

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

March 9, 2021

Series - *The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul*

The Corinthian Letters

The Long Letter (First Corinthians)

Text – 1 Corinthians 11 – *Head Covering and The Lord's Supper*

Memory Verse – 1 Corinthians 11:31

"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

Introduction

In chapter eleven the Apostle Paul will correct some problems that the Corinthian church was having in their public worship. It is apparent that these problems were reported to the Apostle Paul by someone from within the church who wanted to see them corrected. The first area that is dealt with in this chapter deals with head covering while participating in public worship. The second area regards participation at the Lord's Table. The principles declared here in this chapter should govern our behavior in the public worship service today. It is important to note that the apostle begins this section of correction with commendation (v 2).

I. Head Covering in the Public Worship Service (vs. 1 – 16)

Should a man or a woman cover the head while *praying* or *prophesying* (prophesy - foretell future events or to speak under divine inspiration) in a public worship service? Notice it is a foregone conclusion that women would participate in public worship. The principle here really deals more with being under authority than it does with wearing a hat in the church service.

A. The Man

1. He is under the authority of God. (v. 3)
2. He is the image and glory of God. (v. 7)
3. He is by the woman (v. 12)
4. He should not have long hair (v. 14) because hair in itself is a covering given by natural design (v. 15).
5. He should not cover his head (v. 4) because by doing so he dishonors his Head, which is Christ.

B. The Woman

1. She is under the authority (headship) of the man. (v. 3)
2. She is the glory of the man. (v. 7)
3. She is of the man (v. 8).
4. She was created for the man (v. 9).

5. She should have long hair (v. 15) because her long hair is a covering by natural design.
6. She should cover her head because by so doing she honors her head, which is the man. (v. 5)
7. She ought to have *power* on her head (*because of the angels v. 10*)
8. Should she have her head covered with some type of a head covering other than her hair?
 - a) Historically, up until recent years, women always wore some type of head covering in the worship service.
 - b) Recently, the majority of the fundamental churches have adopted the position that her long hair is covering enough.

Consider these thoughts from Warren Wiersbie on the subject:

The important fact is this: both women and men must honor the Lord by respecting the symbols of this headship—hair and the head-covering. Whenever a woman prays or prophesies in the assembly, she must have long hair and must wear a covering. The man should have short hair and not wear any covering. (This would be a change for Paul, for devout Jewish men always wore a cap when they prayed.) The man honors his Head (Christ) by being uncovered, while the woman honors her head (the man) by being covered. She is showing her submission both to God and to the man.

The Corinthian women who appeared in the assembly without the head-covering were actually putting themselves on the low level of the temple prostitutes. The prostitutes wore their hair very short, and they did not wear a head-covering in public. Their hairstyle and manner announced to others just what they were and what they were offering. “If you are going to abandon the covering,” wrote Paul, “then why not go all the way and cut your hair?”

In Jewish law, a woman proved guilty of adultery had her hair cut off (Num. 5:11–31). Paul used two different words in 1 Corinthians 11:5–6: *shaved* means exactly that, all the hair shaved off; *shorn* means “cut short.” Either one would be a disgrace to a woman.

Both man and woman are made in the image of God and for the glory of God; but since the woman was made from the man (Gen. 2:18–25), she is also the “glory of the man.” She glorifies God and brings glory to the man by submitting to God’s order and keeping her head covered in public worship. Thus, Paul tied together both local custom and biblical truth, the one pointing to the other.¹

II. The Lord’s Supper (vs. 17 - 34)

A. The Problems with their Partaking (vs. 17 – 22)

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 604). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

1. There were divisions among them. (Cliques - James 2:1 – 9)
2. Some were feasting and some went hungry. (v. 21)
3. Some were drunken. (v. 21)
4. Paul said in verse 20 that they were not observing the Lord's Supper.

B. The Purpose of the Lord's Supper (vs. 23 – 26)

1. To remember the Lord's broken body.
2. Unleavened bread had to be used as leaven always symbolizes sin, and our Lord was sinless.
3. To remember the Lord's precious blood.
4. Unfermented grape juice had to be used as fermentation is also a picture of corruption, and our Lord's blood was sinless blood.

C. The Passion of God Regarding the Purity of the Observance of the Lord's Supper (vs. 27 – 34)

1. A Strong Warning (v. 27)

Two Interpretations:

- a) Traditional interpretation of this is that you should not partake of the Lord's Supper if you have serious or unconfessed sin in your life.
- b) The word unworthily, being an adverb, would modify the verbs eat and drink; meaning that God is concerned about what you are focusing on when you partake of the Lord's supper.
 2. A Severe Punishment (vs. 29 & 30) (remember Uzza)