

# Series: Together Toward Maturity

Inductive Bible Study Guide: 1 Corinthians 11:1-16



## Step 1: Observation – What does the passage say?

Read **1 Corinthians 11:1–16** carefully and slowly. This passage deals with worship, headship, honor, and cultural expressions within the Corinthian church.

### Observation Prompts:

- What instructions does Paul give?
- What relationships are described?
- What words or ideas are repeated?
- What cultural practices are mentioned?
- How does Paul connect theology and practice?

### Read the passage and note what you see:

What command or encouragement does Paul give in verse 1?

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What order or structure does Paul describe in verse 3?

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What does Paul say brings honor or dishonor when men and women pray or prophesy in worship? (vv. 4-5)

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What instructions does Paul give regarding covering or uncovering the head?(vv. 6-7)

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What instructions does Paul give regarding covering or uncovering the head, and how does he connect this to glory and honor? (vv.8-10)

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What balance does Paul introduce in verses 11–12?

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What appeal does Paul make to nature or common practice in verses 13–15?

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How does Paul conclude the discussion in verse 16?

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## Step 2: Interpretation – What does the passage mean?

Paul is addressing **order and honor in worship**, not value or worth. The Corinthians lived in a culture where outward symbols (like head coverings and hairstyles) communicated loyalty, morality, and honor. Paul's concern is that worship visibly reflects **God's design, mutual honor, and Christ-centered authority**.

### Questions to Explore:

**What does Paul mean by “head” in verse 3?**

How does this relate to authority, responsibility, and source rather than value?

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Why does Paul connect outward actions during prayer and prophecy with honor or dishonor?  
What does this suggest about how worship reflects deeper spiritual realities? (vv.4-5)

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How does Paul use the ideas of glory and honor to explain different expressions for men and women in worship? What distinction is he making without implying inequality? (vv.6-7)

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How does Paul ground his instructions in creation and purpose rather than preference or opinion? What does this reveal about order and authority in God's design? (vv.8-10)

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Why does Paul intentionally balance his argument in verses 11–12? What does this teach about mutual dependence between men and women in the Lord?

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How does Paul use cultural norms (nature, hair length) to support his point? (vv.13–15)

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What does verse 16 suggest about unity and church-wide practice?

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## Word Study Suggestions:

- **Head (v.3):** Greek *kephalē* — source, authority, or leadership responsibility.
- **Honor/Dishonor (vv.4–6):** refers to respect toward the head..
- **Authority (v.10):** sign or symbol of authority, order, or accountability.
- **Nature (v.14):** cultural norms shaped by creation and custom.
- **In the Lord (v.11):** life lived under Christ’s rule and grace.

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## Step 3: Application – How should I respond?

This passage challenges believers to think deeply about **how worship reflects what we believe about God, authority, and one another**. While cultural expressions may change, the **principles of honor, order, humility, and unity** remain.

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**Personal Reflection:** Do my attitudes and actions in worship reflect honor toward God and others?

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How do I respond to God’s design for order and authority — with trust or resistance?

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Where might I be tempted to resist God’s order instead of receiving the truth of His word with faith?

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What principle from this passage applies to every culture and generation, even if the expression looks different today?

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What part of this passage felt most challenging or uncomfortable—and why?

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What does honoring God’s design look like in my daily life, not just in church?

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Do I trust that God’s design is ultimately for my good, even when I don’t fully understand it?

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## Summary Truths:

- Worship is not only internal — it is also visible and communal.
- God’s design includes order, authority, and mutual honor.
- Headship reflects responsibility and accountability, not superiority.
- Men and women are equal in value and purpose, yet distinct in role.
- Our goal in worship is not self-expression, but God’s glory.

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## Optional Memory Verse:

*Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.— 1 Corinthians 11:11-12 (ESV)*

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## Prayer Prompt:

“Lord, teach me to worship You with humility and reverence. Help me honor Your design and reflect Your glory in how I live, serve, and gather with Your people. Unite Your church in truth, love, and submission to Christ.”

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## For Further Study:

- Ephesians 5:21–33 — Mutual submission and Christlike love
- Philippians 2:1–11 — Christ’s humility as our model
- Colossians 3:12–17 — Order, unity, and worship in the body