

# **Journey Through the New Testament**

## **I Corinthians 7-11**

### ***Series: Body Language***

### ***“Spatial Awareness”***

**7-21-19**

#### ***Introduction***

In Paul’s letter to the Corinthian believers, he urged them to change their behavior. His instructions were for the good of the believers as the church body and for the faith development of others. The Corinthian church had drifted away from the picture of the early church in Acts where they were “devoted to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer...All the believers were together and had everything in Common.” (Acts 2:42-43). Paul was directing them back to behaving as the body of Christ.

#### ***Opening Prayer***

O God, as we strive to be the church in our time, strengthen us as the body of Christ. May we seek to glorify you in all that we do and to be an example of your love to everyone we encounter. In Christ we pray. Amen.

#### ***Q and A***

***Lesson Notes:*** Scan the section headings for chapters 7-11 for a fast review of the various questions and answers that Paul is addressing in the Corinthian church. Some of Paul’s letter answered specific questions that the church had previously written to him about. Their conduct reflected the Corinthian culture more than the love of Christ or care for others. A quick summary of Paul’s advice provides clues to guide our behavior as a church and as individual believers. You may wish to divide into smaller groups and assign scripture references to each in order to save time.

#### ***What?***

1. What was Paul’s answer regarding food sacrificed to idols? (8:1-8)
2. What was the gauge for deciding to eat or not eat something? (8:9-13)
3. What was Paul’s advice regarding conduct during communion? (10:24, 31, 11:33)

## ***So What?***

1. So, when it comes to making choices about our actions as believers, what is a general “rule of thumb” to guide us based upon the above advice that Paul gave to the Corinthian church?
2. Consider how the church has shifted with the trends in culture—dress, music styles, worship times, locations of worship, formal, informal, use of technology, etc. How do we sometimes focus on the wrong things when deciding how we should look or act as believers? Give examples. Think about internal attitudes verses external appearance.
3. What behaviors from “church people” repel nonbelievers?

***Lesson Notes:*** The cultural norms for males and females in ancient Corinth played a part in Paul’s description of conduct in worship. Corinth was full of pagan temples and idol worship. The worship of Aphrodite included wild sexual rituals. The temple priestesses were prostitutes and some scholars believe they had short hair. There are many interpretations of Pauls’ instructions regarding hair and head covering. Many of the problems in the Corinthian church were related to the “anything goes” culture that had crept into the church. Paul gave guidance for the situations they were encountering in their world at the time.

## ***Now What?***

1. In our time, what behaviors could be “permissible” but “cause someone to stumble?” (10:23, 31,32)
2. How does our behavior affect the power of our witness?
3. How might our behavior be seen as “holier than thou?”
4. How does authenticity, humility, and concern for others strengthen our credibility as a believer?

***Lesson Notes:*** We have freedom in Christ, but we must use that freedom carefully so as not to have a negative influence on the faith of others. The church is the body of Christ and we have a responsibility to live accordingly; in unity and love glorifying God in all that we do. Our witness and example impact other people.

## ***Closing***

*As a matter of fact, do everything heartily and freely to God’s glory. At the same time, don’t be callous in your exercise of freedom, thoughtlessly stepping on the toes of those who aren’t as free as you are. (1 Cor 10:31, The Message)*