

Series: Together Toward Maturity

Inductive Bible Study Guide: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34



Step 1: Observation – What does the passage say?

Read **1 Corinthians 11:17–34** slowly and more than once. Paul addresses serious problems in the Corinthian church related to their gatherings and their practice of the Lord's Supper.

Observation Prompts:

- What problems does Paul identify when the church gathers together?
- What behaviors show division and selfishness?
- What instructions does Paul repeat from Jesus?
- What warnings does Paul give?
- What corrections does Paul offer moving forward?

Read the passage and note what you see:

What does Paul say about the Corinthians' gatherings in verses 17–19?

What behavior does Paul confront in verses 20–22?

What does Paul recount about the Lord's Supper in verses 23–26?

What warnings does Paul give about participating in an unworthy manner in verses 27–32?

What final instructions does Paul give in verses 33–34?

Step 2: Interpretation – What does the passage mean?

Paul rebukes the Corinthian church because their worship gatherings are marked by division rather than unity. What should have been a proclamation of Christ’s sacrifice had become a display of selfishness and inequality.

By returning to Jesus’ words at the Last Supper, Paul reminds them that communion is a sacred act meant to unite believers around the cross. His warnings are not meant to condemn, but to correct, protect, and restore the church.

Questions to Explore:

Why does Paul say their gatherings do more harm than good?

What do divisions reveal about the church’s spiritual health?

Why is Paul so strong in rebuking their behavior during the Lord's Supper?

Why does Paul return to Jesus' original words and actions when correcting the church?

What does it mean to take the Lord's Supper in an "unworthy manner"?

How does self-examination protect both the individual believer and the church?

How do Paul's final instructions help restore unity without removing the Lord's Supper?

Word Study Suggestions:

- **Unworthy manner (v.27):** treating the Supper carelessly or selfishly, not personal perfection
 - **Discern the body (v.29):** recognizing Christ's sacrifice and the unity of the church
 - **Judgment / discipline (vv.30–32):** corrective and restorative, not condemning
 - **Proclaim (v.26):** the Lord's Supper is a visible declaration of the gospel
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Step 3: Application – How should I respond?

Paul calls believers to examine not only personal sin, but also how we treat one another when we gather for worship. Communion should reflect humility, repentance, gratitude, and unity in Christ.

Personal Reflection:

Do my attitudes or actions contribute to unity or division in the church?

Am I mindful of others when we gather, or do I focus primarily on myself?

How does remembering Christ's sacrifice shape my approach to communion?

Do I practice honest self-examination and repentance before worship?

What practical steps can I take to help make our church gatherings more Christ-centered and unified?

Summary Truths:

- Worship gatherings can harm rather than help when marked by pride and division.
 - The Lord's Supper proclaims Christ's death and unites His people.
 - Self-examination guards us from treating holy things lightly.
 - God's discipline is loving and restorative.
 - True communion requires reverence for Christ and love for His body.
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Optional Memory Verse:

"Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup."
— *1 Corinthians 11:28 (ESV)*

Prayer Prompt:

"Lord Jesus, thank You for Your body and blood given for us. Teach us to worship with humility, repentance, and love for one another. Heal division in Your church and help us faithfully proclaim Your death until You come."

For Further Study:

- Matthew 26:26–29 — The institution of the Lord's Supper
- Acts 2:42–47 — Unity in the early church
- James 5:16 — Confession and restoration
- Ephesians 4:1–6 — Unity in the body of Christ