

## LESSON EIGHT

# PAUL'S FIRST CORINTHIAN LETTER (Continued)

Scriptural Reference: I Corinthians Chapters 11, 12, 14.

### A. **WOMEN'S PLACE IN PUBLIC WORSHIP: (I Corinthians 11:1-16, I Corinthians 14:34-35).**

In chapter 12 Paul dealt with proper behavior in public worship. The conduct of women involves the principle of subjection to the man. Paul's chief argument has to do with headship. In the church the woman covers her head, to acknowledge the headship of the man and the man leaves his head uncovered to acknowledge the headship of Christ.

Before correcting the women, Paul compliments them on the ordinances, which they have kept. It is his desire that they follow Christ as closely as he has. Christ is dishonored when a man prays, covered. Man is dishonored when a woman prays, uncovered. It is a disgrace for a woman to have her head shorn or shaven for it shows that she is not in subjection to man. Man is the glory and image of Christ and woman is the glory of man.

Corinth was full of temple prostitutes. These lewd women were known to go about the street unveiled, which was a sign of their character. Some of Christian women, taking advantage of their newfound liberty in Christ were laying aside their veils in church meetings, and it was this that Paul endeavored to correct.

In the scripture, Paul established the necessity of long hair. He stated that the woman's hair was her glory and her covering (verse 15). There was no custom in the church of a woman cutting her hair and thus there was no reason for contention (verse 16).

Not only did Paul emphasize the importance of a woman having long hair, and not cutting her hair, but also he emphasized the importance of a man having his hair cut. Definitely God wants a distinct distinction between male and female and when it comes to the matter of worship the woman must conform to God's plan and also man must conform.

In verse 10, the word "power" means "covering; authority." This is a reminder that even the angels cover their faces as they worship Jehovah, and they want to look down and see a Christian woman worshiping God also in reverence. In verse 11, we are reminded that we are nothing without Him. Yet, as the woman is from the man by creation, even so is man also from the woman by human birth, but all things are of God and in Jesus Christ the man the woman are together in a love that is submissive for the glory of the Lord Jesus.

### B. **THE LORD'S SUPPER: (I Corinthians 11:17-34).**

Another problem of the Corinthian church concerned their method of keeping the Lord's Supper. Paul defined how that the observance of that ceremony could be a blessing or could be a curse. Paul did not disapprove of literal communion but he set forth the orderly procedure

and gave the spiritual interpretation, which would result in fellowship between them and the Lord.

It was the practice in the early church to meet together for what they called "love feasts." This was simply a time of social fellowship, which they followed with the breaking of bread. The trouble was that in Corinth the Lord's table had become abused because of surfeiting. Many who brought food ate it in their own clique and those who had abundance were not sharing with those who had little.

The cup containing the fruit of the vine represented the shed blood of Christ and the broken bread representing his broken body. These were emblems, symbolical of the body and blood of Christ. There was no virtue in the wine and bread itself. Nothing is said as to how often the observance should be made but it is not to become commonplace. In observing the Lord's Supper, we look back to Calvary and forward to His coming.

Paul warned the Corinthian church against the sin of eating the bread and drinking the cup, unworthily. He did not write, if we are unworthy for we could never be worthy. Our worthiness is in Christ. He warned against the way in which the communion service would be kept or the attitude in which we would approach the table. When we meet around the Lord's table, we are to remember the Lord's body. This may mean, not only His body that hung on the cross, but the body of Jesus Christ in the world today. If we discern that we, a part of His body, and are in any way sinning against the body, we are grieving the Lord and would be eating unworthily. Also, if we were to not examine ourselves, we would be eating and drinking unworthily. This is a very serious thing and because of this many are sick and some have even died.

### **C. SPIRITUAL GIFTS: (I Corinthians 12).**

#### **1. UNITY OF THE BODY:**

It would appear that Paul had finished answering the questions that the Corinthian church had asked and that he had now completed dealing with carnality in the church and was going to deal with spiritual things. Chapter 12 teaches two things: unity of the body and the operation of the gifts of the Spirit.

The problem with the Corinthian church was a three-fold problem: a) Division and carnality; b) immorality and sin; c) problems of church administration and of life in general.

The unity of the body answers the question and gives the remedy for divisions and carnality. Verse 13 is one of the more important verses of the entire Bible. This is a tremendous statement, which every Christian must understand fully. There is only one body and one spirit. Christians may come from many different cultures and nationalities but one spirit places them into one body. The members of the church may be different in temperament and personality but they are members one of another and together they make one body.

The same spirit works in all. The Spirit divides to every man as He wills. The saints must all work together. All are needed in the church, and all the manifestations and gifts of the Spirit. Some may seem to be more important and have greater responsibility and to be more prominent, but no member should feel superior to another because each is dependent upon the other. Actually, within the body there is no such thing as an unimportant member or a member who is essential. We should seek the welfare of the body, desire the will of

God and covet to be used by God in a way that will glorify the Lord and benefit the entire body.

## 2. GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT:

There are nine gifts of the Spirit, placed in the church for the profit of each member (verse 7). These gifts of the Spirit are diverse and given to every man severally as the Lord wills (verse 11). The gifts of the Spirit are distributed within the body according to the Lord's will. They are there, not for display purposes, not to be played with and to be shown off, nor to reveal the spirituality of a saint. They are there to meet a definite need that may arise in the church and to minister to the church. These nine gifts are as follows:

- a. Word of Wisdom. Let us note that this is not wisdom but the word of wisdom. Jesus showed the gift of the word of wisdom in his ministry (Mark 12:14-17). He promised his disciples similar aid (Matthew 10:19-20).
- b. Word of Knowledge. Again this is not knowledge but the word of knowledge. We see this manifested in the ministry of the Apostle Paul (Acts 27:22-26).
- c. Faith. The gift of faith is not given to make up for a lack of faith or weak faith. This gift of faith is a supernatural endowment by which some special work is wrought through answered prayer. It is to meet a special need that may arise in a church.
- d. Gifts of Healing. This gift is in the plural - gifts of healing. We notice that in verse 28 it is gifts of healings. The reason for the plural is probably because of the many causes of sickness. Some ailments are caused by demon activity; others are organic and still others may call for a correction of living habits. The human body is extremely complex and there may be hundreds of reasons for sickness, both spiritual and physical. For this reason, it is the gifts of healing.
- e. Working of Miracles. A miracle is an act of God, which to the natural man would seem impossible and which would have no natural explanation. Again this gift is not for display purposes but to meet needs that arise in the protection and preservation of God's people.
- f. Prophecy. New Testament prophecy is a forth telling of Scripture truths, within the framework of the Bible. Prophecy is speaking by inspiration in ones own mother tongue. Prophecy speaks unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort (I Corinthians 14:3).
- g. Discerning of Spirits. The Holy Spirit places into the body the gift of the discerning of spirits, making us aware of a wrong spirit and giving us knowledge how to deal with such a wrong spirit. It is the opinion of the writer that every successful pastor must have at least in a measure, this gift. This is one of the most important of all nine gifts.
- h. Divers Kinds of Tongues. This gift connected with the gift of prophecy is speaking to the church, a message that God wants the church to hear. It should be operated in strict connection with interpretation. It is a message addressed to the church strictly in harmony with Bible truths.
- i. Interpretation of Tongues. In the original, the word "interpret" does not mean "to translate" but "to explain." The one who receives this gift explains the meaning of the message in tongues, yielding to the Spirit, in the giving forth of the message. Sometimes the message in tongues is longer than the interpretation and vice versa.

It may help us somewhat in understanding the ministry within the church of the nine gifts by grouping them into three groups as follows:

- a. Gifts of Knowledge (to know): word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discerning of spirits.
- b. Gifts of Power (to act): faith, working of miracles, gifts of healing.

- c. Gifts of Utterance (to speak): prophecy, divers kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues.

### 3. OTHER GIFTS:

In verse 28, Paul lists other ministries and gifts, which God has placed in the church: apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

We should note that his word "governments" actually is referring to organizations. This is scriptural proof that organization is of God.

The question: "Do all speak with tongues?" is a definite reference to the gift of tongues, one of the nine gifts. It does not refer to the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

### D. ORDERLY WORSHIP: (I Corinthians 14).

In chapter 14, Paul gave clear instruction relative to tongues and interpretations. This gift may either be misused or neglected. We should strive to do neither. Let us not misinterpret verse 19. Nowhere did Paul condemn speaking in tongues but he did advise against ministering to the church congregation in tongues unless accompanied by orderly interpretations. The edifying of the church was Paul's concern and he recommended prophecy above tongues for that purpose, unless there was an interpreter.

There are several important truths brought out in this chapter concerning orderly worship in the church. We might list a few of them:

1. Love should govern the operation of the gifts of the Spirit.
2. The guiding principle of the operation of the gifts of the Spirit is to edify the church.
3. There are four ways of speaking to the church, namely: by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by doctrine (verse 6).
4. Prophecy is speaking unto men to edification, exhortation and comfort (verse 3).
5. One may speak in tongues in prayer and worship and by so doing edify himself (verse 4).
6. The vernacular should be used in the church so that the unsaved can understand what is going on (verses 19, 20).
7. The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. This simply means that a prophet does have power to control the gift.
8. There should be no confusion in the church but everything should be done decently, in order and that which will glorify the Lord.

## LESSON EIGHT

### SELF HELP TEST

- A. Explain clearly how a woman's hair is her glory.
- B. What is a woman's place in public worship?
- C. How may a person partake of the Lord's Supper unworthily?
- D. What were the three main problems existing in the Corinthian church?
- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
- E. List five principles which govern orderly worship in the church:
- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.