

Summit Woods Baptist Church  
First Corinthians Sermon Study Equipping Class

1 Corinthians 11:17-22

❖ Day 1

Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-22.

For these lessons, the sermon text is provided in a format that visually helps display the structure of the paragraph or section of text. The main verbs are underlined. Generally, the main indicative clauses remain to the left, and the supporting clauses are either directly underneath when they have equal priority to what comes before, or are tabbed to the right when the clause supports, develops, or draws a conclusion from a neighboring clause.

<sup>17</sup>But in the following instructions I do not commend you,  
because when you come together  
it is not for the better  
but for the worse.  
<sup>18</sup>For, in the first place, when you come together as a church,  
I hear that  
there are divisions among you.  
And I believe it in part,  
<sup>19</sup>for there must be factions among you  
in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.  
<sup>20</sup>When you come together,  
it is not the Lord's supper that you eat.  
<sup>21</sup>For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal.  
One goes hungry,  
another gets drunk.  
<sup>22</sup>What!  
Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?  
Or do you despise the church of God  
and humiliate those who have nothing?  
What shall I say to you?  
Shall I commend you in this?  
No, I will not.

1. What verb is repeated in verses 17 and 22c as bookends to this paragraph?
2. What has Paul heard about them? From whom do you think he may have heard this report?
3. There are two most likely interpretations of verse 19. List a few supports and problems with each interpretation, and decide which one you think is more likely (or modify either statement to be most likely). *(this question continues on the next page)*

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- a. Paul is making a sincere statement that divisions within the Corinthian church reveal who is genuine (and it is not the divisive ones – see verse 16).
  - b. Paul is sarcastically quoting a Corinthian slogan to the effect that “dissentions are unavoidable and inevitable,” similar to a sarcastic understanding of verse 2.
4. In verse 21, what evidence was reported to Paul to demonstrate their division?
5. Though the people say that they are eating the Lord’s supper, what does Paul say in verse 20?
6. What is the real purpose of the Lord’s supper? (Hint: Look ahead to 11:26.)
7. In verse 17b, Paul says that their behavior “is not for the better but for the worse.”
- a. What is the “better” that should come from the right practice of the Lord’s supper? (Refer back to 10:17.)
  - b. What is the “worse” that results from the Corinthians’ practice, and from where in the text do you get your answer?

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- c. In summary, what heart issues does Paul say their behavior reveals? And what is the basis for their division? (Note that 'those who have nothing' could literally be translated 'the have-nots'.)

❖ Day 2

Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-22 again.

8. How does it appear that they are treating the Lord's supper in comparison to other meals? (Hint: Verse 22a should help inform your answer.)
9. What phrase does Paul repeat three times in verses 17-20?
10. This phrase logistically lets us know that Paul is talking about the gathered congregation in this passage, but how is this phrase also significant to the heart issues he is addressing?
11. Where did the church in Corinth meet? Did they have a dedicated church building?
12. Who is supposed to be the 'host' of this meal, and therefore the one receiving honor and attention?
13. If it is not the *Lord's* supper, then whose supper is it (who is the honored host)?
14. Is Paul speaking against dinner parties?

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15. The practices Paul bemoans would have been the social norm for a private dinner party at someone's home and not offensive at all. It was common for wealthier guests to dine on finer foods in the main dining room while those of lower social standing dined on smaller quantities of simpler foods in the courtyard. What sets *this* supper apart and makes *this* occasion different?

❖ Day 3

Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-22 again.

16. From where did they receive their initial instructions about the Lord's supper that they should have been following? (Hint: Look back at verse 2.)
17. From what source does it appear they are drawing from instead to establish their practice?
18. Though the scenarios are different, how do the heart issues here relate to the heart issues we saw in chapters 8-10?
19. What are other ways these heart issues might show up in a congregation?

In preparation for Sunday, pray that in every way we would honor the Lord above all and reflect the gospel when we come together as a church.