

# 1 Corinthians 11:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

## Analysis

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**For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body**—Paul specifies what makes eating unworthy: μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα (not discerning the body). Diakrinō means to distinguish, judge correctly, recognize. What body?

1. Christ's physical body sacrificed on the cross—failing to see the Table as representing Christ's atoning death
2. the church as Christ's body (12:12-27)—failing to honor unity and diversity within the congregation.

Context favors both: Corinthians dishonored Christ's sacrifice and divided His body.

**Eateth and drinketh damnation to himself** (κρίμα ἔαυτῷ ἔσθιει καὶ πίνει)—krima means judgment, not necessarily eternal condemnation. Paul clarifies in v. 32: temporal discipline ('chastened') not final damnation. Yet the judgment is real—God doesn't overlook profaning the Table. The same meal that nourishes faith when received worthily brings judgment when received unworthily. This mirrors Israel's wilderness experience: manna sustained the faithful but judgment fell on rebels (1 Corinthians 10:1-12).

## Historical Context

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The phrase 'not discerning the body' became central in sacramental theology. Catholics emphasized Christ's real presence in the elements; Protestants emphasized the church as Christ's body. The Corinthian context clarifies: they failed to discern both—treating the meal as ordinary food (not Christ's body) and ignoring social divisions (fragmenting Christ's body, the church). Discernment requires theological understanding (this is covenant meal) and ethical response (unity in love).

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. What does it mean to 'discern the Lord's body'—recognizing Christ's sacrifice, the church's unity, or both?
2. How can unworthy eating bring judgment even on believers—what kind of judgment does Paul have in mind?
3. How should churches teach about the Table's seriousness without inducing fear or scrupulosity?

## Interlinear Text

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ο	γὰρ	ἐσθίει	καὶ	πίνει	ἀναξίως,	κρίμα	ἐαυτῷ
G3588	For	eateth	and	drinketh	unworthily	damnation	to himself
G1063	G2068	G2532	G4095	G371	G2917	G1438	

ἐσθίει	καὶ	πίνει	μὴ	διακρίνων	τὸ	σῶμα	τοῦ	κυρίου
eateth	and	drinketh	not	discerning	G3588	body	G3588	the Lord's
G2068	G2532	G4095	G3361	G1252		G4983		G2962

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Corinthians 11:27** (References Lord): Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

**1 Corinthians 11:30** (Parallel theme): For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

**Hebrews 5:14** (Parallel theme): But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

**Ecclesiastes 8:5** (Parallel theme): Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.

**Romans 13:2** (Parallel theme): Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

**1 Corinthians 11:24** (Parallel theme): And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

**James 3:1** (Parallel theme): My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.