## **Heresies Exposed**

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(1 Corinthians 11:19)

In the context of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, Paul addresses one of the many problems, sinful practices, of the church at Corinth. This situation that needed to be corrected was in regard to their collective worship services. Their attitudes were so bad that Paul said while their coming together was intended for their continued spiritual development, it had become so corrupt that their spiritual development was actually retarded. According to verse 17, "ye come together not for the better, but for the worse." What could possibly have been such a glaring problem? We are not left in the dark about the matter as Paul points out specifically what the problem was in verse 18. He said he didn't want to believe what he had heard, but some he could not help but believe. What was the problem that Paul simply did not want to believe of his Corinthian brethren? "There are divisions among you" (v.18). Paul had already addressed this sinful manifestation of a carnal and childish spirit in chapters 1 through 3 and he addresses it again. Their divisiveness was making itself known in the assembling together of the congregation. What Paul spoke of earlier would ultimately result in this open division in chapter 11.

Let's examine this a little deeper. There are two words used by the inspired apostle to describe the divisions at Corinth. "Divisions" in verse 18 is the same word used in 1 Corinthians 1:10 to describe the effect of their placing their allegiance in preachers and not in Christ and His truth. These divisions were the result of dissension caused by worldly motivation and spiritual immaturity (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). While this is bad enough, the "heresies among you" of 1 Corinthians 11:19 is a different word denoting the end result of allowing the "divisions" to go unchecked. Vine says of this word: "A self-willed opinion which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division and the formation of sects." Thus, dissension that continues to fester and produce toxic poison within the body of Christ ends up being out and out permanent separations or "heresies." The promoters of heresies are "heretics." Paul instructed Titus, "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject" (Titus 3:10). Why is that, Paul? The church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22,23). To seek to defile the church (1 Cor. 3:17) is to seek to destroy the body of Christ. This is serious business folks.

Now to get to the point of verse 19 which justifies the title of this article. The "approved" are made manifest by the heresies. In this context, those "approved" and thus commended are those not guilty of seeking to divide the body of Christ. Those unapproved and thus rejected by God are the division causers. The benefit of the "heresies" in this context is that it reveals, at least in the area of divisiveness, who is approved and who isn't. The fact is that many brethren are showing their true colors, substituting for and refusing to submit to the power of truth and are thereby exposed by heresies. The wise will take note of Paul's inspired analysis.

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