



First Corinthians

Week 4

Hi amazing leaders- I only have notes for the first three days so far, but I will get Days 4 and 5 up soon. I continue to pray for you as you facilitate discussion on these principles that Paul is teaching to the Corinthian church- we are currently dealing with so many same challenges today in our own churches. May we be lights to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ!

Day 1

In this day we look at three things we must do to truly get beyond ourselves:

- We must give up our rights. A big “aha moment” came to me in this section of our lesson. We have been given American rights and Christian rights. Christian rights are on a whole different level that we struggle to understand with our finite minds, but we know are way better than earthly rights, and impossible for us to earn and impossible for us to lose. Ephesians 1 gives us a glimpse of these Christian rights: As Christians, we have the right to adoption into the family of God, we have a right to grace, we have a right to forgiveness, we have a right to the wisdom and insight of God, we have a right to the Holy Spirit, we have a right to every spiritual blessing. Because of all of these spiritual rights, I think we need to live in a manner that holds more loosely to our American rights, if it means it could contribute to the purposes of Christ- who we are first and foremost concerned about. I am not sure I know more than this at this time, but I am trying to filter all of the current culture through this filter of understanding and see if I can make sense of it.
- We must find common ground with others. Ricky Hemme used to always say- build bridges with others, not barricades. Do we build bridges with others? Do we affirm what we have in common with others or only look at how we are different?
- We need to stay spiritually fit. In this day and age of Netflix, YouTube, and social media- we need to be EXTRA disciplined to make our spiritual health a priority- we must schedule to time for bible study, prayer and discipleship. We are too lazy and undisciplined to stay spiritually fit if we do not.

Day 2

In this day, we look at three warnings that will keep a spiritual family from staying together.

- Idolatry
- Immorality
- A Complaining Spirit

After going through the lesson on these three pitfalls, what key insights or descriptions stood out to the ladies in your group? For me, I loved what Melissa wrote about the “soul sickness” on page 120, that comes from worshipping counterfeits. We may create and worship false gods that may lead to a quick high or feeling of self-worth, but eventually, it will always result in disillusionment, despair or anxiety because we were not created to worship anything other than our Creator. We break down otherwise- our soul gets sick. Nothing can hold up under the weight of the need of our souls except our Creator



Day 3

On this day we look at the very practical topic of how to handle areas of personal conviction in the church, or with unbelievers. At first, reading these Scriptures, I got confused and did think Paul was contradicting himself, but then, Melissa broke it down in a handy flow chart (speaking my love language here) at the bottom of page 126.

1) God's approval is more important than people's opinions. 2) If God would approve of either option, then 3) not offending others and helping others find their way to God is more important than doing everything the way I prefer.

I think if we can use this filter more, we will be able to better discern what to do with items of personal conviction. But we must be aware- sometimes we will find ourselves in a no-win situation (as Melissa stated on page 129). In this case, keep in mind, at the end of the day, we answer to God for our decisions and no one else.

Day 4

Oh, the head covering passage. I don't know ladies.

I have read many interpretations of this passage, and I can't say with certainty what Paul meant here- because there does seem to be a cultural reference. I do think a biblical principle (that transcends time and culture) that we can take from this strange command from Paul is to be diligent, as women, not to draw attention to ourselves (and detract from people's attention toward the worship and teaching in church) by dressing provocatively or acting loud or disrespectful in church.

I will also add a few points about men and women- just in case it is helpful in your group.

- In Gen 1:26, God tells us that men and women are ontologically equal in nature and essence. We are both made in the image God.
- In 1 Cor 12:4-6, God tells us that both men and women are given spiritual gifts.
- In 1 Cor 11:11, God tells us that women and men are interdependent. Eve came from Adan, and all other men come from women.

Having said all of the above, God does set up roles for men and women within the church and within the family. This is not because as women we are inferior or incapable (see above), rather it is because it is an order that God established. We see this same order within the Trinity between the three persons of the Trinity (who are also ontologically equal). The Son and Holy Spirit submit to the Father.

Here are a couple of articles regarding these two teachings. They are long, but I am including them because I think they are helpful:

Question: "What does the Bible say about women pastors?"

Answer: *There is perhaps no more hotly debated issue in the church today than the issue of women serving as pastors/preachers. As a result, it is very important to not see this issue as men versus women. There are women who believe women should not serve as pastors and that the Bible places restrictions on the ministry of women, and there are men who believe*



women can serve as preachers and that there are no restrictions on women in ministry. This is not an issue of chauvinism or discrimination. It is an issue of biblical interpretation.

The Word of God proclaims, “A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent” (1 Timothy 2:11–12). In the church, God assigns different roles to men and women. This is a result of the way mankind was created and the way in which sin entered the world (1 Timothy 2:13–14). God, through the apostle Paul, restricts women from serving in roles of teaching and/or having spiritual authority over men. This precludes women from serving as pastors over men, which definitely includes preaching to them, teaching them publicly, and exercising spiritual authority over them.

There are many objections to this view of women in pastoral ministry. A common one is that Paul restricts women from teaching because in the first century, women were typically uneducated. However, 1 Timothy 2:11–14 nowhere mentions educational status. If education were a qualification for ministry, then the majority of Jesus’ disciples would not have been qualified. A second common objection is that Paul only restricted the women of Ephesus from teaching men (1 Timothy was written to Timothy, the pastor of the church in Ephesus). Ephesus was known for its temple to Artemis, and women were the authorities in that branch of paganism—therefore, the theory goes, Paul was only reacting against the female-led customs of the Ephesian idolaters, and the church needed to be different. However, the book of 1 Timothy nowhere mentions Artemis, nor does Paul mention the standard practice of Artemis worshipers as a reason for the restrictions in 1 Timothy 2:11–12.

A third objection is that Paul is only referring to husbands and wives, not men and women in general. The Greek words for “woman” and “man” in 1 Timothy 2 could refer to husbands and wives; however, the basic meaning of the words is broader than that. Further, the same Greek words are used in verses 8–10. Are only husbands to lift up holy hands in prayer without anger and disputing (verse 8)? Are only wives to dress modestly, have good deeds, and worship God (verses 9–10)? Of course not. Verses 8–10 clearly refer to all men and women, not just husbands and wives. There is nothing in the context that would indicate a narrowing to husbands and wives in verses 11–14.

Yet another objection to this interpretation of women in pastoral ministry is in relation to women who held positions of leadership in the Bible, specifically Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah in the Old Testament. It is true that these women were chosen by God for special service to Him and that they stand as models of faith, courage, and, yes, leadership. However, the authority of women in the Old Testament is not relevant to the issue of pastors in the church. The New Testament Epistles present a new paradigm for God’s people—the church, the body of Christ—and that paradigm involves an authority structure unique to the church, not for the nation of Israel or any other Old Testament entity.

Similar arguments are made using Priscilla and Phoebe in the New Testament. In Acts 18, Priscilla and Aquila are presented as faithful ministers for Christ. Priscilla’s name is mentioned first, perhaps indicating that she was more prominent in ministry than her husband. Did Priscilla and her husband teach the gospel of Jesus Christ to Apollos? Yes, in their home they “explained to him the way of God more adequately” (Acts 18:26). Does the Bible ever say that Priscilla pastored a church or taught publicly or became the spiritual leader of a congregation of saints? No. As far as we know, Priscilla was not involved in ministry activity in contradiction to 1 Timothy 2:11–14.



In Romans 16:1, Phoebe is called a “deacon” (or “servant”) in the church and is highly commended by Paul. But, as with Priscilla, there is nothing in Scripture to indicate that Phoebe was a pastor or a teacher of men in the church. “Able to teach” is given as a qualification for elders, but not for deacons (1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus 1:6–9).

The structure of 1 Timothy 2:11–14 makes the reason why women cannot be pastors perfectly clear. Verse 13 begins with “for,” giving the “cause” of Paul’s statement in verses 11–12. Why should women not teach or have authority over men? Because “Adam was created first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived” (verses 13–14). God created Adam first and then created Eve to be a “helper” for Adam. The order of creation has universal application in the family (Ephesians 5:22–33) and in the church.

The fact that Eve was deceived is also given in 1 Timothy 2:14 as a reason for women not serving as pastors or having spiritual authority over men. This does not mean that women are gullible or that they are all more easily deceived than men. If all women are more easily deceived, why would they be allowed to teach children (who are easily deceived) and other women (who are supposedly more easily deceived)? The text simply says that women are not to teach men or have spiritual authority over men because Eve was deceived. God has chosen to give men the primary teaching authority in the church.

Many women excel in gifts of hospitality, mercy, teaching, evangelism, and helping/serving. Much of the ministry of the local church depends on women. Women in the church are not restricted from public praying or prophesying (1 Corinthians 11:5), only from having spiritual teaching authority over men. The Bible nowhere restricts women from exercising the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12). Women, just as much as men, are called to minister to others, to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23), and to proclaim the gospel to the lost (Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 3:15).

God has ordained that only men are to serve in positions of spiritual teaching authority in the church. This is not because men are necessarily better teachers or because women are inferior or less intelligent (which is not the case). It is simply the way God designed the church to function. Men are to set the example in spiritual leadership—in their lives and through their words. Women are to take a less authoritative role. Women are encouraged to teach other women (Titus 2:3–5). The Bible also does not restrict women from teaching children. The only activity women are restricted from is teaching or having spiritual authority over men. This precludes women from serving as pastors to men. This does not make women less important, by any means, but rather gives them a ministry focus more in agreement with God’s plan and His gifting of them.

Question: “Does a wife have to submit to her husband?”

Answer: Submission is an important issue in relation to marriage. Here is the plain biblical command: “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything” (Ephesians 5:22–24).

Even before sin entered the world, there was still the principle of the headship of the husband (1 Timothy 2:13). Adam was created first, and Eve was created to be a “helper” for Adam (Genesis 2:18–20). God has established several types of authority in the world: governments



to enforce justice in society and provide protection; pastors to lead and feed the sheep of God; husbands to love and nurture their wives; and fathers to admonish their children. In each case, submission is required: citizen to government, flock to shepherd, wife to husband, child to father.

The Greek word translated “submit,” hupotasso, is the continuing form of the verb. This means that submitting to God, the government, a pastor, or a husband is not a one-time act. It is a continual attitude, which becomes a pattern of behavior.

First, of course, we are responsible to submit to God, which is the only way we can truly obey Him (James 1:21; 4:7). And each Christian should live in humble, ready submission to others (Ephesians 5:21). In regards to submission within the family unit, 1 Corinthians 11:2–3, says that the husband is to submit to Christ (as Christ did to God the Father) and the wife is to submit to her husband.

There is much misunderstanding in our world today about the roles of husband and wife within a marriage. Even when the biblical roles are properly understood, many choose to reject them in favor of a supposed “emancipation” of women, with the result that the family unit is torn apart. It’s no surprise that the world rejects God’s design, but God’s people should be joyfully celebrating that design.

Submit is not a bad word. Submission is not a reflection of inferiority or lesser worth. Christ constantly submitted Himself to the will of the Father (Luke 22:42; John 5:30), without giving up an iota of His worth.

To counter the world’s misinformation concerning a wife’s submission to her husband, we should carefully note the following in Ephesians 5:22–24:1) A wife is to submit to one man (her husband), not to every man. The rule to submit does not extend to a woman’s place in society at large. 2) A wife is to willingly submit to her husband in personal obedience to the Lord Jesus. She submits to her husband because she loves Jesus. 3) The example of a wife’s submission is that of the church to Christ. 4) There is nothing said of the wife’s abilities, talents, or worth; the fact that she submits to her own husband does not imply that she is inferior or less worthy in any way. Also notice that there are no qualifiers to the command to submit, except “in everything.” So, the husband does not have to pass an aptitude test or an intelligence test before his wife submits. It may be a fact that she is better qualified than he to lead in many ways, but she chooses to follow the Lord’s instruction by submitting to her husband’s leadership. In so doing, a godly wife can even win her unbelieving husband to the Lord “without words” simply by her holy behavior (1 Peter 3:1).

Submission should be a natural response to loving leadership. When a husband loves his wife as Christ loves the church (Ephesians 5:25–33), then submission is a natural response from a wife to her husband. But, regardless of the husband’s love or lack thereof, the wife is commanded to submit “as to the Lord” (verse 22). This means that her obedience to God—her acceptance of His plan—will result in her submission to her husband. The “as to the Lord” comparison also reminds the wife that there is a higher authority to whom she is responsible. Thus, she is under no obligation to disobey civil law or God’s law in the name of “submission” to her husband. She submits in things that are right and lawful and God-honoring. Of course, she does not “submit” to abuse—that is not right or lawful or God-honoring. To try to use the principle of “submission” to justify abuse is to twist Scripture and promote evil.

The submission of the wife to the husband in Ephesians 5 does not allow the husband to be



selfish or domineering. His command is to love (verse 25), and he is responsible before God to fulfill that command. The husband must exercise his authority wisely, graciously, and in the fear of the God to whom he must give an account.

When a wife is loved by her husband as the church is loved by Christ, submission is not difficult. Ephesians 5:24 says, “Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.” In a marriage, submission is a position of giving honor and respect to the husband (see Ephesians 5:33) and completing what he is lacking in. It is God’s wise plan for how the family should function.

Commentator Matthew Henry wrote, “The woman was made out of Adam’s side. She was not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be loved.” The immediate context of the commands to the husband and wife in Ephesians 5:19–33 involves the filling of the Spirit. Spirit-filled believers are to be worshipful (5:19), thankful (5:20), and submissive (5:21). Paul then follows this line of thought on Spirit-filled living and applies it to wives in verses 22–24. A wife should submit to her husband, not because women are inferior (the Bible never teaches that), but because that is how God designed the marital relationship to function.

Day 5

In this day, Paul addresses some abuses of the practice of Communion. One of the most convicting parts of this day was reading Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 11:22. Our unthoughtful and selfish behavior can “disgrace God’s church and shame the poor. “ The last thing we ever want to do is disgrace God’s church. I think this is a great thing to keep in mind when we find ourselves slipping into selfish thoughts or behaviors.

If you have extra time in your group, you can do the exercise on page 139: Read 1 Corinthians 9-11 and then go around and ask the ladies if they have new insights or application that the Holy Spirit brought to their minds that they would like to share.