

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

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

## THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP (1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-3)

After a strong call from Paul for these Christians to “**flee from idolatry**” by avoiding participation in pagan practices, Paul now turns the next issue at hand-order within the church.

- Chapter 11 deals with two major issues regarding this question.
- Vs. 2-16 address the issues regarding the roles of men and women in a **Christian worship service** (order, authority, accountability, and appropriate attire/practices).

The praise in verse 2 that Paul lauds on this church seems a bit “**over the top**” - some scholars think **he might even be sarcastic**.

- Nevertheless, he admonishes them to remember **Paul's apostolic authority and follow his teachings** (“**traditions**”) in how their church is to operate in all things.
- Submitting to **spiritual authority** can be a scary thing- but we're all called to submit.

To that end, Paul sets a **foundation** for his teaching in the rest of this chapter by saying, “the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God” (vs. 3).

- God has established in His word **principles of order, authority, and accountability** both within the home and within the church.
- Men and women **play different roles** in the home, family, and church - and that's **God design**.

The term “**head**” has a number of meanings, including “**source**” and “**authority**”- for someone to be the “**head**” implies them **having responsibility to lead and the matching accountability** in leading.

- If someone is our “**head**”, it's right for us to **submit to them**.
- Difference in role doesn't mean **inequality or inferiority** in personhood!

### “THE HEAD OF EVERY MAN IS CHRIST...”

In a way, Christ is the “**source**” of males in that God created **Adam from the dust** (Genesis 2:7).

- In another sense, as he leads his wife and family, **every man is called to be under submission** to the Lordship and leadership of Christ.
- Men who aren't under Christ's authority often find that **they don't have much spiritual influence** or authority over their family.

### “THE HEAD OF A WIFE IS HER HUSBAND...”

In one sense, **males are the source of females** in that Eve was “**fashioned**” from Adam's side (Genesis 2:22).

- In another sense, God's order for a **marriage is for the wife to serve the husband by submitting to his leadership**, and for a husband to serve his wife by **loving her and leading the family as he submits to the authority of Christ**.

### “THE HEAD OF CHRIST IS GOD...”

God the Father is the **head of Christ** because Christ, “**came from the Father**” (John 16:27-28), and Christ lovingly submitted to the will of the Father (John 4:34).

- Within the trinity of **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit we see equality**, but we also see submission and differences in roles.
- The **Christian life is all about submission** (Ephesians 5:21) - we submit to God, to God's Word, and to each other.

## ON HEAD COVERINGS (1 CORINTHIANS 11:4-10)

### THREE VIEWS OF 1 COR. 11:4-16

1. **Non-authoritative** (This was Paul's opinion, not God's Word...but how do we know the difference?)
2. **Authoritative and absolute** (Women must wear physical head coverings in church and long hair, men can't, no exceptions...but what do we do with other passages of scripture (Exodus 29:6, Acts 21:36-30)?)
3. **Authoritative but culturally limited** (the principles are authoritative, but their application is cultural).

### LET'S EXAMINE THE CULTURAL CONTEXT...

In the Mediterranean world of Paul's day, it was customary for women to wear a veil or head covering in public, and **this practice somehow honored their husbands and families**.

- Wives who didn't cover their heads **brought shame to their husbands** as though their heads were shaved- the only women with shaved heads typically were **prostitutes, lesbians, or adulterers**.

In that culture, **men would commonly cover their heads with their togas** as they performed pagan worship rituals.

- For a man to, “**cover his head**” in the worship of Christ was to worship in the same way **pagan men worshipped their gods**.
- Somehow, this custom of wearing a head covering **carried with it a deep cultural meaning**.

For a man to “**pray or prophesy**” in a church gathering with **his head covered dishonored his head** (Christ) because he mixed pagan symbols into the worship of Christ.

- For a woman to “**pray or prophesy**” in a church gathering with **her head uncovered dishonored her head** (**her husband**) because she communicated culturally that she was not under her husbands' authority.

Men in this church **shouldn't imitate this practice of a pagan head covering** because a man is, “the image and glory of God” (vs. 7a).

- A man's purpose is to **bring honor and glory** to His “**head**”, that is God.
- Women in this church **shouldn't throw off the practice of covering** their heads because, “the woman is the glory of man” (vs. 7b) - women are called to give honor to their husbands.

“**Man was not made from woman, but woman from man, neither man created for woman, but woman for man**” (vs. 8-9)

- In Genesis 2:18, we read of the one thing that was not declared “**good**” in all of God's creation: **the fact that the man was alone**.
- We also read about God's solution: “**I will make him a helper fit for him.**”
- At 1st glance, **this may seem devaluing to women**, but two Hebrew terms in this verse give us clarity.

The word translated “**helper**” is the Hebrew term ‘ezer’. There are **21 occurrences of the word ‘ezer’ in the Old Testament**.

- It's used twice for the woman, but it's used 3 times for nations Israel turned to for military assistance, and 16 times to describe God as Israel's helper.

- In calling God, our “**helper**”, we would never view Him as **subservient to us as humans**.

In referring to the woman as a “**helper**”, the emphasis isn't on her 2nd rate importance, it's on the deficiency of the man to do his work alone!

- The woman **was God's solution to man's deficiency**.
- The 2nd important Hebrew word in Gen. 2:18, translated “**fit**” is **kenegdow**.
- It literally means “**according to the opposite of him**”, or an appropriate match for him.

Woman was not created above or below the man; **she was complementary**.

- As a “**helper fit for him**”, she was strong in all the areas that he weak.
- It isn't an **accident** that the Bible uses the word ‘ezer’ (often a military word) **to describe the 1st woman**.
- In the garden, the man and woman were created to “**subdue the earth and have dominion**”.

God **created the woman to come alongside the man in this battle**.

- She was to watch his back & he was to watch her back in this **battle and mission** of God together.
- She was to be a life-giver, an ally, a creator of beauty, a comforter, and someone who leads together with the man in the mission of God.

- It would take both of them to create & sustain life - and they'd **need to fight together**.

This is a beautiful picture of **unity, honor, and reverence for the divine order** of authority that God established.

- For that reason, **this cultural symbol** (head coverings) of respecting this divine order of headship was to be practiced in this church (vs. 10).
- Also, because of the “**angels**” - **angels who are over the church** (Revelation 2:1, 3:14) or angels who somehow participate in our worship (1 Peter 1:12, Luke 15:7).

## ALL THINGS ARE FROM GOD (1 CORINTHIANS 11:11-16)

Men and women **need each other** (vs. 11) - it's not right or honoring for a man to abusively lord over and repress a woman.

- Every man was first born of and then exceptionally dependent upon a woman (vs. 12) - there is a **divinely ordained interdependence** between the sexes that we're called to recognize and honor.
- God has given women **vital roles to play** within the home and church.

Paul then appeals to these believers' **cultural understandings of appropriate behavior** by asking if it's proper for a woman to pray in public worship with their head uncovered (vs. 13).

- In this culture (and in many cultures around the world), **women generally wore their hair long** and men wore their hair short (vs. 14).
- Because women wore their hair long, Paul sees this longer hair as “**nature's covering**” (vs. 15).

Paul's argument is this - if “**nature itself**” has given women long hair as a covering, then that in itself points to woman's need to be covered (**according to this cultural practice**).

- Does this mean that a **man can't wear his hair long** and that women can't cut their hair? No. Paul had **long hair for a time** as part of his Nazirite vow (Acts 18:18), and in some cultures long hair among men is seen as normal.

The principle is this - **out of reverence for God** and his beautiful design for the roles of men and women.

Women should not take on the appearance of a man, and men should not take on the appearance of a woman (Deuteronomy 22:5).

- Culturally, **short or long hair is not necessarily an indication of this**, but other things certainly may be.

If anyone was inclined to be **argumentative, contentious, or rebellious** about these things, Paul simply tells them, “we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God” (vs. 16).

- In other words, in the early church there was no other practice besides the custom of having the women cover their heads in public worship.
- This was a **cultural expression of honor and submission to authority**.

## UNCHANGING PRINCIPLES FOR ALL OF US

1. Freedom in worship doesn't mean **we're allowed to be dishonoring** and offensive to God and **others within the church**.
2. There is a **beautiful design** and a God-given order regarding gender roles among men and women **within the family, home, and church**.
3. In the Lord, **men and women are interdependent** - we **need** each other!

## AUTHORITY

- The **defining spirit of our age is self-determination**, not submission to the will of another.
- In the Christian life, **we honor God** by submitting to the authority He has placed over us.
- God's (James 4:7)
- Our employers (Ephesians 6:5, Colossians 3:22)
- Governing authorities (Romans 13)
- Our spiritual leaders/pastors, elders (Hebrews 13:17)
- Wives to husbands, husbands to Christ (Ephesians 5:22)

## DESIGN

- The defining spirit of our age is self-determination, not **submission to a divine order** given to us from the Divine Architect who knows better.
- God has a design for how we're to do church, **our marriages, our families, our sexuality**, and for gender.
- Are we **so arrogant as to assume** that we can do better than the Creator?

## HUMILITY

- The defining spirit of our age is a **defiant, proud, self-determination** that only recognizes the supremacy of our own intellect, opinion, and viewpoints on certain topics.
- Are our **minds already made up on certain things before we've opened God's Word**?
- Are we humble enough to **submit to God and other people** He's placed in our lives?