

# Covered



# Glory

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## 1<sup>ST</sup> CORINTHIANS 11 & THE CHRISTIAN USE OF HEADCOVERINGS

DAVID PHILLIPS

INTRODUCTION

SCRIPTURE'S EXPLANATION

CHRISTIAN HEADCOVERINGS FOR TODAY?

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## Ω PREFACE

**The Apostle Paul:** “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. Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head. But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head... 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... Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head.”

In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11, Paul teaches about the relationships between people and the Lord, the act of prayer, the glory of God, and... having a “covered” head?! I remember how odd these instructions seemed when I first read them in my Bible. While I believed that God's Word is authoritative in directing Christians how to live, I wasn't sure how to respond to *this* direction.

For a long time I left the passage alone until I could take a closer look at it. Meanwhile, I figured that the use of headcoverings was probably just an ancient cultural practice that God was reinforcing for the church in Corinth. But if using a headcovering was still required by the Lord for Christian women today, then a lady's long hair probably qualified as an adequate “cover.”

Since the Lord calls the husband to love and lead his wife (Ephesians 5:23), I eventually felt that a small part of fulfilling my role was to gain some clarity about God's teaching in this passage. I happened to know a few ladies who wore headcoverings in response to this passage, and my interest was further piqued when I realized that Christian men often follow Paul's instruction

to uncover their heads when they pray. It was also intriguing to learn that during the last 2000 years, it's generally been the norm for Christian women to use headcoverings during times of prayer.<sup>1</sup>

This subject provided a great opportunity to study Scripture carefully and to read from a very wide variety of Bible teachers and theologians. It challenged me to learn more about Christian history and to sort through key issues within First Century culture.

Of course, the primary reasons believers should devote time to studying Scripture are to learn from God, grow in their relationship with Him, and obediently follow His direction. Towards that end, I hope that this study<sup>2</sup> will help provide a well-grounded understanding of the direction that the Lord gives us within the first half of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11.

David Phillips // [write2David@gmail.com](mailto:write2David@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup> As documented by the writings of Christian leaders across Church history, including Augustine, Martin Luther, Charles Spurgeon, and many others.

<sup>2</sup> You are reading a condensed version of the full-length study, which is available at [www.bitly.com/CoveredGlory](http://www.bitly.com/CoveredGlory).

## Ω WHAT SCRIPTURE TEACHES

### *First Corinthians 11:2-16 (NASB)*

**2** Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.

**3** 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.

**4** Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head.

**5** 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.

**6** 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.

**7** 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.

**8** For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man;

**9** for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.

**10** Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.

**11** However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.

**12** For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God.

**13** Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

**14** Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him,

**15** but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering.

**16** But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.

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*In this study, all instances of the word "verse"  
(or the abbreviation "v.") refer to 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11.*

## Ω WHAT IS THE “HEADCOVERING”?

**Introduction.** Readers of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11 often ask: What were the Corinthian woman supposed to cover their heads *with*? Most English Bibles appear to leave this question unanswered. Fortunately, a careful look at the passage provides enough insight to identify what type of headcovering Paul was referring to.

**Identity.** First, there is no indication from the passage (nor from history) that Paul is describing a *veil* that is to be worn over the *face*. The passage also doesn't allow for the “covering” to refer to the husband – this perspective confuses the woman's “head” (her husband, v.3) with the symbolic covering “on” her head (v.10).<sup>3</sup> Instead, the original Greek terms that refer to the headcovering indicate that it is a cloth worn over the head. Thus, “a cloth over the head” has been the primary interpretation within Christianity from the Early Church to the present.

**Is It “Long Hair”?** Another proposal states that the woman's long hair (mentioned in v.14-15) is the only “covering” that Paul has in mind throughout the entire chapter. However, v.6 indicates that “long hair” is distinct from the cloth headcovering. Verse 6 describes a woman who does not cover her head and then “also” cuts off her hair. At this point she is missing two things: the headcovering and “also” her long hair.

<sup>3</sup> In other words, a thing that is represented by a symbol is not the same thing *as* the symbol. Similarly, the authority over the wife (v.3) is not the same thing as her *symbol* of authority (v.10).

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11 shows several additional differences between the cloth headcovering and the woman's long hair.

A woman's **long hair** is a continual covering, worn 24 hours a day. It is put on the woman's head by the Creator of nature, God Himself (v.15).

A **cloth headcovering** is worn only “while” praying (v.5) – it is a situational covering. It is put on the woman's head by the woman herself (v.6).

For women to have **longer hair** than men is somewhat instinctive; it is “taught” by nature (v.14-15). Women usually have longer hair regardless of their religion.

Using a **headcovering** is not instinctive – rather, it is a unique practice taught by Scripture. Christian women are to use it for distinctly-spiritual reasons (v.2-10).

**Long hair** is an adornment.<sup>4</sup> It is the woman's “glory” (v.15).

A **cloth headcovering** provides the opposite effect: it conceals glory during communication with God (v.7, 15).

In view of these distinctions, it comes as no surprise that the woman's “covering” of hair (v.14-15) is described using a *different* Greek word than the cloth headcovering (v.5-13).

<sup>4</sup> In v.15, the Greek word “hair” refers to an *ornamental style*.

## Ω SCRIPTURE'S REASONS FOR THE HEADCOVERING COMMANDS

God's instructions in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11 include not only *direction* for the use of headcoverings, but also a specific *explanation* for that direction. This explanation is composed of five different points.

1. **Distinct Gender Roles.** God's universal order of "headship" (v.3) is the topic that initiates Paul's discussion about Christian headcoverings. Paul states that the headcovering relates to distinct gender roles – roles that are seen in God's creation of the genders (v.8-9). The "head" of woman is man (v.3), and the headcovering is a symbol of the woman being under his "authority" (v.10).
2. **Glory & Honor.** Paul next explains the connection between *gender roles* and *communication with God*. The reason that men should not cover their heads is that they are the "glory of God" (v.7), and to cover the "glory of God" while praying is a dishonor (v.4). The reason that women cover their heads is that they are the "glory of man" (v.7), and to uncover the "glory of man" while praying would be a dishonor (v.5). Essentially, Paul explains that while communicating with God, it is proper for His people to symbolically "uncover" the glory of Deity (man) while symbolically "covering" the glory of humanity (woman). The Lord's glory is to be preeminent.
3. **Angels.** Paul states that women should cover their heads "because of the angels" (v.10). Paul's grammar indicates that this third reason for the headcovering is connected to his previous two reasons (*gender roles* and *glory*), but he does not further elaborate about what part the angels play.
4. **Hair Length.** There is normally a difference between men and women regarding the length of their hair – and Paul says that this difference also hints at what Christians should do regarding the use of headcoverings (v.13-14). The passage provides for only one outcome: if a woman won't cover her head, she must cut her hair off (v.6). But since nature "teaches" that this would be a disgraceful loss of her "glory" (v.15), she should cover her head (v.6).
5. **The Universal Practice of The Church.** Christianity's use of headcoverings did not begin with Paul's letter to the Corinthians – it was already the standard practice among the other churches (v.16). It was *from* the rest of Christianity that Paul "delivered" this practice *to* the Corinthian believers (v.2), just as he had similarly "delivered" to them the practice of the Lord's Supper (v.23). His instructions were not intended for only a specific culture, but rather were for "every man" and "every woman" within Christianity (v.4-5).

## Ω ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS FOR THE HEADCOVERING COMMANDS

As discussed on the previous page, Scripture explains five specific reasons for the use of headcoverings. However, some Bible teachers have come up with *alternative* explanations for why Paul gave instructions about the use of headcoverings. Each of these theories rests on the assumption that Paul's instructions were based on *other* reasons that he didn't mention. The most common alternative explanations are listed to the right. Below are some historical and Scriptural considerations for each of the alternative explanations.

### *Common Alternative Explanations For Paul's Instructions...*

- ◆ "Headcoverings were culturally necessary for modesty, as a sign of marriage, or to avoid looking like a temple prostitute."
- ◆ "Paul's instructions were intended to prevent Christians from imitating the clothing style of pagan Roman worship."
- ◆ "In order to avoid offending the Jews, Paul desired the Corinthians to imitate Jewish headcovering practices."

### *Alternative Explanations: Considerations From History*

1. **Corinthian Culture.** Corinth was a Roman colony and the Corinthian church was primarily made up of Gentiles. During the time of Paul, Roman men normally wore a headcovering during their religious activities. Roman women normally went without a headcovering in public. In nearby Greek culture, women did not wear a headcovering during worship. Thus, much of Paul's instructions about the headcovering did not match up with the norms of Corinthian culture.
2. **Prostitutes.** Historical evidence shows that going without a headcovering was not a distinguishing mark of the Corinthian prostitutes. Further, scholars have pointed out that the Corinthian's Temple of Aphrodite (which supposedly housed 1000 prostitutes without headcoverings) was destroyed over 200 years before Paul wrote 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians.
3. **Religion.** Did Paul simply want the Corinthians to avoid imitating pagan Roman worship (in which men wore a covering on their heads)? This proposal does not provide a sufficient explanation for v.2-16. [Dr. Roy Ciampa](#) (of Gordon-Conwell seminary) notes that "one would wonder why Paul would not have similar problems with women covering their heads, since that was also the norm for Roman worship."
4. **Testimony of the Early Church.** Early Church theologians discussed the use of a headcoverings but never described them as a form of conformity to (or rejection of) the local Corinthian culture. Rather, multiple Early Church sources show the wide use of headcoverings *outside* of Corinth. In fact, Tertullian (a theologian in the Early Church) specifically stated that the Christian practice of headcovering was not something that came from the Gentiles.

***Alternative Explanations: Considerations from Scripture***

1. **The Origin of The Practice.** Paul introduces the topic of headcoverings by reminding the Corinthians of the practices he “delivered” (v.2) to them. This implies that these were practices that weren't already a part of their native society. Paul ends his instructions by noting that the rest of Christianity follows these same practices (v.16). Evidently, the use of headcoverings by Christian women not a practice oriented around the Corinthian's own culture.
2. **The Focus of the Practice.** Paul gives specific theological reasons for his instructions, reasons that cannot be explained by the Corinthian's own pagan culture. Specifically, (1) he states that the headcovering reflects God's creation of *gender roles*. (2) He relates the use of headcoverings to the concept of *glory*. (3) Paul states that the headcovering is worn “because of the angels” (v.10) – not “because of local society.” In view of all these dynamics, the headcovering cannot be just a reference to local Corinthian customs regarding modesty, prostitution, or marriage. Instead, the passage teaches the use of headcoverings only for times of Christian prayer and prophesy.
3. **The Jews.** The New Testament states that Christian women “ought” to wear a headcovering when praying (v.10). However, nowhere in the Old Testament did God require Jewish women to wear a headcovering. Further, the Corinthian church was primarily Gentile, not Jewish. Any concern for Jewish culture does not explain the Christian practice of using a headcovering, especially for the churches *outside* of Jewish areas (see v.16). Note that prior to Paul's letter to the Corinthians, Paul and other Jewish church leaders decided that they should “not trouble” Gentile Christians with the “burden” of having to follow Jewish customs – except four specific “essential” practices, none of which included the use of headcoverings (Acts 15). This matches up with Paul's typical response of *not* requiring Christians to follow Jewish practices (Galatians 2:1-5, 14). The wording of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11 provides no indication that Paul is seeking to promote the adoption of Jewish religious customs among the Corinthian Christians.

### ***Reasons for the Headcovering: Conclusions***

While each of the alternative explanations are “creative” in attempting to find societal connections for the Christian use of headcoverings, they cannot be harmonized with history and Scripture. As [Dr. Darrel Bock](#) (professor at Dallas Theological Seminary) states, “Suggestions that the presence or absence of a head covering was associated with prostitution, adultery, homosexuality, pagan worship, mourning, immodesty, etc... often suffer from a lack of evidence... Moreover, they often only explain why the behavior of just one of the sexes is forbidden.”

When Scripture and history disqualify these alternative proposals, they do so only as a side-effect of the fact that Paul specifically bases the practice of headcovering on *trans-cultural issues*. When discussing this dynamic, [Dr. S. Lewis Johnson](#) (former professor at Dallas Theological Seminary) posed the question: “Is the head covering merely a cultural matter? That’s frequently said today. We don’t really have to pay much attention to this passage because this is just cultural.” Dr. Johnson responded to this perspective by noting that Paul’s objections to the Christian woman praying without a headcovering “have nothing to do with social custom... Each of the reasons given for the wearing of a veil is taken from permanent facts... [Look at] the reasons that Paul gives for what he’s talking about here... Those are not cultural reasons.”

[Dr. R.C. Sproul](#) (pastor and theologian) addresses these same issues in his book “Knowing Scripture.”

*Numerous commentators ... [state] the reason why Paul wanted women to cover their heads was to avoid a scandalous appearance of Christian women in the external guise of prostitutes. What is wrong with this kind of speculation? The basic problem here is that our reconstructed knowledge of first-century Corinth has led us to supply Paul with a rationale that is foreign to the one he gives himself. In a word, we are not only putting words into the apostle’s mouth, but we are ignoring words that are there. If Paul merely told women in Corinth to cover their heads and gave no rationale for such instruction, we would be strongly inclined to supply it via our cultural knowledge. In this case, however, Paul provides a rationale which is based on an appeal to creation, not to the custom of Corinthian harlots. We must be careful not to let our zeal for knowledge of the culture obscure what is actually said. To subordinate Paul’s stated reason to our speculatively conceived reason is to slander the apostle and turn exegesis into eisegesis.”*

In summary, the practice of headcovering is a *uniquely* Christian command – especially because the *reasons* for the command are uniquely Christian. Thus, it is not surprising that God’s direction for the use of headcoverings was actually *counter-cultural* for the Corinthians. The alternative explanations for v.2-16 ignore the passage’s appeal to both the “universal principles” of Creation and the “universal practice” of the Church.



## Ω CHRISTIAN HEADCOVERINGS FOR TODAY?

*"This passage can't really mean what I think it says. I mean, none of the Christian women that I know use a headcovering."* This is a common reaction that many Christians have when reading 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11 for the first time. However, to dismiss any command in Scripture requires clear, biblically-valid reasons. Those who do not follow the teaching within v.2-16 often provide one of the following four rationales.

### 1) "The Headcovering Is Meaningless In Contemporary Culture: Discontinue This Obsolete Practice"

It is important to note that Scripture does not indicate that the headcovering is intended to "speak" a message *to* the public society. The question could similarly be asked: "How do baptism and the Lord's Supper speak to modern culture?" Christians recognize that all Scriptural symbolism is purposefully unique. A biblical symbol is meaningful *beyond* the culture that the believer lives within. But those whom the symbolism *is* intended for *do* understand it.<sup>5</sup>

It was noted earlier that v.2-16 are not simply a case of God requiring Christians to follow First Century cultural practices. The use of headcoverings by ancient societies never had the same purpose, theology, or requirements as it has within Christianity. Like modern Christians, the Corinthians could have responded to Paul by saying, "This new practice doesn't make sense to our society." Paul, however, already knew that his instructions were counter-cultural.

<sup>5</sup> Paul's reasons for the headcovering were meaningful to Christians *specifically*, and only made sense from within a *Christian* perspective. The only reason that the Christian use of headcoverings has little meaning to many believers today is that in the last century Western churches generally stopped teaching its Scriptural meaning.

### 2) "The Headcovering Is Meaningless in Contemporary Culture: Choose A New, Relevant Symbol As A Replacement"

Like other Scriptural symbols, the headcovering is intentional. To signify that "man is the *head* of woman" (v.3), a Christian lady covers her *head* during prayer. Similarly, the man uncovers his *head* to show honor for his "*head*" (Jesus, v.3). Paul teaches that the *headship* dynamic is to be symbolized & visualized with the gender-appropriate use (or non-use) of the *headcovering*. As [Dr. Elliot Johnson](#) (professor at Dallas Theological Seminary) notes, if a different symbol were substituted for the headcovering then there would be a "problem of losing or distorting the type of meaning."

Note that this symbol is worn "on" the head (v.10) by "every woman" (v.5) during times of "prayer" (v.5, 13). Also, the man takes off the same thing that the woman is to put on (v.4-5). These four specifications disqualify other symbols that have been proposed as replacements (such as a dress or wedding ring). In Western culture there is no symbol that points to the principles found in v.2-16. The symbol Paul gives is one that he states is universal to the churches (v.16). Christians likewise don't replace the other symbolic actions found within Scripture (such as baptism and the Lord's Supper).

### 3) "The Symbol Is Unnecessary – Only The Principle Counts"

**The Principle.** A person's "heart" definitely matters *much* more than a person's attire. In other words, the *meaning* of a symbol is always more important than the symbol *itself*. For example, Christ's death is what saves a person, not the Lord's Supper that represents it. The thief on the cross experienced salvation (Luke 23:43), even though he was never baptized. Christian women are indeed able to practice the *principles* found within 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:2-16 without wearing a headcovering. Further, it is quite possible to *use* the headcovering symbol while *acting* contrary to it, just as the Corinthians misused the symbolism of the Lord's Supper (v.17-34).

**The Practice.** However, Paul states that the use of a headcovering *reflects* the principles of v.2-16. And so, among the churches the "practice" (not just the *principle*) was the standard (v.16). The Corinthian women could likewise have argued, "I respect God's order of headship when I pray, so I don't need something on my head to show it" – but Paul still required it for them. Similar to baptism and Lord's Supper, the headcovering symbol is to indicate *a condition of the heart*. Christians practice the symbolic actions taught in Scripture because (1) the symbolism is meaningful, and (2) the symbolism is commanded by God's Word.

### 4) "Obscurity Prevents Confident Obedience"

**Prevalence & Authority.** Many Christians have wished that Scripture contained more information about certain topics. Some of these topics are indeed "obscure" in that they are mentioned in only one or two verses. However, more than making a passing reference to the use of headcoverings, Paul devotes half of a chapter to discussing the topic. While the use of headcoverings is not widely discussed throughout the New Testament, v.16 states that it was widely taught & practiced throughout the New Testament churches (Early Church artwork & writings provide evidence for this as well). Verses 2-16 were inspired by God and so they have His full authority. The importance of a command can't be evaluated simply by counting up the number of times it was repeated in Scripture.

**Clarity.** Some passages in Scripture are "vague" in that they do not provide detailed information about a specific topic. The instructions in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:2-16 are different in several ways. *Clarity* is Paul's goal: he starts by writing, "I want you to understand" (v.3). Instead of leaving the practice of headcovering unexplained, he provided five reasons for its existence. Rather than a societal custom understood only by the ancient culture of Corinth, Paul needed to deliver, explain, and even defend this practice to the Corinthian believers. In the passage, Paul takes multiple approaches in seeking to convince the Corinthians to follow his instructions. Many New Testament practices are taught without this amount of explanation.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Unfortunately, some Christians (in various times and locations) have have followed the headcovering instructions in v.2-16 *only* because of tradition or culture. When tradition becomes the primary reason for following a biblical practice, the Word of God is ignored. Along the same lines, while God's Word teaches that Christian women should dress modestly, modesty is not one of the reasons given by Paul for wearing a headcovering. Similarly, a biblical headcovering is not intended as merely a fashion accessory, just as baptism isn't a bath and the Lord's Supper isn't meant only to relieve physical hunger.

Instead, Scripture teaches that the headcovering is *meaningful*. To symbolize gender roles (v.3), Christian women "ought" to cover their heads with a "symbol of authority" (v.10). Since the woman is the "glory of man" (v.7), she should symbolically cover her head when communicating with God (v.6). Even the angels and nature play a part in the reasons why Christian women should cover their heads during times of prayer (v.10, 13). Thus, Paul is not just teaching standard Christian *principles*, but is defending a standard Christian "practice" (v.16). Paul taught practice by basing it on five foundational reasons that still exist today.

As [Dr. Daniel Wallace](#) (professor at Dallas Theological Seminary) wrote, "The argument that a real head covering is in view and that such is applicable today is, in some respects, the easiest view to defend exegetically and the hardest to swallow practically... The real

danger, as I see it, is that many Christians simply ignore what this text says because any form of obedience to it is inconvenient."

However, obedience to Scripture is important, not only because disobedience dishonors God but because His commands exist for a *purpose*. Paul states that the purpose of the headcovering is to honor God's structure of headship and to promote His glory during communication with Him. The Lord's authority and glory are highly valued among His people. They are especially "on display" within the Christian's marriage, as a covenant intended to symbolize the relationship between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:22-33).

Still, it can be tempting to forgo God's direction in v.2-16 for the sake of a man-made alternative. One of Jesus' concerns with the Jewish religious leaders was that they had let go of the "commands of God" in order to "hold onto the traditions of men" (Mark 7:8-9). Thus, knowing that some Christians would resist His instructions about the use of headcoverings, the Lord inspired Paul to promote unity in this practice: "If one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God" (v.16).

This study has considered the primary *interpretive* issues within the first half of Corinthians 11. However, there are several *practical* issues that have not been discussed here. A supplement entitled "Practical Issues" (coming soon) seeks a biblical perspective for these topics. Additionally, contemporary articles, testimonies, and discussion can be found at the website [www.HeadCoveringMovement.com](http://www.HeadCoveringMovement.com).

### APPENDIX: LEGALISM & GENDER EQUALITY

**Legalism?** Unbiblical *perspectives* and *rules* can be dangerous. Legalism is often an attempt to create works-based self-righteousness, rather than follow God's grace-based process of sanctification. While the term *legalistic* is not found in the Bible, Scripture does warn believers against the concept of legalism.

It was, of course, appropriate for the Corinthian believers to respond with obedience to Paul's instructions regarding the use of headcoverings. But would the same response by Christians today be a form of legalism? Three types of legalism should be considered when answering this question.

**1) Legalistic Beliefs About Salvation.** "Legalism" is often used to describe attempts to *earn God's forgiveness* by living obediently. This is the "classic" definition of legalism, in which God's mercy is thought to be received by following religious rules. Legalism is completely contrary to the Scriptural concept of *salvation by grace*, in which forgiveness is an *unearned* and *undeserved* gift from God through the death of His Son Jesus on the cross.

**2) Legalistic Unbiblical Rules.** "Legalism" can also refer to *non-Scriptural requirements for behavior* (without any connection to the issue of salvation). This type of legalism appears when Christians create new "moral rules" beyond those given by God Himself.

**3) Legalistic Biblical Rules.** "Legalism" can describe a *wrong kind of emphasis on behavior* – behavior that is otherwise biblical, right, and good. The improper emphasis is on obeying "the letter of the law" to the exclusion of "the spirit of the law." *Obedience to God* becomes divorced from *relationship with God*. This can occur with

almost any Christian activity, including church attendance, financial giving, prayer, and Christian service.

**Legalism: Conclusions.** (1) The Bible does not teach that wearing a headcovering earns God's love or forgiveness. (2) If the use of headcoverings is biblically required *only* in the Corinthian cultural context, then any other requirement for their use would indeed be legalism. (3) The use of a headcovering can also become legalistic if the Scriptural *purposes* and *principles* of the covering are ignored. (4) The solution to legalism is not to avoid rules. Paul, who was known for preaching against legalism and man-made traditions, still taught God's rules for Christian behavior. Jesus indicated that the solution to legalism is to honor both the Scriptural rules *and* the Scriptural principles (Matthew 23:23).

**Gender Inequality?** Headcoverings may serve a demeaning or repressive role for women in some cultures or religions. In the Bible, though, God's direction for how men should treat their wives is the opposite (Ephesians 5:25, 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:7). Both genders are equally made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Paul proclaims gender equality in the realm of salvation (Galatians 3:28) and in the middle of his discussion on headcoverings he was careful to show the interdependence between man and woman (v.11-12). Note also that Scripture does not describe submission as demeaning. Verse 3 teaches that men are to submit to Christ. As Jesus the Son submits to the Father and is yet equal in value, so the wife submits to the husband and is equal in value. The various New Testament teachings on the wife's submission have their foundation in God's good Creation (v.8-9, cf. Genesis 1-2).