

“The Matter Of Respect”

1 Corinthians 11:1-16

Message by Michael J. Barnard

March 3, 2019

Teaching Aim: To explore the questions: 1. “Should women wear head coverings while praying or prophesying?” and 2. “Should men have their heads covered while praying or prophesying?” To illustrate Paul’s teachings on this subject and to encourage each believer to make up his or her mind on this issue based on the biblical evidence. To encourage Christians not to be judgmental on this issue, but to respect one another’s personal convictions before the Lord!

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: God’s sovereign design for headship in the home and at church (1 Cor. 11:1-3)

1. Paul’s words, “*Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ,*” seems, more properly, to be the conclusion to the preceding chapter (**vs. 1**). What was the main theme of **1 Cor. 10:23-33**? (See **1 Cor. 10:31**) Does this principle still apply to us today? Are you comfortable in encouraging your children, grandchildren, co-workers and neighbors to follow your example as you follow Christ? Why or why not? What steps can you take to improve your Christian walk?

2. What was Paul referring to in **verse 2** when he praised the Corinthians for “*keeping the traditions*” just as he had delivered them? When did Paul give these teachings? (See **Acts 18:1-17**) How long had Paul remained in Corinth? (See **Acts 18:11**) Why is it always a good practice to compliment people on something before sharing a rebuke?

3. **Verse 3** reveals God’s divine order in headship. “*Head,*” as used here, primarily refers to “*authority,*” but can also be used to refer to the “*source*” or “*origin*” in a secondary sense. How does Paul’s expression, “*the head of every man is Christ*” fit well into each of these definitions? Does Paul’s expression, “*the head of woman is man*” fit into these definitions as well? In what sense can we say, “*the head of Christ is God*?” (See **John 6:38-40; 10:28-30; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Phil. 2:6**) Do you think this is a reference to the incarnation, or does this verse refer to the distinction in roles between the Father and the Son?

Part II: The significance of covering one's head during worship (1 Cor. 11:4-13)

1. According to the Apostle Paul, what happens when a man prays or prophesies with his head covered (**vs. 4**)? What *"head"* is being dishonored, the man's or Christ's? Is it appropriate for men to wear baseball caps (*or any other kind of hat for that matter*) while praying or teaching God's Word at the church? Why do you think so many young men come to some churches today wearing their baseball caps and keeping them on during the service? Is there ever a time to confront and lovingly correct? Why or why not?
2. According to **verse 5**, should a woman take her head coverings off while worshiping the Lord? Who is a woman dishonoring if she prays or prophesies with her head uncovered? Why? According to Paul, how serious of an offense is this? Why was it degrading for a woman to have her head shaved?
3. What kind of women wore short hair and no head covering in Paul's day (**vs. 6**)? (See Commentaries) According to Paul, what should a woman do if she finds having her head shaved embarrassing?
4. According to **verse 7**, why should a man not cover his head in church? What did Paul mean when he said man is, *"the image and glory of God?"* (See **Gen. 1:26-27**) Is Paul implying that women are inferior to the men when he says, *"but woman is the glory of man?"* (See **Gal. 3:28**) Was Paul a male chauvinist, as many claim today, or was he simply laying out the different roles God ordained for males and females? Do you feel these distinctions in role are being confused today in society? If so, how?
5. Is Paul arguing in **verse 8 & 9** from *"local custom"* or from *"creation"* to defend his comments in **verse 7**? What is the difference between a *"custom"* and a *"principle?"* Is Paul teaching *"principle"* or *"custom"* in **verses 7-9**? According to **verses 8 and 9**, what are some ways that men and women are mutually interdependent? What was the role of the first woman? (See **Gen. 2:18**) How is **Gen. 4:1** another picture of that interdependence?

6. According to **verse 10**, why should a woman have “*a symbol of authority on her head*”? What symbol is referred to in **verse 10**? What stunning revelation do we find in **verse 10**? Are you surprised that angels are watching you worship? How should the presence of angels at our worship services affect the way we worship? As incredible as it is to have angels watching our worship services, whose presence should put us in a state of reverence and awe?

7. In God’s great scheme of things, do men and women need each other (**vs. 11**)? If so, in what way? According to **verse 12**, who designed the different, and yet interdependent roles of men and women?

8. What is Paul asking the Corinthians to judge in **verse 13**? Is the refusal of a woman to wear a head covering an act of defiance against both God and man? Why or why not?

Part III: Propriety in worship (1 Cor. 11:14-16)

1. On what basis did Paul argue against men wearing long hair (**vs. 14**)? We often see pictures of Jesus with long hair, are these pictures accurate according to **verse 14**? What is the only group of men in the Bible required to have long hair? (See **Num. 6:1-8**) Why? Can you think of any male Bible characters who lived under this vow? (See **Judg. 16:17; 1 Sam. 1:11**)

2. According to **verse 15**, what is given for the woman’s glory? How long should a woman’s hair be? What can the woman’s long hair be considered as (**vs. 15**)?

3. Paul seems to anticipate debate on the subject of head coverings (**vs. 16**). What is his response? (See **1 Cor. 11:16** in the NIV) Does **verse 16** seem to indicate that the principles laid out in **1 Cor. 11:1-16** were universal to all Christian churches, or unique to Corinth?

4. After doing today's study, it is clear that Scripture instructs Christian women to wear a head covering while praying or prophesying. Is it your belief that this head covering is an outward piece of material worn on top of the head, or is it a women's long hair? How did you come to this conclusion? Wearing an outward head covering is a legitimate biblical way for a woman to worship God, while at the same time, demonstrating respect for her husband or father! Should Christians be judgmental when we see woman wearing outward head coverings? Why or why not? How about when we see men wearing hats in a worship service?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- It is God who has established the biblical order of headship in the home and in the church!
- Headship does not mean dictatorship; Jesus is the ultimate example as Head of the Church!
- Women should have their head covered while praying or prophesying!
- Men's should not cover their heads while praying or prophesying; by doing so they cover up the glory of God and dishonor God!
- Wearing head coverings in the church is a legitimate biblical way for a woman to worship God while, at the same time, demonstrating respect for her husband or father!
- Part of the reason for the difference in hair length between men and woman is to demonstrate the distinction between the sexes; confusing the sexes does not please God!