

Distinction

Long Beach Alliance Church • September 6th, 2009 • Pastor Chris Lankford

Be imitators of me,
just as I also am of Christ.
~1st Corinthians 11:1 (NASB)

1) The Guttiest Statement In The Bible

- A) After a lengthy discussion on idolatry and living with an “other person” mindset (1st Corinthians 10:24), the Apostle Paul calls on followers of Christ to “imitate me” in the same fashion in which he is imitating Jesus (11:1).

- B) Most of us are so worried about never distracting from “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (2:2), that we could not make such a bold statement to those around us. Yet, we are all called to be “Christ’s body” (cf. 12:27), imitators and examples of Jesus Christ for the world (11:1).

- C) Whether you realize it or not, every follower of Jesus Christ is making this same bold statement with their life! The world watches how a follower of Christ lives which God or Satan utilizes for the purposes of their kingdom!

- D) Embracing the responsibility of “imitating Christ with intentionality for others” is a critical aspect of Christian maturity. Stand firm and call others to imitate you as you are also imitating Jesus Christ!

2) Principles & Traditions – A Delicate Mix Of Belief & Practice

- A) Commending the Corinthians for their proper imitating (11:2), Paul addresses issues of “Christ’s body” (the church) and how it properly functions within culture (11:3).
- B) Much like our culture (but very unlike their own culture), the Corinthian Christians were advocating (inquiring?) abolishing gender distinctions (e.g. Galatians 3:28-29) between men and women. This is the background for Paul’s comments on headship (11:3ff).
- C) Note that the headship order is not hierarchal (11:3), establishing instead that everyone has a “head.” This is the principle which underlies the tradition of how the metaphor of headship is portrayed physically in worship.
- D) While the physical manifestation of the abiding principle is negotiable (11:4-7, 13), note it is rooted in the creation order (11:8-9) and nature (11:14-15) and as such should be reflected.
- E) The reference to angels (11:10) is baffling, but precedes a note on interdependence (man & woman, 11:12-13), perhaps indicating a similar Godhead/Angelic/Mankind metaphor.

3) Distinction Between God & Christ, Men & Women

- A) Because the passage is clearly rooted in tradition (11:2), and practices were subject to judgment (11:13, 16), much of this passage is rightfully viewed as cultural.
- B) However, there are underlying principles of gender distinction (male roles, female roles, Christ roles, God roles) which reflect headship in the created order which must be followed, and expressed in culturally intentional and gracious (11:16) manners!