



Hair As a Covering

In the Corinthian church, hair was the legalistic focus in the local assembly. While women did not have hats in the ancient world, they did have veils. And no lady was properly dressed for street attire unless she had a veil covering her head. There were many types of veils in the ancient world.

Two types of women were not permitted to wear veils - prostitutes and slaves. When either of these two types walked into the local church with long hair and no veil, it caused the legalists to get upset. They wanted to throw these ladies out because they were not wearing veils. They were not following the custom of the day. They were very critical of those who were positive to Bible doctrine. Paul began by teaching three basic principles of authority.

The Objective of the Apostle Paul

In 1 Corinthians 11:3, “But I want” is the present active indicative of θέλω (thelō) and denotes purpose or intention. He is saying in effect, “I intend, literally.” It is used here for censure. “To understand” is the perfect active infinitive of οἶδα (oida) and is a past perfect form used as a present tense. In other words, there is something that must be straightened out in the Corinthian congregation.

“But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:3, NASB)

“Christ is the head” is κεφαλή (kephalē) and refers to the head on the body, the residence for the soul and human spirit, but it also means superior rank and authority. “Every man” is ἀνὴρ (anēr) and refers to a noble man, a saved man. The present active indicative of εἰμί means that Christ keeps on being the head of every man.

“The man is the head of a woman” refers to the husband’s higher authority in the marriage relationship. There is no verb used, which is great emphasis in the Greek. Authority in the church leads to authority in marriage. “God is the head of Christ” is referring to Christ in hypostatic union. “God” refers to God the Father. God the Father had the authority and the rank during the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

The Pattern for Men Praying

In 1 Corinthians 11:4, “Every man” is πᾶς ἀνὴρ (pas anēr) and means every male believer, nobleman, praying or prophesying in contrast to the next verse where you have the female. “Who has” is the present active participle of ἔχω (echō) and is meant to get a dramatic continuity going. “Has something on his head” is κατὰ plus κεφαλή (kephalē) and is a figurative use referring to the literal head.

“Praying” is the present active participle of προσεύχομαι (proseuchomai) which is an intensive prayer and a public prayer that is part of a worship service. “Prophesying” is the present active participle of προφητεύω (prophēteuō) and means to prophesy, to be a prophet, to speak forth by divine inspirations, to predict. Both of these are assembly functions in context. However, since the canon of Scripture is completed, this is limited today to the teaching of prophetic passages by an authorized communicator. “Disgraces his head” is the present active indicative of κατασχύνω (kataischunō) and means to disgrace. He keeps on disgracing his head (his authority). He keeps on dishonoring Jesus Christ.

“Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head.” (1 Corinthians 11:4, NASB)

What is this saying? In idiom form, it is speaking of long hair. Long hair dishonors a man. This is



strictly a dissertation on hair length until we get to a parentheses and then it becomes a dissertation on the husband-wife relationship in marriage.

A man's badge as head of his home is his short hair. Hair style on a man is strictly a matter of what he thinks. The long hair craze is not a fashion expression, but is indicative of an animal mentality. A good illustration of a man who reeked authority was Otto Von Bismarck who formed the German empire in 1870. He was a genius of history.

If a man puts on a hat in a church service, he is covering up his authority. If he has long hair, it does the same thing. He actually becomes cut loose from his authority. Instinctively, a man wants short hair if he is a man (believer or unbeliever). To the unbeliever - "does not even nature itself teach you" and to the believer "does not even doctrine teach you?" 1 Cor. 11:14.

"Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him," (1 Corinthians 11:14, NASB)

A man who has long hair because a lady told him he looked good is obviously a responder in his soul. He is a woman in his soul. A man would say, "You need to get used to me this way, honey, because this is the way it is going to be!"

About 70 years ago, there was discovered in the catacombs of Rome a picture of believers meeting in the early church and all the men had short hair. The caption said, "Christians in Assembly."

So, when is hair too long in a male? If you comb it straight forward and it comes over the eyes or nose or mouth, it is too long. The hair has become a veil!

The Pattern for Women Praying

In 1 Corinthians 11:5, "every woman" πᾶς γυνή (pas gunē) and refers to a woman of any age, whether a virgin, or married, or a widow. "Praying" is the present middle participle of προσεύχομαι (proseuchomai). "Prophesying" is the present active participle of προφητεύω (prophēteuō). "Has her head uncovered" is ἀκατακάλυπτος (akatakaluptos) and refers to something hidden and down. This is a veil.

Paul is setting this up to catch the legalists who were criticizing the women for coming in without a veil. He didn't define the veil as being long hair until the end of the chapter, but they are nodding their heads now--yes, Paul, yes, Paul you are right, etc.

"But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved." (1 Corinthians 11:5, NASB)

In 1 Corinthians 11:5, Paul was saying, "A woman should never go without her covering." The legalists really liked the sound of that. "Disgraces her head" is the present active indicative of κατασχύνω (kataischunō) and means to put to shame, to disgrace, to humiliate. Paul does a lot of repeating and he does that to get the legalists nodding. Paul then says, "Why it's the same as if her head were shaved." The legalists liked the sound of that even more.

The perfect passive participle of ξυρέω (xureō) means to shave with a razor. The perfect tense means she has been shaved and will continue to remain shaved. The passive voice means she was shaved by someone else. No woman of her own volition ever shaves her hair. The participle means the reality of being permanently shaved.

Shaving the head was the punishment for prostitutes in the ancient world. They had rejected the concept



of sex in marriage only and so they lost their glory.

If a female slave ran away the first time, her hair was shaved. If she ran away the second time, her body was branded. If her hair was shaved, she could wear a hat, a veil, but you discredit your head if you have long hair and a hat.

Wait until Paul gets to verse 15 where he says her veil is her hair! The legalists definitely do not like the sound of that. The long hair of a woman is her glory. Her hair is designed differently. She has the green light to comb it, to brush it, to trim it, and to keep it attractive. Her long hair is an illustration of divine design. It is a sign of submission to God and to her husband. How does she dishonor her head? When she fails to recognize God's grace provision of rapport love and becomes negative to the teaching of Bible doctrine. The real issue here is not veils or hats, but Bible doctrine!

The Customs and Traditions of the Times, Their Relationship to the Local Church

In 1 Corinthians 11:6, "For if" is a first class condition and means "if and it is true." "A woman does not cover her head" is κατακαλύπτω (katakalyptō) and means to cover up, to veil or cover one's self. Paul is using sanctified sarcasm here for emphasis.

"Let her also have her hair cut off" is the aorist middle imperative of κείρω (keirō) and means to shear as you would a sheep, to get or let be shorn, shearing or cutting short the hair of the head. Paul is saying she is uncovered only when she has been shorn. The legalists were saying that a woman is uncovered if she does not wear a cloth type veil.

"For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head." (1 Corinthians 11:6, NASB)

"But if it is disgraceful" is a first class condition meaning it is truly disgraceful. Paul is using reverse sarcasm here again for emphasis in making his point. "Shaved" is the present passive infinitive of ξυράω (xuraō) and means shave it all off, to cut off hair with a sharp instrument. "Let her cover her head" is again κατακαλύπτω (katakalyptō) and means to cover up, to veil or cover one's self. To the legalist this is a hat. To the Apostle Paul this is long hair. Her hair is her hat. Paul is saying, "But if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or shaved, let her be covered."

A translation of 1 Corinthians 11:6 is, "For if a woman does not veil herself, shave her. But if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or shaved, keep on veiling her. Paul has the legalists all nodding at this point.

The Application

In 1 Corinthians 11:7, "For a man ought not" is the present active indicative of ὀφείλω (opheilō) plus the negative οὐκ (ouk) and is a very strong negative. "To have his head covered" is κατακαλύπτω (katakalyptō) and means to hide, to cover up, to veil or cover one's self. This means that a man should never have long hair that would constitute a veil. A man's hair should never cover his face!

"For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man." (1 Corinthians 11:7, NASB)

"Since he is" is the present active participle of ὑπάρχω (huparchō) and means to be, to exist. "The image and glory of God" refers to the image which is the soul essence. Glory means that even though the man has an old sin nature, he can still glorify God in his regenerate state through Bible doctrine. Glory here refers to the edification complex of the soul.



“But the woman is the glory of the man” is the present active indicative of εἰμί and means that she keeps on being under the authority of the man and is the glory of the man. This refers to the man’s edification complex of the soul. Also, he has found the right woman for him and her indication of that fact is her long hair. “Glory” indicates the woman as a responder to the man.

There are only two reasons for a man having short hair - because he has recognized the authority of God and because he has recognized that God has given him leadership authority over his wife in marriage.

The Appeal to Common Sense For the Female

In 1 Corinthians 11:13, “Judge” is the aorist active imperative of κρίνω (krinō) and does not mean to judge at all, but to have discernment and apply common sense to the situation. “For yourselves” the preposition ἐν (en) plus the instrumental of the reflexive pronoun means to discern by means of yourselves.

“Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?” (1 Corinthians 11:13, NASB)

Constantive aorist of *krinō* means it is a matter of continual discernment that there is a difference between male and female. The active voice means that you have to discern for yourself. The imperative mood is a command.

In discernment, you recognize the context and go from there. Discernment comes from *epignosis* Bible doctrine in the soul. A maximum amount of Bible doctrine in the right lobe of the soul and a maximum amount of common sense are completely compatible.

A man’s short hair is his badge of authority and that he has leadership authority over his wife in marriage. A woman’s long hair is her badge of recognizing the man’s authority and her acknowledgment before God that she has been provided in His grace the right man for her. The husband fulfills his wife and she completes him.

“Is it proper” is the present active indicative of εἰμί (eimi) and means does it keep on being proper. “Proper” is the impersonal verb πρέπω (prepō) and means fitting or proper. “To pray” is the present middle infinitive of προσεύχομαι (proseuchomai) and means intensive prayer. “Uncovered” is ἀκατακάλυπτος (akatakaluptos) and means not covered, unveiled. A cover is something that hangs down so that it hides the face such as long hair.

A translation of 1 Corinthians 11:13 is, “Discern by means of yourselves, is it proper for a woman to pray not having long hair?”

If a woman prays with short hair, it is a sign that she has already rejected God’s order and design. Normally this means unveiled, but here it means not having long hair. Common sense tells you that if a woman with a boy cut walks in and a long haired male walks in, can they impress God with their prayers. No. They are already in rebellion.

There are two basic ways whereby there can be basic recognition of authority in the marriage. Bible doctrine is now in writing, so that makes it easy. Short hair on the man and long hair on the woman is a recognition of this gift from Jesus Christ.

Both common sense and propriety demand longer hair on a woman no matter what she is doing. Her hair is the woman’s glory. This is her recognition that God provides is grace and that He will provide the right kind of man for her. This is her submission to God’s authority while she waits for God to bring the right kind of man designed for her. If she does not recognize God’s authority, she will never recognize



the authority of the right kind of man.

There are some men who are either unbelievers or negative to Bible doctrine who are a bit intolerant of allowing their wives to come to Bible class. In doing so, they buck the tiger. What they are doing is destroying their own authority in the marriage.

The Appeal to Common Sense For the Male

In 1 Corinthians 11:14, “Does not even” is οὐδέ (oude) and expects a positive answer. “Nature” is φύσις (phusis) and means the nature of things, natural laws, the order of nature and refers to God’s laws in the natural realm. It means common sense teaches you instinctively that a woman with long hair looks like a woman and a man with short hair looks like a man. There is a difference between a man and woman. A man is not beautiful, pretty, or sweet. He can be as ugly as hell. A woman is beautiful, cute, pretty, and sweet. She is as pretty as heaven. The man was never designed to be beautiful! If he is an animal, he may try to be beautiful because he is feminine in his soul.

“Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him,” (1 Corinthians 11:14, NASB)

The principle here is that common sense and propriety demand that a woman have long hair, no matter what she is doing. “Teach you” is the present active indicative of διδάσκω (didaskō) and means to teach a group. Nature teaches a group. Does not nature communicate to all of you?

“If a man” is a third class condition of ἔάν (ean) plus the subjunctive mood in the verb. This recognizes the fact that a man could let his hair grow long. “Has long hair” is one verb in the Greek, the present active subjunctive of κομάω (komaō) and means to wear long hair, rather than have it.

A translation of 1 Corinthians 11:14 is, “Does not nature itself communicate to all of you that if a man keeps on wearing long hair, it is always (in the history of the human race, present active indicative of *eimi*) being a disgrace or dishonor to him.”

It is dishonorable because the man is wearing the woman’s badge of submission. Long hair on a man is not the fashion. It is a sign of the condition of the soul with scar tissue, emotional revolt, and reversionism. It is a rebellion against the grace gift of woman and God’s design for him!

Conclusions Regarding Hair

In 1 Corinthians 11:15, “but if” is a third class condition and means that when a man chooses to wear long hair, it is a disgrace to him, but when a woman wears long hair, it is her honor. “A woman has long hair” is the present active subjunctive of κομάω (komaō) and recognizes that all through history it was possible for women to have long hair. “It is a glory to her” is the dative of advantage of δόξα (doxa) and means it keeps on being a glory to her, but on the man it is a disgrace.

“but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering.” (1 Corinthians 11:15, NASB)

“For her hair” is κόμη (komē) and means her head of long hair is something glorious and beautiful. “Is given” is the perfect passive indicative of δίδωμι (didōmi) and means to give something to someone of one’s own accord that is to their advantage, to bestow a gift. The three gifts to man are his right kind of woman, salvation, and Bible doctrine.

The perfect tense means it has been given and refers to the permanence of the principle in that it never changes. From the Garden to the end of the Millennium, a woman’s long hair is just as much a sign as a



rainbow in the sky, but for different things. The passive voice means the woman receives this sign from God in grace, even as she receives the right kind of man for her. The indicative mood refers to the reality of doctrine and means the hair is the reality of the sign.

“For a covering” involves a preposition which is mistranslated. The Greek word ἀντί (anti) means “instead of” not “for.” Covering is περιβόλαιον (peribolaion) and means for her hair has been given her instead of a veil or hat or bonnet or anything a woman may put on her head. Her hair is her covering.

A translation of 1 Corinthians 11:15 is, “But if a woman wears long hair, it keeps on being a glory to her because her hair has been given to her instead of a covering (veil, hat, etc.).”

In 1 Corinthians 11:16, “But if one” is a first class condition and refers to the reality of the situation for a male or female. “Is inclined” is the present active indicative of δοκέω (dokeō) and means to presume. It is presumption for a woman to wear short hair and a man to wear long hair.

“But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.” (1 Corinthians 11:16, NASB)

“Contentious” is φιλόνηκος (philoneikos) and means a love of contention. It is used for those who have scar tissue of the soul, emotional revolt of the soul, reversionism, anti-establishment thinking, rejection of authority and no self-discipline. “We have no other practice” or custom as this where a person has to wear a hat in a church. It is not found in Corinth and even in the other churches, “nor have the churches of God.”