



1 Corinthians 11:1-2

1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

2 Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you.

Why ought we to imitate Paul? In what ways should we imitate him? It may help to review previous chapters to understand.

*Paul did not create the early church or Christianity. There were already traditions being built and he received them and then passed them on. What traditions has he passed along? For one example, **read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.***

1 Corinthians 11:3-10

3 But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband,¹ and the head of Christ is God. **4** Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, **5** but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. **6** For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. **7** For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. **8** For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. **9** Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. **10** That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.

Have you heard these verses discussed before? What has been your exposure to or understanding of this passage?

Here Paul is discussing proper conduct within worship. Who is praying and prophesying in these settings?

If we understand that both men and women are prophesying, a public practice, how does that affect the way we might read the rest of this passage (and similar passages in the New Testament)?

¹ Or ...*woman is man*. Each instance of “wife” may be read as “woman,” as is in most other English translations.

A concern of Paul's is that the genders remain distinct, thus his emphasis on dress and hairstyle, but some had taken the idea that, "all things are lawful for me" (**1 Cor 6:12**) as a basis to adopt new practices. If the women dressed or wore styles typical of temple prostitutes of their time (ie. uncovered hair), or made their appearance like men, what problems do you think might arise in that culture?

1 Corinthians 11:11-16

11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; **12** for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. **13** Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? **14** Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, **15** but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. **16** If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.

Although he lifts up the distinctions between men and women, what does he follow with in these verses? What is the significance of verses 11-12?

This passage has perplexed many in the church, and still does so today. What questions do you still have concerning 1 Corinthians 11:1-16? What can you do to answer these questions?

Acts 16:35-40

35 But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go." **36** And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace." **37** But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out." **38** The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. **39** So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. **40** So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

On his way out of Philippi after being freed from jail, Paul stops to see the some fellow believers. In doing so whose house does he go to? What does this probably say about her standing in the church?

*For another example of female leadership, read **Acts 18** to learn about Corinth's own Priscilla. How did she help Paul? Whom did she teach?*

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?