

1 Corinthians 11:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

Analysis

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup—The solution to unworthy eating: self-examination. Δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἔαυτόν (let a man examine himself)—dokimazō means to test, prove, scrutinize (metallurgical term, testing metals for purity). This isn't morbid introspection but honest self-assessment before God. The examination focuses on: attitudes toward others (divisions, v. 18), treatment of the poor (v. 22), and discernment of Christ's body (v. 29).

And so let him eat (καὶ οὕτως... ἐσθιέτω)—after examination, participate. The goal isn't to scare believers away from the Table but to prepare them to approach worthily. Self-examination should produce repentance, reconciliation, and faith—then eat. The Table is for sinners who know they're sinners, not for the self-righteous. Calvin called this "fencing the Table"—protecting it from profanation while welcoming the penitent.

Historical Context

Jewish Passover preparation included searching homes for leaven (symbol of sin, Exodus 12:15). Paul spiritualizes this: search your heart for sin before the Christian Passover. Early church liturgies included confession of sin and mutual reconciliation before communion (Matthew 5:23-24, Didache 14:1-2). The church father Chrysostom preached that unreconciled Christians should abstain from the

Table until they reconcile. This self-examination wasn't individualistic but communal—assessing how one's attitudes and actions affected the body of Christ.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What should self-examination before the Lord's Supper focus on—personal sins, attitudes toward others, or both?
2. How can churches practice corporate self-examination without becoming legalistic or introspective?
3. What role should church leaders play in helping members examine themselves—pastoral counsel, fencing the Table, liturgical preparation?

Interlinear Text

δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἔαυτόν καὶ οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ
examine But a man himself and so of G3588
G1381 G1161 G444 G1438 G2532 G3779 G1537

ἄρτου ἐσθιέτω καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου πινέτω·

that bread let him eat and of G3588 that cup drink
G740 G2068 G2532 G1537 G4221 G4095

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 6:4 (Parallel theme): But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

2 Corinthians 13:5 (Parallel theme): Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Lamentations 3:40 (Parallel theme): Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.

1 Corinthians 11:31 (Parallel theme): For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

Haggai 1:7 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

Haggai 1:5 (Parallel theme): Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

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