Many were and , and many . (I Samuel 2:22-25; I John 5:16)**
27. **Instead of waiting for the Lord to deal with our sins, what should we do? (v.31) Answer: “If we would (discern) ourselves, we would not be .” (See Psalm 51; Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 57:15)**
28. **Why does the Lord judge His own church? (v. 32) See Deuteronomy 8:1-6; Psalm 119:67, 71; Hebrews 12:1-13**
29. **Read verses 33-34. Having identified the problem with the way they were observing the Lord’s Supper, Paul now gives them guidelines for doing it in a “worthy” manner. First of all, what should they do when they “come together to eat”? (v. 33) Answer: They should (or wait) until everyone is present .**
30. **If someone is too hungry to wait for everyone to arrive, what should they do? (v. 34)**

**Summing Up**

**The problems that Paul deals with in this chapter show us how a lack of love can seriously hinder a church’s ability to worship the Lord “in Spirit and truth”. Pride, selfishness, disregard for the feelings of others, insisting that things be done “our way”; all of these are the direct result of an unloving spirit. While changes in processes and procedures can help, only a genuine change of heart can completely address the root causes of these issues. In the next chapter, we will see that even the use of our God-given spiritual gifts can be a source of disunity and strife when love is lacking.**