

1Corinthians 18-10-21b

We're ready now to resume our study in Corinthians. We're looking at both chapter 11 and chapter 14. As I said, one of our primary rules for interpretation is to take clear passages and make sure we understand those.

Then we can see clearly to look at the ones that are maybe not so clear. So we have looked in the first session at Timothy, at Thessalonians, and the other passages that illuminate our topic here, which is do women talk in church or not? And this is something of a contentious point in the modern day. We understand the difference between, and we've talked about it many times in the past, from the word of God, the difference between what a person is worth and what their assigned function is.

Order is not determined by worth. The most valuable people don't necessarily rise to the top. The brightest, the best, the most morally well-equipped, the most intellectually well-equipped, the most strategically savvy don't necessarily rise to the top.

Order is not based on merit. We would like to think it is. We would like to reward merit with promotion.

There is the, I believe it's the Peter principle that says everybody rises one level above their greatest place of competence. You keep getting promoted until we find out that you can't do the job anymore because you went one step too far. And in God's economy, the order that we saw so emphasized in Thessalonians and that we see emphasized here in Corinthians, we see it in Ephesians, we see it throughout the word of God, Old Testament and New, the order is established by God.

God assigns not only the types of order we have in human society, but he also calls people to function within it. Not everyone gets to be a chief. Most people are Indians in some context, at some level.

All of us are under authority. Roman centurions were some of the most powerful men on the planet in their day. But the centurion talking to the Lord Jesus says, I'm a man under authority.

I am also a man in authority. I say to one, come and he comes, to another go and he goes. I understand authority, I understand order.

And he's expressing to the Lord Jesus, his recognition that the Lord Jesus has authority and that he doesn't need to come to his roof. He can simply speak a word. And healing will take place.

So with that as a background, let me just review three more passages. We've looked at Corinthians chapter 14. We've looked at Corinthians 11.

We looked at 1 Timothy chapter 2, verses 11 through 14. Turn back or turn forward actually to Ephesians 5, 22 and 23. I quoted it to you, but I want you to see it.

In the word of God, the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church and he is the savior of the body. Therefore, verse 22, wives submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. There is an order and for wives, it is submission to their husbands.

What about unmarried women? Well, ideally, they don't leave their father's house until they are betrothed and married to their husband and it is the father's authority. That's why this passage continues talking about in chapter six, children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Honor your father and mother, first commandment with promise and so on.

And then there is a concomitant responsibility for the fathers to exercise that authority wisely. Do not provoke your children to wrath, bring them up in training and admonition. This is learning and edification.

Just as we saw in Corinthians, the purpose of order is to enhance, to encourage, to build up, not to discourage and provoke, not harsh measures, not insensitivity. The purpose is upbuilding so that everyone can learn, everyone can grow. That's the purpose of God's order.

That's why he emphasizes orderliness to such an extent. Flip over a few pages past Philippians to Colossians chapter three, verse 18. Colossians 3.18, wives submit to your own husbands as is fitting in the Lord.

Notice, there may be times when it is not fitting. There may be times when it is not in the Lord. You're not enslaved.

The man can't tell you to climb a building and jump off. As is fitting in the Lord. What is the purpose of the order? Encouragement, edification, learning, positive outcomes.

If the institution has been turned on its head, if the authority is being abused, if the person under authority is being abused before the Lord, that's a different situation. As is fitting in the Lord. Finally, turn with me to the other pastoral target, Titus chapter two, verse five.

Titus 2.5. This is the older women, two, three. Older women likewise be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things. Notice, women in the church are teaching, teaching good things.

That they admonish the young women. Who is the target of their teaching? Other women. Can women teach women in the church? What does Paul tell Titus? Older women can teach younger women and should admonish them to love their husbands, to love their children.

Doesn't this comport with everything that we've seen? Loving your husband is recognizing his assigned function and your assigned function. Same way as an enlisted man recognizes the authority of the senior enlisted or the officers, in the same way that policemen recognize the authority of those who coordinate their activities, in the same way that junior employees recognize the authority of senior employees, there is an order, there is a structure. And older women who have had experience with this teach the younger women to love their husbands,

love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands.

Notice, love their husbands and obedient to their husbands. That the word of God may not be blasphemed. That the word of God may not be blasphemed.

What's gonna happen if the word of God is called into question? If the word of God is not lived out in the life of believers? They become an enemy of the cross. People are not learning. They are not being edified.

There is not good order. It doesn't direct attention up the chain of authority to God himself and the Lord Jesus himself. Instead, there are quarrels and dissensions.

There are disputes. There is chaos and it is not edifying. It doesn't build up.

That's Titus 2, 3 through 5. So, back to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. The sore thumb passage that is not seemingly consistent with these is this one, right? Every place else emphasizes the submission of women to their husbands in the same way that children are to be submissive to their parents and the spirits of prophets are to be submissive to the prophet. The chain of command flows down from God through the Lord Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, to the apostles, to the prophets, to the pastors and teachers, wherever that direct chain of command flows.

I also wanna quickly straighten out something in 14 that my good friend in Pennsylvania pointed out and he was absolutely right. When we were talking about the prophets, spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, this was 1 Corinthians 14, 29 through 32. Two or three prophets speak and let the others judge, verse 29.

Two or three prophets speak and let the others judge. And the word there is alas, A-L-L-O-S. And I told you that this is others of a different kind, which is backwards of what it is.

Alas is others of the same kind. Heteros is other kind. This is why heterosexuals go after people that are not like them in terms of gender.

If you're a heterosexual, you're a man, you're interested in women. If you're a woman, you're interested in men. You're hetero, others of a different kind.

They're humans, but different kind of human. Very attractive human over there, other of a different kind. This is alas.

So if two or three are gonna speak and let the others judge, who are the others? Others of the same kind in this context would probably be the other prophets that have spoken. You be quiet and judge for yourself, perhaps what the other one is saying. Others of the same kind, alas, A-L-L-O-S.

But what I wanna do now, and to do that before I forgot, is in chapter 11, let's go back. And you remember this, we read it in the first session. Talking about praying and prophesying, two

specific speaking out situations in the assembly.

And it is all solved, I think, very elegantly and very simply. It doesn't take tortured exegesis. It doesn't take a bunch of assumptions.

There's one missing cultural feature. And once we plug it into place, this passage says exactly what all the others said. And that is this.

Look again. Having reviewed the order in verses two and three, here is God's order. Orderliness is enjoined in all of the assemblies among all believers.

Be orderly. And here is the order. Christ, the man, the woman, right? And above Christ is God the Father.

Now, is Jesus Christ subordinate to God the Father? Is he subject to the Father? I have not come to do my will, not my will, but thine be done. I must do the will of him who sent me. I must work the works of him who sent me.

Work the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no man can work, right? I work Jesus throughout his teaching, ministry, throughout his prayer life, expressed and both implicitly and explicitly his subjection to the will of the Father, right? No clearer than Gethsemane. Not my will, but thine be done, right? So let me just ask the question, is Jesus subject to the Father? Yes or no? Yes, he is.

Is there any question that Jesus is subject to and sets aside his own will to do the will of the Father? Yes or no? Yes, he does. Now, here's a fresh theological question for you. Is Jesus co-equal with God the Father? Is he just as valuable? Is he just as eternal? Is he just as omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, all of the other attributes of deity? Is Jesus just as much God as God the Father is? Yes, he is.

He is absolutely equal in every respect. So why is there this subordination? Is Jesus subordinate because he's not quite as smart as the Father? Because he's not quite as powerful? Not quite as good? Did the Trinity sort itself out into the Father, the Son, and the Spirit in order of subjection because the second and third persons weren't quite up to the challenge? Yes or no? No. Now, if God the Holy Spirit can subject himself voluntarily, being co-equal and co-eternal with the other two members, if the Lord Jesus Christ can subject himself voluntarily to the Father, even though he is just as good, how hard should it be for us to willingly and voluntarily subject ourselves knowing that it doesn't imply, connote, or suggest that we are lesser in quality? It is an assigned function, right? It's an assignment.

Let me give you one further passage. 1 Corinthians chapter seven. Just flip back a few more pages.

We've already covered this. Wanna review it? 1 Corinthians chapter seven, verse 17. As God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk, and so I ordain in all

the churches.

How many times have we seen that? This is the pattern of order in all the churches. As the Lord has called, as God has distributed. There's a translation I occasionally refer to and like.

Listen to the way this is rendered into English. Lead the life which the Lord has assigned and in which God has called. This is the rule in all the churches.

Lead the life, that's what it means, to walk. This is peripeteo, to walk about. This is your lifestyle.

This is your conversation. In the old King James view of the word. Lead the life which the Lord has assigned and in which God has called you.

Right? Now, turn back a few more pages to Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12, beginning at verse three. I say through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think more highly than he ought to think.

What kind of thinking would this be? I am not as high in the order as I ought to be. God should have put me further up the chain of command. I shouldn't be a sergeant.

I should be a staff sergeant. I shouldn't be a staff sergeant. I should be a gunnery sergeant.

I shouldn't be a gunnery sergeant. I should be a warrant officer. I shouldn't be a warrant officer.

I should be a lieutenant. No, a captain. No, a major.

No, a colonel. No, a general. I should be the commandant.

I should be the president. Commander-in-chief. I think I ought to be up doing the job that has been given to someone else.

Do not think more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. This is not the quantity of faith. This is your area of the field to plow.

God has assigned you a field of faith. It's not, well, God gave you great faith, so you've got great responsibility. No, you've been assigned an area of faith.

This is the area where God would like you to be faithful. You're a child. He wants you to be a faithful child, obeying your parents and the Lord.

You're a wife. God has assigned you an area of faith to trust, that even though you may be smarter, even though you may have greater insight and more sensitivity and a lot of other features, attributes, qualities, and characteristics, you didn't get the assignment to be the husband. God, in the counsels of his own will in eternity past, said, you're gonna be born with this gender in this time, in this place.

You're gonna meet this person. You're gonna get married. This is your measure of faith.

This is your grain to sow. How big a crop are you gonna produce? Are you gonna let it be choked with weeds? Are you gonna put it on stony ground where it can't penetrate? What are you gonna do with the word? What is the object of faith? What do we put our faith and trust in? It's the word of God, right? Everything we know about the Lord Jesus, everything we know about everything is the word of God. It's the object of our faith.

What is the measure of your faith? What areas have you been assigned where you've got to apply the word of God? You've got to be faithful, cling to the promises, be diligent, be consistent, be committed, care about eternity, have hope, express love. It's your measure of faith. So, what does he say here? 12, four, as we have many members in one body, all the members do not have the same function.

You can't all be a mouth. You can't all be a hand. You can't all even be seen.

Some members are covered up, right? We being many are one body in Christ, verse five, Romans 12, five. We many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another. Just because you might be up, near, close to, or a part of the head doesn't mean you can do without the rest of the body.

I was talking to somebody the other day that was a minor little slip of one pin in their piano and a whole note would not play because the flange for the jack, there's a pin in there and a hinge. And if that pin slips out, as they sometimes do, and the jack gets crooked, nothing works right. And it doesn't matter that you've got great felt, wonderful hammer, perfect balance, the key is there, all of the adjustments, everything, the string is there, it's perfectly in tune.

One little pin, it's three sixteenths of an inch long. If that pin, it's still there, but one side of it has moved out of its little socket and now it's crooked and it jams the jack so the jack doesn't come up under the hammer butt and doesn't move the hammer forward. All of the rest of this stuff is wasted just because of the one little pin.

I told you before the story of my VW van, got an engine, got the brakes, everything, sweat, blood in that thing for years, it's all running and working perfectly, but I go to drive it and I shift into first and nothing happens, why? Because a \$6 part that links my shift lever all the way to the back of the engine and the front of the engine where the transmission is, that it's a little thing, you could make one out of baling wire, but it failed. Because it failed, all of the rest of the van is dependent on that little \$6 part, probably cost them 50 cents to make and they sell it for six. Without that part, the van goes nowhere.

Well, but why am I not the steering wheel? Why am I not the emblem on the front? Why am I not the exhaust pipe making noise? Why am I not this? Why am I not the engine? Why am I not a piston? Listen, without you, you little \$6 coupler, nothing goes anywhere. It has to be faithful and because it wasn't faithful, it got replaced, right? So that the van would work. Well, the idea

is don't think about, well, but I'm a humble part that nobody sees.

Just remember, you were assigned your place and your measure of faith and it is required of a steward to be found faithful. Remember that, talking about the elders? What's good for the elders is good for all the rest of us, right? Faithfulness, measure of faith, your assignment from God, it's important. You don't know what depends.

Do you think the little link down there knows what's going on in the back or what's going on in the front, to the human and the steering and the trip and the destination and how much gas and mileage and the rest of it? His job is to hold the front and the back of that transmission linkage together. It's all he's asked to do. Two bolts and a cylindrical sleeve.

Little bit of flexibility in there for bumps. Just don't fail. You don't know how critical that is for you to be faithful.

The driver knows and the driver will replace what doesn't remain faithful. So it's our opportunity, it's our chance. Let God figure out the details.

Now, that's our principle. It's clear. Does anybody have any doubt about God's authority, God's assignment of functions and roles that don't depend on your quality? It's not a meritocracy.

It is assigned functions. Some of the best people are in some of the lowest ranks and they need to be there. Some of the strongest alloys in your car are in places where you never see them.

But if those alloys are not strong in the suspension and in the engine and the crankshaft and places like that, if your timing belt loses a tooth because it's a poor quality belt, all of the rest of the engine is gonna get destroyed. So faithfulness to assigned function. Let the designer worry about where it's going and how important it all is.

Our requirement is to be faithful. We've been appointed a measure of faith. God has dealt to each one.

Many members in one body, all the members don't have the same function. So back to 1 Corinthians. All of these are dead clear, crystal clear, no doubt, no wiggle room.

No, but what if, you know, if the steering wheel breaks, can I take the transmission linkage coupler and put it up there on the steering post and try to steer with that? It's not designed for that. It's not appointed that. So back to 11 of 1 Corinthians.

What are we talking about here? Let me just cut to the chase and fill in the piece of this puzzle. And it is a puzzle. We're not well acquainted with first century culture and the culture that informed it, that preceded it, that conditioned it, that caused it to come into being.

But I'm gonna give you an essential piece. It's well-documented. It just hasn't been thought for when it comes to interpreting this passage.

Imitate me just as I also imitate Christ. I praise you because you keep traditions as I delivered them to you. But let me review the order because you are disorderly.

Here is the order and you get the refreshment. Verse four, every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head.

Praying and prophesying, is the head covered or uncovered? The head covering is something of a metaphor for bigger things. We all realize that, right? It's symbolic, especially in this culture. In the same way that when you get further down, he talks about hair.

Judge for yourselves, verse 13, is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not even nature teach you if a man has long hair, it's a dishonor to him. But if a woman has long hair, it's a glory. Short hair for the man, long hair for the woman.

Is there anything intrinsically, you know, there's exceptions. Nazarites had long hair. No razor cuts their hair, Samson, et cetera.

There are exceptions. But generally speaking, there is a model. There's a pattern.

There's something evoked and communicated by this. Here's the point. At this time, and for many centuries preceding it, if someone in a worship assembly was going to stand up and speak, they uncovered their head.

I want you to picture the Corinthian assembly. Let's say, for the sake of argument, there's 120 people there. Maybe there were 10 times that many.

Let's just picture 120 people. They come together. Somebody opens in a word of prayer.

What are they gonna do? They are going to stand up. Everybody has come, and they all have the typical ancient Near Eastern form of dress for worship, which was a shawl over the head. When the women certainly, and in Jewish cultures, the men as well.

You've seen your Bible story, your illustrated Bible for little eyes and so on. You remember, you often see Jesus with a thing over his head. You see the disciples and the apostles and the people in the crowd.

But a man who is going to stand up and lead the opening prayer would uncover his head. If you are the speaker, you are visibly the speaker because your head is uncovered. If you walk into the room and you want to know who's, even if nothing's being said at the moment, maybe he's paused for dramatic effect, you walk in, well, who is standing up with their head uncovered? That's who currently has the floor.

It's called having the floor. The chair, who in this case is in heaven, grants the floor to the person whose head is uncovered, right? If you are going to pray, if you are going to prophesy, if you are going to enunciate words to the group, you take the shawl off your head. You're the

current speaker.

If another prophet later on is going to stand up and speak, he stands up and uncovers his head. The first guy sits down and if he has a head covering, he covers his head. I'm not sure that the men had head coverings.

What I am sure of is all the women had head coverings. Now, so for a woman to pray or prophesy, what is she going to have to do? She's got to look like the men who pray and prophesy, whether or not they have a head covering. When they are praying and prophesying, their head is manifestly uncovered.

Because Paul says, if his head was covered and he was praying and prophesying, it would be a shame to him. So any man in the church, we know without a doubt, when he stands up and prays or prophesies, his head is uncovered. The women, through long cultural practice, going back to the law that Paul cites, express subordination to their father or their husband by having a head covering.

It's the same, I was watching a drama where police went to interview a woman who had a head covering on her head and she suffered an abusive injury and she was Islamic. So these Anglo-Saxon, I don't doubt they were Protestants, but they were just Anglo-Saxon policemen go to interview this lady. It's a man and a woman who go to interview her.

She doesn't speak English, so her daughter is translating from Arabic for the policemen. They say, you know, what happened? And she talks very low. Her head and her face are covered.

You just see her eyes and she's talking. And not in a cocoon, but just very modest. You don't see most of her face, you just see her eyes and a little part of her nose.

Her daughter is interpreting and they say, so this hot liquid was thrown at you and burned you? And the daughter says, yes, it burned her face and her shoulders. And so the woman officer says, can we see the injury? And the daughter doesn't even talk to the wife. She says, you can, but only you.

He has to leave. Only her father, only her husband can see her face uncovered. Going back to ancient times, a part of modesty was for women to have their head covered, their faces often veiled.

And the only people who could see that were those who were authorized authorities, father, husband. And so when the male officer leaves the room, then the woman, and they don't actually show it, but she's got this bad burn scar on the side of her face. It's covered up by this thing.

Another woman can see it. Older women can teach younger women, but another man cannot, because there is an order in that society that goes back to ancient, ancient times. I say all of that to say this, for a woman to stand up and pray or prophesy, she has to uncover her head.

It's two parts of the same action. She can't stand up and pray or prophesy with her head covered is the point. And so if she stands up and uncovers her head to pray and prophesy, she is dishonoring.

It's the same as if that woman had let the male police officer look at her face. You're outside the order. It's improper.

That's not permitted. And these ladies were not to be seen in full view, uncovered, their head even. And so to pray or prophesy, she has to stand up.

So what is Paul basically saying here? He's arguing by analogy with the head covering and with hair. In the same way, he doesn't say, well, if a woman has short hair, she can't prophesy, but if she's got long hair, she can. Does he? Because it's an analogy.

The head covering itself is also an analogy. In other words, 1 Corinthians 11 is saying the same thing as 1 Corinthians 14, same thing as Ephesians, same thing as Thessalonians, same thing as Timothy specifically and explicitly. Women are not to have communication roles to the group, the mixed group, in church.

Period. Ever. There is no out in 1 Corinthians 11 because in order for her to do it, she would have to uncover her head.

Anybody speaking, praying and prophesying with their head covered, if a man does that, he's shamed. Nobody stands up and prays and prophesies. Why? Who is actually speaking? When a man stands up and prophesies or delivers the word, remember my analogy that we shouldn't get too caught up in the communicator because it's like the angels speaking in the first person for God.

You don't say, what a great telephone. You're listening to the person on the other end speak. Let's just take prophesying.

It's a little simpler. If somebody is prophesying in the church, whose message is it? Did the guy get an interesting thought and say, you know, the other day I was... Where does the prophecy come from? Whose word is being communicated when a man stands up in the Corinthian assembly and prophesies? He's just the telephone. It's the word of God coming through, right? So if it's the Lord Jesus speaking to his body, it is the head talking to the body.

The head of the man is Christ. So if he is standing up and speaking a heavenly word, heavenly originated, tongues, prophecy, whatever, where is it coming from? He is speaking on behalf of, he is the voice of the Lord Jesus, right? An under shepherd, hopefully, is communicating the word of the great shepherd, the shepherd who gave his life for the sheep, right? If I'm doing my job, I'm not giving you the word of Sam, I'm giving you the mind of Christ. Prophecy is the mind of Christ.

Now, if a woman stands up in the assembly and starts to prophesy, whose word should she be

giving? Who's her immediate supervisor in the order? Her husband. You're not there to hear the word of the husband. You're there to hear the word of Christ.

She is not the direct representative of Christ for communication purposes in the same way that somebody from the tribe of Naphtali is not in the chain for representing God in Israel. There are Levites tasked with doing that. Levi was no great sheikhs as a person.

Remember him? Simeon and Levi and all the trouble they got in with Dinah and the rest of it. He's not better than his brothers, he just got the assignment. The husband is the speaker for Christ.

Now, does this make sense when he says, if a woman has a question, let her ask her husband at home? Because what's the order for information flow? Christ, the man, the woman. Christ, the pastor, the congregation. And if those two start to conflict, you don't have women trying to represent Christ.

They need to have a husband or father under whom they function. It's an assignment, it's not quality. But if you have a woman pastor, she has shamed her head.

She has dishonored her head. And in so doing, she's dishonored God and dishonored Christ because God came up with that order. Christ follows that order.

I talked about the Trinity earlier. Let me just close with this. What's the order in the Trinity? They are co-equal, co-eternal, exactly the same in every sense of quality, right? There's no diminishment in the Lord Jesus, there's no diminishment in the Holy Spirit.

We've illustrated and demonstrated that Jesus subordinated himself voluntarily to the Father. What did Jesus say about the Holy Spirit? I will send you another Comforter, He will lead you into all truth. What did He say about the Holy Spirit in terms of His message? He will not speak from Himself.

He will take my things and communicate them to you. The Holy Spirit energizes all of these gifts, right? So it is from the Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit to the pastor, from the Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit to the husband, depending on if you're in the assembly or if you're at home. When you're in the assembly and you're a woman and you have a question, you wait until you get home.

That's the model, that's the order. Now it's not the law in the sense that there's some sort of rigorous, no women can speak a syllable in the church. We have questions from wonderful, thoughtful ladies all the time in our church.

Why is that not a problem? What is the goal? Was there a law in Israel that said don't harvest on the Sabbath and did the disciples pluck grain on the Sabbath? And did Jesus say, you know what, it's okay, you're taking things out of context, there's an order and a purpose? In our assembly, when any of the ladies here or afar asks a question, there's no embarrassment,

there's no shame, there's no disruption of order. Husbands are not being left out. Husbands are here.

They're augmenting and supplementing and providing parts of the answers or providing parts of the questions. And we have a fellowship and the order is not disrupted. Paul's point, you notice all of these passages I went to, what is the goal? Order.

Don't disrupt the order. Why was it mentioned in Corinth and not in Philippi or not in some of the other churches? Because it became a problem where the order was manifestly being disrupted in Corinth. They had many problems, one of which is the women were starting to run the church.

They were shaming their husbands by talking out of turn, by standing up, flipping back their head covering and saying, I've got a word from God. Well, A, they didn't and B, even if they thought they had one, they were disrespecting their husband who's sitting right next to them. And if God was going to give a word from the Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit, it would hit the husband.

So by default, a woman praying or prophesying standing up is going to uncover her head and she's out of line. Look at every other scripture you have. So what's the upshot? What's the final? And remember my first point this morning.

This is not just for the assembly. It's all the time. We want to always be a reflection of the glory of the Lord Jesus.

We want to always be a reflection of God's order. Women's adornment, chaste, good works, modesty, reverence, respect, submission, that communicates without a word to her husband and the world. It's an assignment.

It may not be your will, but are you willing to pray like the Lord Jesus, not my will, but thine will be done? And believe me when I tell you, the higher up the chain of order you are, the more responsibility. A husband, a pastor, has a responsibility to get it right because there are people depending on him to get it right. And if he messes it up, for a pastor, I'm not sure for husbands, but for pastors, there is double discipline.

From those to whom much is given, much is required. And sometimes have you ever been in a situation and somebody's got a difficult decision and it's challenging and there's lots of pros and cons and the way is murky and you say, boy, I'm glad I don't have to make that decision. I see the fog surrounding this person and they're wrestling and struggling and I'm glad that's not me.

That's a really tough spot. Well, if you find yourself assigned a support role, equally essential, guys on the front lines, if they've got no beans and no bullets, are going to die. Beans and bullets people are equally essential.

They're just not as, they don't make as many movies about them. You don't get movies about Ration Company C. It's Platoon. It's the guys that are up there shooting.

That was a terrible movie, by the way. But here's my point. These things are not only important to unscramble in terms of what guidance is for the churches.

It is so in all the churches. Corinth gets a double reminder because it was a double problem. And look at the result.

The church is divided. They are elbowing each other out of the way at the Lord's table. There is confusion.

There is strife. It is not edifying. It is not building up.

It doesn't glorify the Lord Jesus. And part of it is in multiple ways and in multiple places, whether it's the function of their gifts, the functions within their marriages, the functions when they're assembled and when they're by themselves, they are not observing God's order. Every part of our life needs to be subject to God's order.

What is my assignment? How can I be the best transmission link? How can I be the best throwout bearing? How can I be the best ignition switch? How can I be the best right front shock absorber? Whatever your assignment is, diligence, faithfulness, submit yourselves under the mighty hand of God. Obey your parents, wives as unto the Lord. Obey as unto the Lord.

I'm not doing this because I want this person right above me to feel good. I'm doing it because I'm looking at God's order and the example of the Lord Jesus. That's why I do it.

Don't read anything into it, person right over me in terms of me thinking that you've got better quality than me or you're smarter than me or stronger than me or better than me, wiser than me. I do this because I love the Lord. This is what He did.

This is what the Father, the Son and the Spirit have figured out and what they themselves exemplify. Remember Paul said, he who does not work will not eat. And I've given you an example because if I don't work, I don't eat.

I don't put a burden even though I could on you to support me. I support myself. Why? It's an example.

God, the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are equal and anybody that says otherwise is blaspheming. They are absolutely totally equal, but they subordinate themselves. How hard should it be for us to set aside wondering about equality or how we're viewed and dedicate ourselves to God's order? That's what these chapters are about and it's not just in church.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word and how clearly and powerfully it illuminates our path. We thank you for the Holy Spirit who directs it

and shines it in the dark places of our souls and answers our questions and helps us to walk the worthy walk, follow the path that has been laid out for us to discharge the responsibility we have for our measure of faith.

We pray that as we reflect on this and as we look at our own lives, both in the assembly and outside, that we can find that very center of your will that pleases you, that renders us fruitful, prune us where we need it, shine the light on us where we are bearing fruit so that we can bear more. We thank you and praise you for our position in Christ and our opportunities to bear that fruit and to reflect that glory. And we ask all these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.