

Through the Bible - 1 Corinthians - Part 2

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of fleeing temptation, prioritizing devotion to the Lord, and maintaining a healthy marriage to avoid immorality and maintain a strong relationship with God.

Duration: 57:13

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 7:8-9

Topics: "Through The Bible"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of freedom in the church and respecting each other's decisions. The example of Paul's willingness to let others choose whether or not to go on a mission trip is highlighted. The speaker also discusses the importance of evangelism leading to other ministries that teach and humble individuals. The sermon concludes with a reminder to do everything in love and to prioritize devotion to the Lord.

Transcript

Let's turn now to God's word. We'll turn to 1 Corinthians and chapter 7. This continues from the previous chapter. There is only one way to overcome the temptation to immorality.

And that is what is mentioned in chapter 6 verse 18. Run away. When Joseph was tempted by Potiphar's wife, he ran away.

If we don't flee and stand around exposing ourselves to temptation, you can be pretty sure that one day you'll fall. But if you have the attitude of running away from anything that is even a temptation to immorality, if you find that a conversation or a friendship or a relationship is moving in dangerous directions, there is only one thing you must do. Please remember that all your life, if you don't want to destroy your life and your ministry, turn around and run.

Get away from there. Very, very important. There are people who have not taken that advice and have destroyed their whole life and ministry.

Can you imagine the regret they will have in eternity because they didn't run. And in that context, he goes on to say in chapter 7 about marriage. He says, yeah, it's good not to be married if you can be more useful in terms of time, having more time for the Lord's work.

But because there's such a lot of immorality in the world, verse 2, and it's even more true today, let every man have his own wife and let every woman have her own husband. And that says that marriage is a protection from immorality. Now, some people think, oh, that's a very unspiritual reason for marriage.

Call it whatever you like. The Holy Spirit puts it there in the Bible as a very good reason for getting married. That is to overcome immorality.

There's such a lot of immorality in the world. Don't be so super spiritual as to think that this is a very low reason for getting married. If the Holy Spirit has put it there, it's a very good reason for getting married.

And that's why later on he says in verse 9, if you don't have self-control, it is better to marry than to burn. A person can burn with sexual desire and passion, and he does not have the self-control to limit himself, then it's far better to get married and avoid that burning and avoid unnecessary temptation. The Bible is very down-to-earth and practical.

It doesn't teach some hermit type of life where you're away from the world in some type of monastery or forest. You live in the middle of the world just like Jesus lived an ordinary life with husband and wife. It says about Enoch, he walked with God and he had sons and daughters.

You can walk with God and live a married life and have sons and daughters, and he walked with God for 300 years. And so marriage can be a protection for you in this world, particularly in the ministry. Then it says when you do get married, husband and wife must remember that they lose their authority over their bodies the moment they are married.

I find in the Indian culture it's very, very important, especially for women who get married, to understand this. Very often there's not enough teaching on this in the churches. People are embarrassed to speak about what scripture speaks so plainly in 1 Corinthians 7, verses 3 and 4, that when a husband gets married, the husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, the wife must fulfill her duty to her husband.

It's called a duty. That sexual relationship is called a duty. Nothing to be ashamed of, just like the duty of cooking the food, taking care of the house.

The sexual relationship is also a duty in a married relationship. Verse 4, once a woman gets married, she does not have authority over her body. Her body, from the day she gets married, belongs to her husband.

And before she gets married, she has authority over her body. After she gets married, from that day, she has to give her body to her husband anytime. The husband also, you see, this is the part which sometimes husbands are very eager to let their wives know their responsibilities, but don't recognize their own responsibilities as husbands.

The same verse says, the husband also does not have authority over his body, but his wife does. Now what does this mean for the husband? I don't believe it's referring primarily to the sexual relationship, the physical relationship in marriage, because husbands may be very eager for that. But it's talking about the fact that your body, if you're married, belongs now to your wife.

What does that mean? That means if you're traveling in a bus, you're a married man and you see a pretty girl, please remember that your eyes belong to your wife. That's in practical terms, that's what it means. You're already married, why are you looking at this pretty girl? No, you're not considering a second wife, are you? Your eyes belong to your wife.

If you don't want your eyes to belong to your wife, don't get married. Then you look at the different girls and see which one you want to marry. But after you're married, why are your eyes still roaming here and there? It's a very important verse.

Your body belongs to your wife. You have to be careful with your eyes, you have to be careful with your tongue in the way you converse with other girls. I'm not saying you shouldn't, I believe it's normal to converse with girls and women, but it's a question of how you do it.

You can do it in a flirtatious, loose type of way, and there's a lot of that. You know the amount of immorality there is among Christian workers in all denominations? It's a scandal. Where does it begin? It begins in the heart, with thoughts, it begins with not a healthy relationship with one's wife, it begins with eyes that are wandering, and it begins with not running away from close encounters.

So if you steer clear of these things, you will not add to the scandals that already are there in Christendom. Apart from the scandals, it completely ruins your ministry for God thereafter, your effectiveness for God. So it's very, very important.

As a married person, be faithful to your wife. And when you find the passion strong, the answer is get married. And keep a very close, healthy, happy relationship as husband and wife, because that's a great protection in an evil world.

And he goes on to mention here that it's possible that God may call some people to a single life. See, for example, verse 7, I wish that all men were like me. Paul was single.

But each man has his own gift from God. So he says, I realize that some people don't have this calling. See, particularly in a ministry like the Apostles, in a time in those days when you couldn't travel too much so quickly, today you can travel from one end of the world to the other in less than 24 hours.

Whereas Paul, if he wanted to travel even 50 miles, it would take a whole day. It's very different today. And so in those days, an Apostle traveled.

He would hardly ever be at home if he were married. That's why it says some of the Apostles took their wives with them. And so in such situations, he says that it's good for an Apostle to be single.

And there may be certain situations today where it's good for people to be single, but I think it's perhaps less than 1% of cases because of the change situation. And also the other factor there was persecution. There was a lot of persecution at that time.

And therefore, he also encourages people to be like that. And I want to show you this verse in verse 35. He says, the reason why I want to encourage you to consider single life is basically this.

To secure your undistracted devotion to the Lord. He earlier says, if you live in this world, you can't afford to be taken up with everything that happens in the world. Okay, there may be certain times when things happen and you have to weep, but don't keep weeping forever.

Finish with it. And those who rejoice, you don't get so taken up with the joy of earthly things. Maybe you built a new house and get so excited about it.

It's okay, but put it in, get over it and get on with serving the Lord. And if you buy something and you're so taken up with what you bought, don't get taken up with anything in this world. That's what he's basically

saying.

And he says, even if you're married, verse 29, don't let your wife and your home life be everything to you. There is work to be done for the Lord. And remember, your devotion to the Lord, verse 35, must be undistracted.

The Lord must be first in your life. And I want you to notice one other thing that Paul says here. More than once he says words like this, verse 25, Concerning virgins, I don't have any command from the Lord, but I give my opinion.

In another place he says, I say, in verse 8, it's good for unmarried people. And to the others, not I, verse 12, I say, but not the Lord. And somewhere else he says, but this is what the Lord is saying, not me.

So Paul distinguishes here in this passage, in this whole chapter, he says certain things, I'm giving you, verse 25, my opinion. Now, it's very healthy for God's servants to distinguish, like Paul did here in verse 25, between the commands of the Lord and their opinions when they preach. There's nothing wrong in giving your opinion.

But make sure you don't confuse your opinion with God's commands. Make it clear to the people, this is God's command and this is my opinion. This is not what God has commanded.

I'm giving you my opinion. And the end of the chapter, verse 40, he says, in my opinion. And he says, I think I have the spirit of God.

See the humility of this man. His opinion is such a godly opinion, but he doesn't have this arrogance that some people have today, who say, thus says the Lord. He says, I think I have the spirit of God.

And I'll tell you this, after being a believer for so many years, I would rather listen to a man who says, I think I have the spirit of God, than to somebody who says, thus said the Lord. Because I've discovered that almost all these people who say, thus said the Lord, the Lord is not speaking at all. It's just they themselves.

Whereas, when a man is humble enough to say, well brother, I think I have the spirit when I say this. Most of the time, God speaks through such humble people. And I would rather listen to such a man, than a man who arrogantly imagines that he's the mouthpiece of God.

Okay, chapter 8. He's speaking about using our liberty to do what we like, in a way that hinders other people. You see, those days, all the meat that was sold in the market, was hung in front of the idols, in the idol's temple. And then only sold.

So, you could not be a non-vegetarian in those days, without eating meat offered to idols. There was no other meat. You had to be a vegetarian.

In Romans 14 also it speaks about that. And so some believers said, this meat offered to idols, I'm never going to eat it. Fine.

So they were vegetarians all through their life. There were others who said, what is an idol? Somebody takes a piece of wood and carves something and puts it up there. And then you hang some meat in front of it.

It doesn't make any difference to me. Whether it's hung in front of that wooden block or anything, there's no idol. I believe in only one God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And I give thanks over this meat and I eat it. He was also right. And here Paul is saying, Yeah, there are both views possible, he said in Romans 14.

And let each respect the other person's view. That he mentions in Romans 14. Don't force the other person to conform to your view.

See, we face this here in India sometimes. When people give you some Diwali sweets. And have they offered it to idols or not? You don't know.

Well, Paul says, later on in chapter 10. If some unbeliever invites you. 1 Corinthians 10, 27.

Eat what is set before you and don't ask any questions. Otherwise, you may not be able to enjoy that food. But if someone says to you, These sweets were offered to idols.

Then you have to say, sorry. I'm sorry, then I won't take it. Not because you're afraid of that idol.

That's only a block of wood. But for his conscience. To show him that you don't believe in idol worship.

It's for his sake. That's what it says there in verse 28. So, in 1 Corinthians 8. He says, the most important thing is not these issues.

The most important thing is, Do you have love? 1 Corinthians 8, 1. Knowledge makes you arrogant. You know the people who said, What is an idol? It's nothing, a block of wood. You fellows don't have knowledge.

You're all scared. Okay, you got a lot of knowledge. You say, that's a block of wood.

Correct, you're right. But you don't have any love. You don't have any concern.

That your attitude and the way you're doing something. Is causing that person to stumble. And so, he says, it's true.

Even if there are so many gods and all that. In verse 5. There is for us only one God. And verse 4. We know there's no such thing as an idol.

Because there is only one God. So, he says, all that is true. I agree with you.

What you're saying is right. But, verse 7. Some people are being accustomed to the idol. I mean, they came out of idolatry.

And they were used to recognizing that block of wood as a God. And their conscience is defiled. He says, you don't have that.

You didn't have that background. Now, he says, take care. Verse 9. That your liberty does not cause another person to stumble.

Because if someone sees you sitting in the idol's temple. This is the problem. You're sitting in an idol's temple.

Verse 10. And eating. Because you say, what is idol? It's just a block of wood.

And this man. His conscience is weak. And he also does what you do.

And he has a problem when he does it. See, the way it applies to us today could be in things like this. Now, the Bible does not say that if you drink a glass of beer, it's a sin.

There's no verse in the Bible that says that. The Bible only says, you shouldn't get drunk. You take a peg of whiskey, that's not a sin.

But, that's not the end of the story. Supposing another person sees you drinking a little bit of toddy. Or a little bit of beer.

And you stop with half a glass of what that's finished. You've got control. That person sees you as a leader or a godly brother.

Oh, he can drink it. Then it must be alright. He also starts drinking it.

And he does not have the self-control that you have. He begins to take more and more and more and becomes a drunkard. Who led him along the pathway of drunkenness? You.

So, your liberty to take one glass and stop at that has led to another person falling into sin. So, what should you do? You say, a true Christian will deny himself. He doesn't say, is it right or wrong? He says, is it profitable? All things are lawful.

One glass of beer may be lawful. But is it profitable? Will it cause another person to stumble? If it is going to cause one person to stumble, I will not drink one glass of toddy or beer or whiskey in my whole life. What do I lose by that? There are a lot of other things I can drink.

Because I'm concerned about that person. That is love. He says, don't live by your knowledge because knowledge will only make you arrogant.

Verse 1, love is what builds up. Please remember this rule. By your knowledge, verse 11, don't ruin that weak brother for whom Christ has died.

See, this applies also to many many things. We have to be very careful. If you are a pastor or an elder of a church and you go to visit a home and the man of the house is not at home, don't go in.

I've never done it. Not because I'm tempted, not because that sister living there is tempted, but because of my testimony. I don't want other people to be stumbled.

I may be able to sit there and have a very pure conversation with that sister and go away. But another younger brother would see me and say, oh brother, I can go and visit a home when there is only a lady there. And he also does it and maybe he falls into sin.

And I was the one who led him astray. These are little practical examples. Or he may see your scooter parked outside that house.

He may not even come inside. And he knows that the man of the house is not there. And you become a bad example.

These are little, little things. If you have love, you'll be concerned about that other person. If you only glory in your knowledge and say, no, I'm keeping myself pure inside the house, that is a selfish, heathen, non-Christian way to live.

Okay, and then you sin and you wound your brother, their conscience, and then you sin against Christ. So he says, anything that causes my brother to stumble like that, I'll never do it. It's so important when handling money, I always tell people in our churches, even if you are the most honest brother in the world, when you open the offering box, please have another brother with you.

So that two brothers together can count the offering. And that there is a proper record of it. And don't let the full-time worker who is receiving that money, count that money.

That's dangerous. Let somebody else do it, who is not getting any money from that offering box. And let him do it for the sake of a testimony, that nobody should say he's pocketed part of it.

So these are little, little things. It's got many applications. Chapter 8. Chapter 9 speaks about, goes on in the subject of liberty.

He says, am I not an apostle? Why do I have to work like others? First of all, why do I have to remain single? Verse 5 teaches us that all the apostles were married, except Paul. He says all the other apostles are married and they carry their wife, take their wife with them wherever they go. Some people think the apostles were not married.

This verse teaches us all the apostles were married. So if there's a church today, which says that you have to be unmarried, like some churches do to be a full-time worker, then Peter and James and all could never have joined those churches. That itself shows you that those churches are wrong.

If the apostles could not join those churches, what type of churches are they? And the second thing people say today is, that if you want to serve the Lord, you must give up all your secular jobs. And then Paul and Barnabas could not have joined those churches, because verse 6, Paul and Barnabas were working with their hands. They were supporting themselves and serving the Lord.

Some people like Peter, James and John, Peter and John and others were not working. They were supported by others, but people like Paul and Barnabas were working. And they also were apostles.

So you can be an apostle doing a secular job, or you can be an apostle who is supported by other believers. You can be an apostle who is unmarried, or you can be an apostle who is married. Marriage and job are no factors in serving the Lord.

Okay. Then he goes on to speak about supporting the Lord's servants. He says, God has said, verse 9, that you shall not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn, while he is threshing.

Is he only talking about oxen? He says, that was an Old Testament law, that they thresh the grain there with oxen going around, and some selfish, hard-hearted farmers would shut the mouth of the ox, so that the ox doesn't eat some of that. He said, no. God said, keep it open, so that let the ox eat something.

After all, it's doing some work. And Paul says, do you think God was only concerned about oxen? No. That is written for our sake, verse 10, that those who serve the Lord, you must provide for them to feed themselves and their families, because they are working so hard, like the oxen, you know, doing the Lord's

work.

And so Paul says, we have sowed spiritual things to you. Is it anything great if we reap some material things from you? That means we have served you so much spiritually. Is there anything wrong if you folks give us some material help to take care of our needs? He's not talking about collecting money to build houses and lands and buy property in my family's name.

That's not what he's talking about. He's talking about survival. He's talking about getting enough money to just eat and drink and buy clothes and travel from one place to another for preaching the gospel and rent a simple house.

He's talking about things like that, which has been exploited today by a lot of people to say you must support me and I just spend it lavishly to live in grand style. It's not that. And he goes on to say, even in the Old Testament, the priest could take from the offerings from the sacrifices in the temple.

So also, here's the word, verse 14. The Lord has directed that those who proclaim the gospel must get their living from the gospel. So that teaches that those who preach the good news here and there have got every right to receive gifts from those who get the benefit of their ministry.

In fact, it says in Galatians chapter 6 that those who are taught should bless those who teach with material things. Now, I find in Christendom two extremes on this. One extreme is those who exploit this teaching to make a lot of money for themselves on the basis of this teaching.

And the other extreme are people who don't do enough or anything for those who minister the word of God to them. They are also at one extreme. They think they are better than the others, but they've just fallen over the cliff the other side.

Both are out of the will of God. Those who obey God's word are honored by God. But this must not be used by us to make a lot of money for ourselves.

And Paul says, I'm writing all this. But he says, now let me give you my example. I'm not writing that you should do this for me.

Because he says, I don't need your money. I've never taken money from you Corinthians. And I'm not writing now to say that you should give me money.

Because I don't need it. I work with my own hands. Paul was very careful.

He received money from the church in Philippi. We read that in 2 Corinthians 11, Philippians 4. That's Macedonia. He did not receive money from the Corinthians.

We read that 1 Corinthians 9, 2 Corinthians 11. He did not receive money from the church in Ephesus. You read that in Acts 20.

He did not receive money from the Thessalonian church. You read that in 2 Thessalonians 3. Most churches, Paul did not receive any money. In fact, as far as we know, he received it only from the church in Philippi.

So Paul was discerning. He knew where to take and where not to take. He didn't have a standard rule saying, thou shalt take or thou shalt not take.

In each case, he sensed by the Holy Spirit. Do I feel free to receive this from this group of churches? Or this church? Or this man? So, a true servant of God will be like that. And he says here, why do I do it like this? This is a very, very important verse.

I do it. Verse 18. Why am I serving you without taking any money from you? I do it because I want to make the gospel free of charge.

Verse 18. The gospel must be free of charge. People who hear the gospel must know they don't have to pay one paisa to hear the gospel.

And that is why, throughout my life, in any public meetings that I've ever had, where I've had the opportunity to have a say in the organizing of it, I've always said, we will not take a collection. Because there could be unbelievers here, and the unbelievers should not feel that they have to pay even one paisa to hear the gospel. And I have never regretted that decision in any place that I've gone.

Only believers have the right to support God's work. Unbelievers have no right to support God's work, because they should not one day stand before the Lord and say, Lord, how can you send me to hell? I gave 100 rupees to Brother Zach for ministering God's word. Don't you remember that day he took a collection in one meeting and I dropped 100 rupees in the bag? And he lived on that.

Nobody will be able to say that about me in the day of judgment. But there are many, many unbelievers who will be able to say about many organizations and many preachers, Lord, we supported that man, we gave money to that man, and he took it. And now you're sending me to hell.

What will you say in that day when the Lord asks you, why did you take it when you knew this man was an unbeliever? So be very careful here. Paul was very, very careful. He knew whom to take from and whom not to take from.

And he says, the gospel must be free. And he says, though I am free from all men, I've made myself a servant of all so that I can serve them. And then in chapter 24 to 27, he speaks about keeping his body under control.

So that verse 27, he does not end up preaching to others and being disqualified himself. Do you know it's possible for a servant of God to preach so many wonderful truths like Solomon, who wrote three books of scripture and go to hell. Paul says here in verse 27, if I don't keep my bodily desires under control, I can preach wonderful messages about all types of things to everybody and finally go to hell myself, disqualified by the Lord in the final day.

The apostle Paul, the man who established churches, the man who wrote scripture, the man who raised the dead, the man who healed the sick, the man who preached so many wonderful sermons, he says, I can be disqualified in the final day if I don't keep my bodily passions under control. And I think, oh, God has used me so much. So you'll definitely take me into his kingdom.

Not necessarily. So it's your life that God looks at primarily, not your ministry. In chapter 10, he gives an example.

He's speaking about those who preach and are disqualified. And he said, I'll give you an example. The Israelites who came out of Egypt, did they all get into Canaan? No, they perished in the wilderness.

He said, the same thing can happen to you. He says, these things have happened. Verse six is an example for us.

Verse 11, chapter 10. These things are an example for us. So be careful.

Then we have this wonderful promise in verse 13. God will never allow you to be tempted beyond your ability. Praise God for that.

No temptation will ever come into your life, which is more than you can handle. Remember that you can overcome every temptation. Don't ever say, this is becoming too much for me.

If you say that, you're saying God is a liar in 1 Corinthians 10, 13. It can never be too much for you. What you need is more grace.

Ask God for grace. That temptation is not too much for you. You can overcome.

God will make a way, it says there, to help you to overcome. And then it speaks here about this verse 31. Whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God.

Whenever you're in doubt about God's will in some matter, always come back to 1 Corinthians 10, 31. You've tried every other method of finding God's will and you can't find out what is God's will here. Come back to 1 Corinthians 10, 31 and ask yourself, can I do this for the glory of God? If you feel in your spirit you can't do it for the glory of God, don't do it.

Whatever we do, even eating and drinking, must be for the glory of God. Chapter 11 speaks about two things, women covering their heads in the church and the Lord's Supper, the breaking of bread. Now remember, I told you right at the beginning in chapter 1, this is the church of God in Corinth.

He's not talking about how a woman should behave at home. Everything is related to the church, chapter 5, chapter 6 and all these, chapter 11 also. And he's explaining here the reason for a woman's head covering.

There are three reasons why a woman should cover her head in the church. Number 1, verse 7, a man should not have his head covered because he is the image and glory of God. A woman should have her head covered because she is the glory of man.

Earlier it says in verse 3, Christ is the head of man and man is the head of woman. So it is a symbol. A woman is saying, a man is my head and the glory of man, should it be covered or uncovered in the church? Covered.

The glory of man should be covered in the church and since verse 7, woman is the glory of man, a woman should be covered in the church. Very simple. Because only the glory of Christ should be seen in the church.

The glory of man must be covered in the church and since a woman is the glory of man, a woman must be covered in the church. But a man should not, his head should not be covered because he is the glory of God. The glory of God should not be covered in the church.

That's why a man keeps his head uncovered. So I believe a priest who wears a cap on his head is just as wrong as a sister who doesn't cover her head. Just the same.

Okay. And another reason is in verse 15. Now all sisters will agree that their long hair is a glory.

No sister likes to have a shaven head. Long hair, every woman will agree, is a glory. Should the glory of woman be covered in the church? Yes.

Therefore a woman's long hair should be covered. The glory of man should be covered, the glory of woman should be covered. A woman's glory is her long hair.

So that should be covered in the church. That's the second reason and the third reason is in verse 10. It's a symbol of submission to authority.

She's saying, I've got a man whose head over me. My husband or my father or if you're an orphan or a widow, the elder in the church. I've got a man who is over me.

I'm not a law unto myself. So those are the three reasons why a woman should cover her head in the church. Now this is an area where western influence has come into India and corrupted this teaching in India.

Unfortunately, you'll always find wherever western influence has come into India, this practice is thrown away. But when you go to churches where western influence has not come in the villages, they all practice it. And then he finally says, he says, now, if you're going to have a lot of arguments about this verse 16, I just want to conclude by saying every church of God practices this.

You can do what you like, but I'm not going to get in an argument with you about it. Okay, we go on to the Lord's table in verse 23 to 34. It says if anyone is when we come to the Lord's table, we are remembering the Lord's death.

In in in this, we fellowship together and we are testifying that Jesus died for us. And I want to be broken like the Lord is broken for me. And also we are testifying, like it says in chapter 10, verse 17, that this bread is one body.

That means I'm testifying when I eat that bread. I'm saying, Lord, I want to be broken like you were broken. I don't want some priest to break it and put it into my mouth.

He cannot decide whether I want to be broken or not. I have to break that bread myself and put it into my mouth. Nobody else can decide it for me.

I break it and I put it in my mouth and I say, Lord, I want to be broken and fellowship with you. At the same time, before that bread was broken, it was one bread. And I'm saying I'm not only breaking it as a testimony of my covenant with you.

It's also a testimony of my covenant with my fellow believers here with whom I am one, just like this bread was one before we all broke it. Now this one bread has gone into all our stomachs. But we are one because this bread was one before it went into your stomach and mine.

And I'm testifying thereby, like it says here in this verse we read in 1 Corinthians 10 and verse 17. We are one bread and one body. Now, if we don't have this type of vertical relationship with the Lord and horizontal relationship with our fellow believers, we should not break bread.

If there's somebody sitting there whom I've got a bitterness against, somebody sitting there with whom I have a dispute about property, somebody else sitting there with whom I've got a grudge. Don't break bread. Because it says if you do, you may get sick.

Verse 30. God may punish you. You will get spiritually sick, physically sick, spiritually weak, physically weak and spiritually dead as well.

So we should judge ourselves. Verse 31. And then the Lord will not judge us.

So it's very serious testimony to break bread together. Let me just mention one thing about women praying and prophesying. A woman is asked to cover her head, verse 4, when she prays or prophesies primarily, verse 4. That means when she's praying or prophesying, which teaches that a woman can prophesy.

It's very clear here, 1 Corinthians 11, 4, that a woman can prophesy. She cannot teach, but she can prophesy. That means she can share God's word in a way that will encourage others, but she cannot teach in the church.

Okay, we move on to chapter 12 where we read about the gifts of the Spirit. And I want you to notice here that the gifts are seen in relation to the body of Christ. It's very important to see this.

Many people think of the gifts all by themselves, and that's why they get into confusion. They read the first half of 1 Corinthians 12 and don't read the second half. You see, it's like some people value the second half of 1 Corinthians 11 and neglect the first half.

Why do they neglect the first half? They say the first half is cultural and the second half is for everybody. Then they have become judges of the word of God. No, 1 Corinthians 11, the first half and second half are both for today.

1 Corinthians 12 also, the first half speaks about the gifts of the Spirit, the second half speaks about the body. And if you want to see the gifts properly, you must see it in connection to the body of Christ. You see, he speaks in 1 Corinthians 12, for example, about the foot, verse 15, the ear, verse 16, the eye, verse 17, and the hand, verse 15, and so on.

And he says in verse 14, the body is not one member, but many. So, what he is saying is, these gifts are exactly like the different members of our body, in the body of Christ. So, he is saying, everybody should not want to be a ear or an eye.

For example, he says something humorous, verse 17, if the whole body were just one eye, or many, many eyes, where would the hearing be? And if the whole were hearing, just ears, ears, ears, ears, ears, ears, ears, where would the sense of smell be? There must be a nose. So, what he is saying is, don't desire somebody else's gift. Okay, God has made him an eye, or God has made him a tongue.

He doesn't want you to be a tongue, he wants you to be a ear, or a little finger, or a liver, or a kidney. See, there are many parts of the body. He says, for example, some parts of the body are not visible.

There are some parts of the body which appear to be weaker, which are very easily, very sensitive, very easily injured. Others, which are hard, like the soles of our feet are so hard, they can take a lot of rough treatment. But there are other parts of the body which are very sensitive, the eyes for example.

One speck of dust goes into the eye, and we are disturbed. But our feet can handle so much of dust, walk on dust, there is no problem. So, he says, all are important.

There are visible members, and others which are invisible, like heart, liver, kidney. All are important. Some are attractive members, and some parts of our body we don't show because they are not attractive.

So, he says, in the church also there are some people who are very visible. For example, a man who speaks in the pulpit all the time, we can say he is like the tongue. Speaking, speaking, speaking.

And some people who never stand in the pulpit are praying, praying, praying, like the heart. Pumping, pumping, pumping, pumping, blood, so that the mouth can speak. Now, tell me, which is important? The heart or the mouth? You know the answer.

Both. The mouth cannot speak without the heart, and the heart will die if the mouth doesn't eat food, and sends some energy down inside. So, which is important? Both are important.

The heart is dependent on the mouth, and the mouth is dependent on the heart. So, he says, whatever gift of the spirit you may have, please remember, you need that brother, and he needs you. He may be an invisible brother like the heart, nobody sees, nobody appreciates.

You may be a visible brother like the face, the eyes, and the hands, and all that move. But there is no competition. There are so many gifts of the spirit, there is no competition.

One is an apostle, one is a prophet. He says in verse 28, somebody speaks in tongues, and somebody has a gift of healing. All are needed.

And everybody doesn't have to have that person's gift. And there should be no competition in the body. There is no saying, verse 21, I don't need you, I can do on my own.

No. And there is no competition. For example, do you think this left hand is ever jealous of this right hand? This right hand writes all the important letters, signs all the checks.

Supposing the left hand is very jealous. Oh, this right hand is doing all the important jobs, and I don't get to do any important job. And one day, I get an injury, and the right hand is injured in plaster.

And the left hand says, ah, now I got my chance. I can do everything. And the left hand tries to sign a check, and the bank doesn't accept it.

Signature not recognized. Because the left hand cannot sign that check. What should the left hand do? The left hand should do everything possible to restore that right hand quickly to health, so it can sign the check again.

Can you do that in the body of Christ? That you see another brother far more gifted than you are. He can sign the check so easily. You even with great struggle, you cannot duplicate that signature.

Because you are a left hand. Why should you? That's not your calling. One member in the body signing checks is enough.

Or if you are a foot, you want to sign checks with your foot. What all complicated things. So many competition there is in the body, because people have not seen the body of Christ.

I believe one of the greatest needs is to see the body of Christ. People have asked me this question through many, many years. Brother Zach, why do you keep on emphasizing holiness, holiness, holiness, holiness, holiness? I said, why does the kidney, through which the blood goes, always emphasize purity, purity, purity, purity, purity? That's all the kidneys do.

The kidneys don't do anything else. But the day your kidneys pack up, you also pack up. You know that.

But they do only one thing. Purify the blood stream and keep all the chemicals balanced in the blood. That's all it does.

But do you think the kidney can function without the hand and the mouth and all? No. We all need each other. Evangelism is like a hand taking a chapati from there, putting it in the mouth, eating it.

Taking that unbeliever, putting it inside the body of Christ. Is that enough? You just put it in the mouth. You keep that chapati in your mouth for ten days, what will happen? That is evangelism.

After the evangelism, you take the unbeliever and put it inside. Somebody else has to take over and break him down and make him small and humble him and get him down to the stomach, pour some acid on him, prophetic ministry. And then break him down and finally make him blood, flesh and bones.

He has become a part of the body. But supposing you just put it in the mouth or just keep it in the stomach and doesn't get digested. After some time, you'll just vomit it out.

The unbeliever goes out. So you see, evangelism must lead on to other ministries that teach, that break down his pride, that humble him, emphasize purity like the kidneys. Finally, which is most important? Everybody is equally important.

Don't try to do somebody else's ministry. Work along with others. To me, this has been a great deliverance in my life once I saw this.

And that's what goes on in chapter 13 to say. Chapter 13, remember, comes between chapter 12 and chapter 14, which are both on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Many people forget that.

There are multitudes of people today who are against the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but always speak about chapter 13. From chapter 11, they take a long jump to chapter 13. And from chapter 13, they take a long jump to chapter 15.

And they have missed two chapters in between. Why? Chapter 13 comes right in the middle of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. How can you be against the gifts of the Holy Spirit and talk about love? He says, this whole chapter on love says, I'm showing you, chapter 12, verse 31, a more excellent way to exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

So he's saying, chapter 13 is about love, telling you how to use these gifts of the Spirit. Everything must be done in love. If you don't have love, you're like an electric wire without any insulation.

Have you noticed that electric wire always got a plastic or rubber insulation over it? Otherwise, it will kill people. That insulation is love. And if you have the power of the Holy Spirit going and you don't have love, you're just going to kill people.

So let everything you do be done in love. Let there be insulation over every part of the electric wire, then you don't kill people. You bless people with light and power.

So love is like that. And that's a whole... you need a whole session to go through 1 Corinthians 13. But take time to read it.

It's all about love. 1 Corinthians 14 speaks about how we are to exercise, particularly in the church, tongues and prophecy. Now, 1 Corinthians 14, verse 5 says, I wish that you all spoke in tongues.

That doesn't mean you must speak in tongues. In 1 Corinthians 7, he said, I wish that you all were single. Now, I know a lot of churches that quote 1 Corinthians 14, 5, I wish you all spoke in tongues, who do not quote 1 Corinthians 7, saying, I wish you were all single.

The same apostle said both. What did he mean? Did he mean that everybody should be single? He said, that's my desire. But I realize that some people are not called to be single.

The same thing here. I realize that not everybody speaks in tongues. It's very clear from verse 5 that everybody in Corinth did not speak in tongues.

I don't understand how everybody is forced to speak in tongues today. That's how all the counterfeit tongues comes up. At the same time, it says in 1 Corinthians 14 and verse 39, don't forbid to speak in tongues.

See, we have two groups today in Christendom. Some who totally forbid speaking in tongues, disobeying verse 39. And some who try to force everybody to speak in tongues.

When it says in verse 5, only some do. And also it says in 1 Corinthians 12 and verse 30, do all speak in tongues? No, all do not. And it's also clear from 1 Corinthians 14, that the speaking in tongues today is different from the speaking in tongues on the day of Pentecost.

On the day of Pentecost, there was no need for the gift of interpretation. A man spoke in tongues, without interpretation, everybody understood. But 1 Corinthians 14 says, that what is the use of man speaking in tongues, verse 5, unless he interprets.

Now that was not true on the day of Pentecost. It was valuable without interpretation. But here it says, if a man does not know, if there is no interpreter, what should he do? Then he must pray, verse 13, that he should interpret.

Otherwise, he should just keep quiet. So, it's clear that tongues had a function on the day of Pentecost, of being in another language, which people understood. But here, it is an expression of what is in our heart.

It could be a prayer, it could be an exhortation, it could be a number of things. It says here, when you assemble, if I speak in a tongue, what is the use, unless, verse 6, that tongue is a revelation, or knowledge, or prophecy, or teaching. So, a tongue could be revelation, knowledge, prophecy, teaching, or it could be prayer.

A man speaks to God. Interpretation of tongue can be a prayer, can be a revelation. Now, an interpretation is not a translation.

Translation is word for word. Interpretation is thought for thought. That's why two different people interpreting the same tongues will give the same message, but may express it in different words.

And it says, in the church, maximum two or three people should speak in tongues. That's all. Verse 27, and if they do, every one of those tongues must be interpreted.

Verse 27, when you go into a church and you hear a person speaking in tongues, and no interpretation, I would say they are a church that's thoroughly, 100% disobedient to the word of God. I have no respect for that church. I would like to see a church where every tongue is interpreted.

It's very clear in verse 27. There is no such thing as a man praying in tongues and everybody hearing it, and there's no interpretation. We have such a lot of things today in Christendom, where people are following the traditions of their grandfathers and not the word of God.

It's written so clearly here. Some people forbid it, saying we don't want it. Some people just follow the tradition of their grandfathers.

I say, let's follow scripture. And in the churches, the most important gift is the gift of prophecy, which means prophecy is not foretelling the future. That was Old Testament.

Verse 3, prophecy in the New Testament is speaking to men to build them up, to encourage them, to exhort them, challenge them, and to comfort them. If you can speak in such a way that you challenge, encourage, build up, that is prophecy. And every message in a church should be a prophecy or a teaching or prophetic teaching.

So that's how the early churches functioned. Verse 29, two or three prophets spoke, not just one man. And then others could also prophesy, verse 31.

Verse chapter 15 speaks about the resurrection and is basically trying to convince these Corinthians that there is a resurrection. Take time to read it. It's basically for those who have a doubt that there is a body that we're going to get when we are resurrected.

Just one thing I want to show you, verse 41 of 15. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, another glory of the stars. Star differs from star in glory, so also, verse 42, is the resurrection of the dead.

That means when we are raised from the dead, we will be like the stars, but the stars have got different degrees of brightness, and there will be different degrees of brightness among believers. Those who have been more faithful will be like the brighter stars, and those who are less faithful will also shine, but will be less bright throughout eternity. So it's good to be faithful here.

Therefore, verse 58, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. In chapter 16, I just want to point out one lovely thing you read in verse 12. Paul says, concerning Apollos, a brother, I encouraged him greatly to come to you.

Paul went to Apollos and said, brother Apollos, you should go to Corinth. Your teaching ministry is needed there, but he did not want to come. A beautiful example of freedom in the church between God's servants.

Paul felt he should go. He did not feel he should go. Paul said, fine, you go when you feel free.

There is no compulsion, saying you must go because I told you to go. No. What a beautiful example.

In conclusion, verse 14, let all that you do be done in love. Let's remember that. It's a good way to conclude how we are to build a local church.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for guidance concerning little details in our daily life and functioning in the church. Help us to live in the light of your word, we ask in Jesus' name.

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