

Respect the Roles of Men and Women

1 Corinthians 11:1-16

Series: "His House" (1 Cor 11-16)

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## **I. INTRODUCTION: UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND**

### **A. THE BIBLE AFFIRMS THE EQUALITY OF WOMEN**

1) "God created mankind in his own image...male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27)

2) Some prominent women in the Old Testament:

Sarah

Ruth

Deborah

Esther

3) Jesus...

- spoke to the woman the well

- healed the woman with the issue of blood

- forgave the adulteress

- raised Jairus' daughter from the dead

- allowed women among his closest followers (Mary and her sister Martha, Mary Magdalene, Salome, Joanna, Susanna)

- appeared first to the women after his resurrection

4) "...WHOEVER believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (Jn 3:16)

5) " 'In the last days,' God says, 'I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy... Even on my servants, both men and

women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy' ” (Acts 2:17-18).

6) Women helped lead the first churches:

- Lydia, a businesswoman, hosted Philippian church in her home (Acts 16)
- Philip's four daughters were all prophets in the early church (Acts 21:9)
- Priscilla helped disciple the great preacher Apollos (Acts 18:26)

7) In Christ there is "...neither... male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

8) Paul listed several female coworkers:

- Euodia & Syntyche "contended at my side for the Gospel" (Php 4:2-3)
- Phoebe a servant or deaconess in the church and benefactor (Rom 16:1)
- Priscilla (Rom 16:3)
- Mary (Rom 16:6)
- Tryphena and Tryphosa (Rom 16:12)
- Persis "my dear friend" (Rom 16:12)
- Mother of Rufus "has been like a mother to me." (Rom 16:13)

## **B. SOME WOMEN APPARENTLY FLAUNTED THEIR FREEDOMS**

The NT authors occasionally reminded the women: Don't flaunt your freedom. Dress and act with purity and reverence.

### SEVEN NT PASSAGES ABOUT WOMEN'S BEHAVIOR

#### *FOUR COMMAND WIVES SUBMIT TO HUSBANDS*

- Ephesians 5:22-33
- Colossians 3:18-19
- 1 Peter 3:1-7
- Titus 2:4-5

## *THREE DEAL WITH BEHAVIOR OF WOMEN IN CORPORATE WORSHIP*

- 1 Corinthians 11:1-16: Wear a head covering.
- 1 Corinthians 14:34-35: Don't interrupt the worship service.
- 1 Timothy 2:9-15: Don't instruct a man (or "your husband"?) at church.

The 3 passages about behavior in worship *are related to* "wives submit to your husbands." The primary issue in all 7 passages is respect for the marriage roles.

### **II. SCRIPTURE [1Co 11:1-16 NIV]**

***1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. 2 I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you.***

***3 But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. 5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head--it is the same as having her head shaved. 6 For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head.***

Respectable women wore a veil in public to communicate they were married and not "available."

Note: A woman with a shaved head indicated either...

- 1) Adulteress who had been forcibly shaved to shame her.
- 2) A radical feminist rebelling against culture, wanting to look like a man.

If this is a biblical command, why don't Christian women wear head coverings today?

*The principle (modesty and submission) is more important than a legalistic application.*

Legalistically following the rule could break the principle.

Example: Imagine a culture where only prostitutes wore veils. To legalistically apply the command would break the intended principle.

We are free in Christ. Dress and act in a way that honors your “head.”

**7 A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. 8 For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; 9 neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. 10 It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own head, because of the angels.**

Apparently the angels are watching our worship!

#### **SIDE NOTE ON “WIVES SUBMIT TO HUSBANDS”**

Notice Paul roots the command in the pre-fall marriage relationship.

##### **1) God created Eve as “a helper suitable” for Adam.**

The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” (Gen. 2:18)

##### **2) The fall brought contention to the marriage.**

“...your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you” (Gen. 3:16b).

Two understandings:

- a) You will wish for the pre-fall intimacy but he will be domineering instead.
- b) You will desire your husband’s role, but he will rule.

What once was harmonious will now be contentious.

### **3) Christ restores the pre-fall harmony to the marriage.**

“Husbands love like Christ, wives submit like the church.” (Eph. 5)

This is not degrading but reflective of our created purpose.

***11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. 12 For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.***

Note the balance. We need each other and are equal before God.

***13 Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14 Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, 15 but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering.***

A woman's long hair helps her appear feminine, soft, and beautiful. The veil or covering only underscores what the long hair naturally states.

Note: Biologically, women are able to grow hair longer.

Note: There is no command here about hair. Paul is simply observing nature. But there is a hidden principle: God made you male or female. He wants you to glory in (celebrate) your masculinity or femininity.

#### **APPLICATION:**

**IN YOUR APPEARANCE SHOW HONOR.**

- A. Honor God's creation of male and female.**
- B. Honor God's delegated authority.**
- C. Honor God's House.**

#### **CONCLUSION:**

***16 If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice--nor do the churches of God.***

Since Jesus submitted to God and sacrificed so much for us, do we really want to fight about this? What is the attitude we are to have?

Jesus said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-- 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." [Mat 20:25-28 NIV]