

First Corinthians

May 25, 2025
Chapter 11

The Matters of the LORD's Supper

“Judgment If Taken Unworthy”
Chapter 11:30-34

(3) The Judgment of the LORD's Supper

(a) Consequences of Improper Participation (11:30)

What is the judgment concerning the LORD's Supper? What are the consequences of improper participation? Paul answers both questions in one brief sentence: verse 30.

³⁰For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.

This harsh reality is that there are physical consequences for dishonoring the Lord's Supper. This verse presents a typically overlooked perspective on the judgment and repercussions of improperly partaking in the LORD's Supper: illness or death. The term “sleep” serves as a euphemism for the death of the body, but not for the death of the soul. The soul is eternal and never dies.

(i) Self-Judgment and Awareness (11:31)

With that warning, Paul emphasizes the importance of self-examination, which fosters self-judgment and awareness. Verse 31.

³¹But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.

The surefire way to avoid being judged is to honestly judge yourself fairly. By engaging in self-examination and acknowledging one's own shortcomings before participating in the Lord's Supper, you can evade the need for divine correction. It should be of utmost importance to every saint to admit personal responsibility and accountability in life for actions taken in the past. If one recognizes his or her faults and repents, judgment will not follow.

(ii) Divine Discipline (11:32)

Nevertheless, divine discipline is an essential aspect of being a true saint. Verse 32.

³²But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

Paul contrasts self-judgment with God's divine discipline. When the Lord judges believers, it is a form of discipline rather than condemnation. This discipline aims to correct, guide, and promote spiritual growth. It helps the saints avoid the same fate as this world, which is separated from God. While saints must live in this world, they should not participate in it. Discipline reflects God's care for His people and underscores His desires for their holiness and well-being.

Paul's sentence highlights the seriousness of participating in the Lord's Supper when a saint's life is insincere and sinful. Preparing for the supper requires sincere preparation of the heart. However, it is not merely something done for the chance to partake in the LORD's Supper. It should reflect a regular evaluation of one's spiritual life to always be ready for the supper outside the Church's doors. Such a life and attitude will foster personal growth, deeper faith, and ultimately, greater unity within the Church. Living this way outside the Church will ensure you are prepared for the Supper inside the Church.

(b) Instruction for Gathering (11:33)

When the saints gather for the Lord's Supper, Paul offers guidance for the meeting. See verse 33.

³³ So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

"So then, my brethren." Once again, Paul speaks to the Jews in the Church. *"When you come together to eat, wait for one another."* At the LORD's Supper meeting, the saints must be mindful of each other, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to partake together. *"Wait for one another"* is a direct instruction to change how they relate to others during the supper. Remember, Paul has previously addressed how some people ate while others were left out, causing division and inequality.

(c) Encouragement to Eat at Home (11:34)

Keep in mind that some approached the Lord's Supper as if it were a casual restaurant meal. In response, Paul encourages people to eat at home. See verse 34.

³⁴ If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment. The remaining matters I will arrange when I come.

"If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home." In the past, some saints arrived at the worship service feeling hungry. Preparing food back then was not as easy as it is today; it was a task, a chore. However, Paul advises them to eat before coming to the Lord's Supper. But why?

"So you will not gather for judgment." The LORD's Supper is not meant to be a meal; it is intended to be a time of remembrance. One serves to provide sustenance, while the other is a token of worship and gratitude for what the LORD has done.

"I will handle the remaining matters when I arrive." The saints in Corinth have received a warning. Paul is on his way, signaling that there are additional issues to tackle upon his arrival. This statement emphasizes that Paul understands his responsibility to correct wrongdoings and realign the misguided path of the saints, especially the *"brethren"* saints in Corinth.

Chapter 12

The Matters of the Spiritual

"Manifestations of the Holy Spirit"

Chapter 12:1-6

As we turn to Chapter 12, Paul has heard from Chloe about the confusion occurring in the church. In Chapter 11, Paul called those causing the confusion *"contentious."* The saints must fully understand each other's true spiritual lives. They need to comprehend how the Holy Spirit works within and through each saint to minister to both the lost and the saved.

E. Confusing Matters

1. Introduction to the Topic (12:1)

Paul introduces the topic of confusing issues in the Corinthian Church. Prior to chapter 12, he discussed Jesus' resurrection, the LORD's Supper, and outlined the proper order of the Church. Now, he aims to address spiritual matters. In chapter 12:1, Paul states,

¹ I do not want you to be unaware of spiritual gifts, brethren.

Let's begin with the first phrase: '*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren....*' Notice the word between "spiritual" and "brethren." That word is "gifts," which is in *italics*. What does that signify? The preface of the NASB 95 Bible informs us that *italics indicate editor's notes* to assist in interpreting the passage (based on their personal theological perspective). It's an editorial addition not found in the original text. In this chapter, Paul discusses spiritual matters, not specifically spiritual gifts. Why? The Holy Spirit is the gift you receive at the time of your salvation. He is the one gift, not multiple gifts.

Paul states, '*Brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.*' He emphasizes his desire for the Church to fully understand spiritual matters in a saint's life. He aims to highlight the significance of knowledge and discernment regarding the Holy Spirit's work in each saint's life. The Holy Spirit oversees the spiritual dimensions of a saint's existence here on Earth.

2. Contrast with Pagan Practices (12:2)

Paul now intends to address spirituality in contrast to pagan practices. Verse 2.

² *You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols. However, you were led.*

The phrase '*You know that when you were pagans*' serves as a reminder to the saints of their previous lives before embracing faith in Christ. It acts as a reference point for understanding their transformation, which leads to a new identity in Christ as saints.

When Paul says, '*You were led astray to the mute idols,*' he emphasizes the futility of their past worship of idols that cannot speak or respond. The city of Corinth was filled with thousands of these man-made idols. Before coming to Christ, such worship of "mute idols" was undoubtedly an accepted practice in that society, a custom that spanned many generations. How do we know this? Paul explains further when he states, '*However you were led.*' This phrase indicates the influence of beliefs among the people of the city prior to the salvation of the saints. Paul asserts that their previous experiences, devoid of the LORD, should not define their understanding of spiritual matters in Christ.

3. Understanding True Spirituality (12:3)

Paul will now begin his explanation of true spirituality as a saint. Verse 3.

³ *Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus is accursed'; and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit.*

"Therefore I make known to you." Paul is about to clarify an essential truth regarding the nature of spiritual life and its source. "No one speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus is accursed.'" With this statement, Paul begins to address the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of saints. Here, he outlines what the Holy Spirit will not do. If you feel something that you believe is the stirring of the Holy Spirit within you, it will not be negative toward the LORD Jesus. Furthermore, it will not be a false statement or negative in any way. It certainly will not be something that curses the LORD. From the negative, Paul gives a positive example when he says, '*No one can say, Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit.*' Of course, Paul speaks of genuine faith, and your actual acknowledgment of Him as the LORD is through the Holy Spirit.

With these remarks, Paul prepares for a more profound and comprehensive understanding of the Holy Spirit's work as He manifests in the lives of each saint.

F. Manifestation Matters**1. Diversity of Manifestation but the Same Spirit (12:4)****a) "Varieties of gifts"**

With the introduction of the Holy Spirit in the first three verses, Paul explains the significance of the Holy Spirit's manifestation in each person's life. Additionally, Paul presents the diversity of manifestations in every saint, yet all these expressions among the many saints originate from the same Spirit. He begins by discussing the variety of gifts. Verse 4

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.

We can all understand that the word "varieties" means *different*. However, we now come to the word that many trip over in this entire passage: the word "gifts." This word is found in this place in Scripture; nonetheless, the English translation here can be somewhat misleading and often leads many to an incorrect conclusion. The Greek term is "charismatōn." The accurate translation in English should be "gifts of grace," not just "gifts." Therefore, the phrase should read, "Now there are varieties of gifts of grace..." With that, we focus on how the Holy Spirit manifests His grace through us to accomplish His work. This means He does not work the same way in each saint, but the work He does in and through us will likely be a *different gift of grace* than the way He operates in other saints. Nevertheless, no matter how the Holy Spirit graces you, each way comes from "*the same Spirit*." Paul uses the word "Spirit," but he speaks of the *Holy Spirit*. He is the "*same Spirit*." He is the One Spirit. He is the One Gift of the Spirit promised by the LORD, who would come to dwell in the saints on the Day of Pentecost.

2. Diversity of Ministries but the Same Lord (12:5)

To demonstrate that the Holy Spirit operates similarly to the LORD, Paul compares the diversity of *gifts of grace* to the variety of ministries, emphasizing that it is the same LORD. Verse 5.

⁵And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.

"*Varieties of ministries*." The term "varieties" is the same as that found in verse 4. The word "ministries" (or "services") refers to the different ways believers can serve the LORD in the Church. We will learn that these include Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers after the Apostles have all died. These service opportunities are granted to us by "*The same Lord*." Just as the Spirit is the source of spiritual manifestations, Jesus Christ is the source of the various ministries. Paul reminds the saints that their service, regardless of their role, is ultimately for the Lord, and all ministries point back to Him.

3. Diversity of Effects but the Same God (12:6)

⁵There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.

"*Varieties of effects*." The Greek word for "effects" is *energēma*, which means "*the workings*." This refers to how the Holy Spirit operates in the saints in various ways. Regardless of how the Holy Spirit works, He is "*the same God who works all things in all persons*." Note that I have crossed out the word "*persons*." This addition by the English editors is not present in the Greek text. Nevertheless, in whatever way the Holy Spirit acts in the life of each saint, He is the same God working in all saints. He is the Holy Spirit.