

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 9TH - 10TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS

GENDER AND GOD (1 CORINTHIANS 11:1-3) SOME ENCOURAGEMENT

When Paul said, "Now I praise you because you remember... and hold fast to the traditions," it must have been a relief for the Corinthians. This didn't mean that everything was perfect, but that a majority of the congregation in Corinth was following Paul's instructions.

- Paul led with encouragement because he was about to address more issues.

ADDRESSING AN ODD CONCERN

Paul was about to address the relationship of men and women in the context of worship services. Before doing this, he reminded the church about headship, or authority, when it comes to men, women, and God.

- The problem was many of the Christians were **not showing proper respect to their spouse or God within their cultural expectations.**

THE CONCERN WAS HEAD COVERINGS

In Corinth, the cultural norm was for women to wear a head covering to show modesty and submission to their husband. **This is not a universal command to all Christians, but an example honoring authority within a culture.**

- Regardless of culture, **Christian spouses should love, respect, and mutually submit** (1Cor. 7, Eph. 5)

WHY PAUL CARED ABOUT THIS ODD CONCERN

First, he wanted the church to follow scripture as they worshiped together and lived their lives outside of the church.

- Second, he wanted people to **respect God and each other.**
- Third, he was concerned about the **testimony and example of the church to the outside world.**

A PASSAGE THAT CAN EASILY BE TWISTED

V4 describes all three forms of headship: Christ is the head, husbands are heads, and God is the head.

What does this mean, and what about women?

- First, **head** in this passage can mean **source**. This term was used a lot with Greeks to show the beginning of something. Man came from God, woman came from man.

HEAD CAN ALSO MEAN CHAIN OF AUTHORITY

Authority was given by God to Christ, Christ to man, man to woman. This is similar to Paul's teachings in Colossians 2:10 and Ephesians 5:23.

- The meaning is a mixture of both. **We're to know where we came from, the unique roles we all have, and how to honor those roles through balance, respect, and love.** V12 will clarify this a little more.

RESPONSIBILITIES (1 CORINTHIANS 11:4-12)

ADDRESSING THE MEN FIRST

Paul says, "Every man who prays or prophesies with something on his head dishonors his head." This is directly related to how men in cults in Corinth would cover their heads when worshiping false gods.

- There is a greater call beyond just living above reproach. **Men are also called to lead their families in the ways of Christ.**

TURNING TO THE WOMEN

Women in Corinth would often do corporate prayer and prophecy (declare a truth of God). Because they were visible and exercising spiritual gifts, they were to show respect to their husbands and the custom of their area by wearing a head covering.

- If not honored, it looked like the woman praying wasn't respectful to her husband.

THIS IS WHEN KNOWING CULTURE MATTERS

The point was less about what was on one's head and more about the reputation of the church in society. If one has ever been to a foreign country to minister, one knows they must follow cultural norms (within the biblical parameters) to lead people to Jesus.

- It goes back to **sacrificing freedoms and comforts for the sake of God and others.**

SO, WHAT ABOUT SHAVING THEIR HEADS?

V6 is referring to another cultural example. In the Mediterranean world, women who committed adultery or prostitution would be punished by having their heads shaved.

- Paul is essentially saying, **when we publicly disrespect our spouse (or anyone for that matter), we're being a disgraceful example to people around us.**

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Though men are given a unique role of ultimately leading the family, this doesn't diminish the role of women. We must remember that the attributes and image of God are displayed through both genders.

- This being said, **there is a high calling and expectation of men to lead in worship, protection, and provision.**

THE GREAT BREAKDOWN

One of the biggest reasons our society is broken is the failure of men to lead in the way God has called them to. **A man cannot simply slap a "head covering" of respect on a woman without fulfilling his submissive duties of loving her like Christ loves us.**

- **The breakdown of biblical manhood is a major cause of societal breakdown.**

AND HEAVEN IS WATCHING

When biblical manhood and womanhood break down, heaven witnesses it. Paul says, "because of the angels" men should love their wives and women should respect their husbands (Ephesians 5).

- **We must learn and live the Bible's definition of masculinity and femininity, not our culture's bastardized version.**

THE BALANCE (V11-12)

Paul says women aren't independent of men, but neither are men independent of women. He also says that women came from men (Adam), but all men come from women (birth).

- This shows the **importance of both genders** and reminds us of the need for **mutual respect and submission** that we should have for each other.

ADDRESSING A GREAT LIE IN OUR CULTURE

The idea of gender is questioned in our society, and the ramifications affect more than just science and culture. It is theological as well.

- **If humanity is made in the image of God shown through a male and female, what does it say that we think we can change or even create new expressions of gender?** Does it put us in the position of a god?

CONSIDERATION (1 CORINTHIANS 11:13-16)

"JUDGE FOR YOURSELVES"

Paul wasn't giving the Corinthians license to ignore his teaching, but to **think through why we do things** and not blindly obey instruction.

- **There are times we follow the Bible even if we don't fully understand, but even in those moments we must be thinking on God's wisdom and His desire to lead us in a good direction.**

NOT SO MUCH ABOUT HAIR

V14-15 are less about hair and more about how to display the principles of Jesus in different cultures.

- Paul is essentially telling the Corinthians that though hair length is not evil, **when we disrespect the cultural norms where we are out of disregard for others we compromise the faith, and that is sin.**

HE IS ALSO SPEAKING OF GENDER DISTINCTION

Again, the issue has little to do with hair and more to do with biblical masculinity and femininity. The length of hair was an example that men should present themselves as men, and women as women.

- This may vary slightly culture to culture, but the underlying truth is that **we're to embrace and live out our God-given gender roles.**

"WE HAVE NO OTHER CUSTOM"

Paul was saying that at this time the only custom in the churches in the Mediterranean area was for women to cover their heads in church services. This doesn't carry over to us today because our culture doesn't view head coverings as a sign of respect.

- **The point was sacrificing freedoms for the sake of reaching others.**

THE IMAGE OF GOD

- Genesis 1:27 states humanity is made in God's image represented by male and female.
- The topic of gender goes much deeper than science or culture, it goes back to **the problem of us trying to fashion God in our image.** The dismissal of gender, like many human ideas, is a symptom of the greater issue of lacking submission to God.

RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION

- Though men and women have unique roles, **we learn through the Word that we are to mutually submit, love, and respect each other because both roles are vital.**
- This **balance** and respect not only makes our relationships better, it is a great example of Jesus to the world around us.
- We're to respect cultural norms (without sinning) in various places or with different people we minister to in order to gain a rapport and not offend.
- **We get out of our comfort zones and make sacrifices because we should love others and want them to be saved by Christ!**

WHAT IS THE POINT?

- The family/society is breaking down because people are not living in a way that honors God and His design for their lives.
- The point is God has placed an emphasis on the leadership of men, and the majority of men aren't living out biblical masculinity.
- Women are not exempt. They are to also lead and live in dignity and honor.
- The point is that we're an inconsiderate, disrespectful, and selfish people, and this dishonors God.
- The point is **our attempt to make a god in our image isn't working** because our design is, and has always been, flawed.
- Everything is on the line, and the only successful path is Christ and His Word.

WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

- It all begins with **humility.**
- We must be **praying** and seeking Him first.
- We must **examine** the fruit of our culture and our own choices and compare them to God's desire for us written in His Word.
- We must learn to **obey, trust,** and **listen.**
- We must be willing to **submit to a loving Creator,** even when it seems sacrificial.