

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Please take God's Word and turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 11.
2. This morning we are beginning a new section.
3. For the last 3 chapters we have been talking about Christian liberty.
4. Now Paul turns his attention to the subject of women in the church.
5. During Paul's day there were certain customs observed for the purpose of headship.
6. Paul talks about them here in verses 2-16.
7. Listen to what he says as I read 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

8. Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you. But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ. Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head. But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved. For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head. For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.

Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God. Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering. But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice,

nor have the churches of God.

9. We live in a world today where women are not feminine and men aren't strong.
10. We hear constantly about gender changes.
11. That men weren't born as men but as women and women weren't born as women but as men.
12. We hear about equality.
13. Women want to do the same things as men.
14. They want the same opportunities, the same jobs, the same opportunities.
15. The same was true in Roman society.
16. Some women went into wrestling and sword fighting.
17. Others liked to run bare-breasted while hunting wild pigs.
18. Feminism today is no different and has seeped into the church.
19. In a chapter titled "To Hell with Sexism: Women in Religion" in *Megatrends for Women*, authors Patricia Aburdene and John Naisbitt show how modern culture celebrates feminism: "Women of the late twentieth century are revolutionizing the most sexist institution in history—organized religion. Overturning millennia of tradition, they are challenging authorities, reinterpreting the Bible, creating their own services, crowding into seminaries, winning the right to ordination, purging sexist language in liturgy, reintegrating female values and assuming positions of leadership."
20. Feminist theology teaches that God is not male, God does not exist in a trinitarian form, Jesus was a feminist, and the true history of women was edited out of the Bible.
21. Aburdene and Naisbitt assert that once women's perspectives "attain greater power, [that] will signal revolutionary changes in church policies."
22. And for years now we have seen a surge in attempts to purge male terminology out of Bible translations.
23. One such translation, the TNIV of 2005 sought to do just that by introducing gender-inclusive language.

24. That means they changed specific gender words to include all genders.
25. In the TNIV, there were 1617 changes made from singular to plural to avoid the use of "he/him/his." They were changed to "we/you/they" or dropped altogether.
26. There were 293 changes to avoid the word "father." They were changed to "ancestors/people/parents/parent" or dropped altogether.
27. There were 10 changes to avoid the word "brother." They were changed to "friend/someone else/the other person" or dropped altogether.
28. There were 256 changes to avoid the word "man." They were changed to "person/peoples" or dropped altogether.
29. In 2011 a new NIV was completed to fix some of these problems.
30. But as Wayne Grudem and Jerry Thacker reveal, "Of the 3699 'inaccuracies' from the TNIV, we found that three fourths of them (75%) stayed exactly the as they were in the TNIV. That means that whatever improvements have appeared, the vast majority of the 'inaccuracies' persist in the 2011 NIV.
31. They further note that "readers should realize...that the 2011 NIV is not a revision based on the old NIV of 1984, but is a revision based on the now-defunct TNIV of 2005." (<http://waynegrudem.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/An-Evaluation-of-Gender-Language-in-the-2011-NIV.pdf>)
32. Some other "gender-inclusive" versions include:
  1. 1987 New Century Version [NCV]
  2. 1986 International Children's Bible [ICB] (aka The Odyssey Bible)
  3. 1989 Revised English Bible [REB]
  4. 1990 New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]
  5. 1992 Good News Bible [1992 Revision] [GNB]
  6. 1992 Today's English Version [TEV]
  7. 1993 The Message
  8. 1996 New International Reader's Version [Nirv]
  9. 1996 New Living Translation [NLT]
33. As you can see Aburdene and Naisbitt were right: "Women of the late twentieth century are...Overturning millennia of tradition, they are challenging authorities, reinterpreting the Bible, creating their own services, crowding into seminaries, winning the right to ordination, purging sexist language in liturgy, reintegrating

female values and assuming positions of leadership."

34. Let me say at the outset: Men and women have equality given to them by God in the Bible but not role reversal or gender change.
35. Some months ago I pointed out in our study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 that women are given equality in the Bible but not permission to reverse roles.
36. In the OT and NT, the Bible teaches that women are spiritually equal to men.
37. They had the same spiritual responsibilities to obey the law, to teach the law, and to participate in the festivals.
38. They had the same protection as men.
39. Penalties given for crimes against women are the same as those for crimes against men.
40. They took the same vows as men.
41. Both men and women were allowed to take the Nazirite vow.
42. They had the same access to God as men and the same privileges.
43. The same is true in the NT.
44. All the commands, promises, and blessings of the New Testament are given equally to men and women.
45. They had the same access to Jesus as men.
46. Though they were given all this, their roles remained the same.
47. Women did not serve as leaders, have an ongoing prophetic ministry or serve as pastors/elders in the church.
48. So as we come to this passage this morning, we see that God gave men and women specific roles.
49. These roles are not interchangeable.
50. And to change them is to dishonor God who created them.
51. Feminism isn't new.

52. In fact, in this passage, Paul is addressing this very issue.
53. He says as a sign of rebellion, some of the women weren't covering their heads but instead were shaving them so that they appeared masculine rather than feminine.
54. Men were covering their heads when they should have been uncovered.
55. Both of these actions indicated a role reversal.
56. And in Corinth for the women to cover their heads was a custom to show subordination.
57. In order for the creation to function properly and with order there has to be headship and subordination.
58. Just like your job, there is someone in charge and the rest are subordinate to the one in charge.
59. The same is true in the family.
60. The fact that God has designed us to be mutually submissive, He has still designed in the family an authority and a submissive role.
61. The man is given the authority in the marriage, and the wife is to follow.
62. The parents are given the authority in the family, and the children are to follow. (<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/90-99>)
63. Paul begins this section in verse 2 by praising the Corinthians for remembering him by holding firmly to "the traditions, just as [he] delivered them to [them]."
64. Going back to 7:1, they had questions about various issues and one of them had to do with women.
65. Paul said in 7:1, "Now concerning the things about which you wrote."
66. They respected Paul's apostolic authority and held to the traditions he taught.
67. The word "traditions" (paradosis) means, "that which is passed along by teaching."
68. It's used in a negative way in the NT when it refers to man-made ideas and practices (Mat.15:2-6).
69. But it's also applied to divinely revealed teaching, as here and in 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

70. The Corinthians held firmly to Paul's inspired apostolic teaching.
71. That was never their problem.
72. The problem was their morals and lifestyle.
73. They were orthodox but not pure. They remembered and believed the cardinal truths about God's nature and work, but they did not live godly lives. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)
74. So before addressing another issue, he praises them for remembering him and for holding firmly to the traditions.
75. Now in verses 3-16, he corrects their misunderstanding of male-female roles and relationships.
76. So he begins by stating first...

## **LESSON**

### **I. The Divine Order of Headship (v.3)**

*But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.  
1 Corinthians 11:3 - NASB*

1. Christ is the Head of Every Man (v.3a)
  1. The word "head" (kephale) refers to either the upper top of the body or to the "one who is of supreme or pre-eminent status" (Louw-Nida).
  2. It could be translated "ruler" (EDNT), "leader" (LEH), or "superior" (DBL)
  3. Christ is the supreme One over "every man."
  4. He is "the ruling and sovereign part of the body." (MacArthur)
  5. He is the head of the church as its Savior and Lord (Eph. 1:22–23; 4:15; Col. 1:18; etc.).

Colossians 1:18, "He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything."

6. He has redeemed and bought it with His own blood (1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:18–19; Rev. 5:9).

1 Peter 1:18-19, "Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

7. But in His divine authority Christ is head of every human being, believer and nonbeliever. "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth," Jesus declared (Matt. 28:18).
8. Most of mankind has never acknowledged Christ's authority, but all things have been put "in subjection under His feet" (Heb. 2:8), and one day "every knee [will] bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and ... every tongue [will] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10–11).

## 2. Man is the Head of a Woman (v.3b)

"And the man is the head of the woman."

1. "Man" is the singular masculine aner which can be translated "man," "husband," or "male"
2. "Woman" singular feminine gune which can be translated "woman," "wife," or "female"
3. Both words are used through verse 15 and are translated "man" and "woman"
4. The male is "head" of the woman...This is true in any relationship such as a daughter to a father or wife to husband. (Richison, Grant. [Verse by Verse through the Book of 1 Corinthians](#). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2007. Print.)
5. Colossians 3:18 says, "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."

6. Ephesians 5:22-24 says, "Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything."
7. Titus 2:4-5 says that the older women are to "encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored."
8. Peter said in 1 Peter 3:1, " In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives."
9. Verses 5-6 says, " For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear."

John Gill writes, "The man is first in order in being, was first formed, and the woman out of him, who was made for him, and not he for the woman, and therefore must be head and chief; as he is also with respect to his superior gifts and excellencies, as strength of body, and endowments of mind, whence the woman is called the weaker vessel; likewise with regard to pre-eminence or government, the man is the head; and as Christ is the head of the church, and the church is subject to him, so the husband is the head of the wife, and she is to be subject to him in every thing natural, civil, and religious. Moreover, the man is the head of the woman to provide and care for her, to nourish and cherish her, and to protect and defend her against all insults and injuries." (Gill, John. [\*An Exposition of the New Testament\*](#). Vol. 2. London: Mathews and Leigh, 1809. Print. The Baptist Commentary Series.)

10. So the principle of subordination and authority applies to all men and all women, not just to husbands and wives. It extends beyond the family to all aspects of society. That is the basic order of creation, as Paul explains later (vv. 8–9). That is the way God planned and created mankind; it is the way He has made us. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [\*1 Corinthians\*](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

### 3. God is the Head of Christ (v.3c)



"And God is the head of Christ."

1. Jesus submitted Himself to His Father's will (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; cf. 1 Cor. 3:23; 15:24–28; etc.).
  1. In John 4:34, "Jesus \*said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."
  2. In John 5:30 Jesus said, "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."
  3. In John 6:38 Jesus said, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."
2. Christ has never been—before, during, or after His incarnation—in any way inferior in essence to the Father.
3. But in His incarnation He willingly subordinated Himself to the Father in His role as Savior and Redeemer.
4. He lovingly subjected Himself completely to His Father's will as an act of humble obedience in fulfilling the divine purpose. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

## II. The Problem of Head Coverings (vv.4-5)

1. Notice in verses 4-5 there is mention of a man having "something on his head" and a "woman who has her head uncovered."
2. Head covering were a local custom in Corinth.
3. The phrase "has something on his head" in verse 4 literally means "having down from head," and is usually taken to refer to a veil though some have taken it to refer to men having long hair because Paul mentions in verse 14 that long hair on a man is a dishonor to him.
4. The pagans worshiped with their heads covered, except when worshiping Saturn or Hercules (Gill).
5. The context here implies that in Corinth such a head covering would have been completely ridiculous for a man and completely proper for a woman.

6. For Jews, who came to wear head coverings, the practice seems to have come in the fourth century a.d., though some may have tried it in the time of the apostles.
7. But generally it was regarded as a disgrace for a man to worship with his head covered. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)
8. It was also a disgrace for a women to worship with her head uncovered or shaved (v.5)

### **III. The Place of Head Coverings (vv.4-5)**

1. Verses 4-5 says, "while praying or prophesying."
2. Since the church is not mentioned this would indicate that this was in public
3. Praying is our vertical relationship to God
4. Prophesying is our horizontal relationship to one another
5. The word for "prophesying" (propheteuo, pres.act.part.) is usually translated "prophecy," "prophesy," or "prophesies."
6. It means "to speak inspired utterances" (DBL) or more simply "to proclaim God's message" (Greek-English Dict. of NT)
7. A more literal rendering would be "to speak before" in terms of an individual or audience
8. Paul was not advocating in verse 5 for women preachers because that would go against his silence clause in 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15.

### **IV. The Problem of Men Covering Their Heads (vv.4,7)**

1. He "disgraces his head" or Christ, who according to verse 3 is "the head of every man."
2. According to verse 7 man is the "image and glory of God" and therefore "ought not to have his head covered."

3. Also verse 8 says that "man does not originate from woman, but woman from man."
4. That is a reference to the creation of man in Genesis 1:26; 2:7

## V. The Problem of Women Not Covering Their Heads (vv.5-16)

### 1. Role Reversal (vv.5-6)

1. We know from secular history that various movements of women's liberation and feminism appeared in the Roman empire during New Testament times.
2. Women would often take off their veils or other head coverings and cut their hair in order to look like men.
3. Much as in our own day, some women were demanding to be treated exactly like men and they attacked marriage and the raising of children as unjust restrictions of their rights.
4. They asserted their independence by leaving their husbands and homes, refusing to care for their children, living with other men, demanding jobs traditionally held by men, wearing men's clothing and hairdos, and by discarding all signs of femininity.
5. It is likely that some of the believers at Corinth were influenced by those movements and, as a sign of protest and independence, refused to cover their heads at appropriate times.
6. As with meat that had been offered to idols, there was nothing in the wearing or not wearing of the head covering itself that was right or wrong.
7. It is the rebellion against God-ordained roles that is wrong, and in Corinth that rebellion was demonstrated by women praying and prophesying with their heads uncovered. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [\*1 Corinthians\*](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

### 2. Creative Order (vv.7-10)

1. Man is the image and glory of God (v.7a)

For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory

of God; but the woman is the glory of man.

1. This is a reference to creative order
2. Both were created in the image of God

Genesis 1:27 says, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

2. Woman is the glory of man (v.7b)

"but the woman is the glory of man."

1. Because she was created from man's rib (Gen.2:22)

3. Man was a direct creation of God (v.8a)

"For man does not originate from woman."

1. He was created from the dust of the ground (Gen.2:7)

4. Woman was created from man and for man (vv.8b-9)

"but woman from man. For indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake."

Genesis 2:18 says, "Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."

5. The woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head (v.10)

"Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels."

1. "Symbol" (exousia) means, "rightful power" or "authority"
2. The covered head was the woman's authority or right to pray and worship, since it demonstrated her submissiveness. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)
3. Paul says all this to sum up why the woman ought to be seen in her God-given role

4. To uncover her head was a sign of rebellion against the God's divine order
5. The holy angels are the supreme example of proper creaturely subordination.
6. It is proper for a woman to cover her head as a sign of subordination because of the angels, in order that these most submissive of all creatures will not be offended by nonsubmissiveness. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary)

### 3. Interdependence (vv.11-16)

1. Woman is not independent of man (v.11a)

"However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man."

2. Man is not independent of woman (v.11b)

"nor is man independent of woman."

### 4. Both originate from one another (v.12)

"For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God."

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Paul concludes in verses 13-16 by first saying based on his argument, "Judge for yourselves; is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?"
2. What's the answer? No
3. In verses 14-15 he states, "Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering."
4. In other words, nature itself teaches that there are God-given roles.
5. And when those roles are forsaken it brings shame and shows rebellion.
6. Paul ends by saying in verse 16, "But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God."

7. Our world is in a mess today.
8. With the advocacy of gender change or gender inclusion, the lines have been blurred.
9. God created male and female.
10. And He gave them roles.
11. Both have spiritual equalities.
12. But both are to function in their God-given role.
13. If you're here today and you have struggled with issues as these, Paul makes it clear of what God teaches regarding men and women and how God designed each to function in society and in the church.
14. Is Paul advocating that women today wear veils? No
15. That was a custom of the day.
16. But he is advocating that we appear as male and female.
17. That gender does matter and the differences should be clearly seen.
18. If you're here today and you have never received Christ, then I want to urge you to come to Him right now.
19. You say why?
20. Because there is no other name given among men by which we must be saved.
21. You say what do I need to be saved from? God.
22. You need to be saved from His wrath and be forgiven of all your sin.
23. That's is only possible by what Christ did for you on the cross.
24. On the cross He took your sin and bore in His body the wages for sin, death.
25. Come to Him now as we pray.
26. Let's pray.