

Head Coverings and Hair Lengths (God's Chain of Authority in 1 Corinthians 11)

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Should Christian women veil? In other words, should a woman wear some type of head covering to portray her submission to her husband? I have been asked this question many times throughout my years as a pastor. There is a reason why this question has resurfaced many times throughout my pastorate. I live in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Where I live there are many women who still practice wearing a head covering as part of their religious Mennonite or Amish heritage.

Of course, whether or not a woman chooses to wear a covering of some kind should never become an issue that determines fellowship together in God's House nor should it ever become an issue of spirituality or a bone of contention among the saints. Nevertheless, I've decided to take on this question and find out what the Bible really teaches on this subject. Dress is largely cultural and, unless what a person wears is immodest or sexually suggestive, it normally has no moral or spiritual significance. However, some local customs in Paul's day required that women wear a headdress or head covering. However, do ancient local customs have any significance for us today?

Should Christian women veil in the 21st century? Does God desire women to wear a head covering in society and the local church? The answer to this question is both yes and no. Please don't write this off as some kind of doubletalk. Stay with me for a while and let me explain in summary format what 1 Corinthians chapter eleven is actually conveying and then we will take a more in-depth look at what Paul is teaching.

The Natural Veil

1 Corinthians 11:15

"But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering."

Apparently the feminists of that day were questioning God's symbol or expression of authority in both the artificial covering and the woman's longer hair length which served as a natural veil. In countering those who

were against God's authority, Paul deals with both issues in this passage of Scripture (artificial and natural head coverings).

In the final teaching of this passage (1 Corinthians 15:11) Paul says that a woman's hair length serves as her covering or "for a covering" (literally, "instead of a covering"; *anti peribolaiou*). God has given to the woman another veil that serves the same purpose as the artificial veil. The Christian woman's hair is to be considered a proper and natural substitute for a head covering that speaks of her submission to God's order.

So here is the simple answer to whether or not Christian women should veil or wear a head covering today. Yes, they should wear a covering but it's not necessarily an artificial covering. Women throughout the passing church generations can wear the *natural* God-given veil that He has designed for them at the time of creation. This veil is her longer hair. This is what Paul is teaching in 1 Corinthians 11:15. This is the crux of the entire passage.

Paul is moving from the cultural practice of man's customs (the artificial covering in Corinth) to the natural order of things (the natural covering given to women at creation) which was designed in Genesis. The artificial veil is cultural and not binding but the natural veil God gave to the woman is transcultural and binding. It's God's design for all women of all ages and throughout the future local churches. In short, the woman's long hair serves as her natural, God-given veil and defines a woman not only as being feminine but being in submission to her husband.

So yes, a woman is required to veil. She is required to wear the *natural* veil God gave to her. But no, a woman is not **COMMANDED** to wear an *artificial* veil as some might teach from 1 Corinthians chapter eleven. This is because the artificial veil was an Eastern custom practiced in the city of Corinth and throughout the orient. It was the cultural and common practice for ladies to wear a veil that covered their entire faces and heads. The artificial veil signified her submission to her husband. In fact, in Corinth only the prostitutes chose to not wear a veil in defiance to God's natural order.

Making Up Your Own Mind

Paul then directs a question to the local churches of both then and now since the church epistles (church truth) is directed to the local churches of

today. Paul asks in 1 Corinthians 11:13, “Judge in yourselves: is it comely (fitting or proper) that a woman pray unto God uncovered?”

This puts the ball in our own court and we must, in accordance with our customs and geographical regions, determine if veiling or wearing a head covering, as it practiced today in many places, is an appropriate expression of a sign of submission. “Judge for yourselves.” This is not a rhetorical question. Paul is asking us to decide for ourselves on this matter of veiling. This means we do have liberty in this area. Personal choice is involved in the matter of veiling or wearing a head covering.

Whether or not a woman veils or covers her head in some manner or fashion will depend on one’s customs, companionships, and church affiliations. However, by asking this question Paul is not setting an apostolic precedence that women in local churches of all ages and time must practice veiling or wear an artificial covering on their heads. This is surely not what Paul is doing since he is going back to Genesis and creation to support male headship and female submission.

The Genesis Arrangement

1 Corinthians 11:3

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”

Headship (the man ruling over the woman) is the Genesis arrangement of authority that God put in place at the beginning of creation (“the woman is of the man” – vs. 12). This makes man to be the authority figure over the woman (1 Tim. 2:12-13). Paul is taking us back to the beginning (vv. 3, 12) in this section of Scripture to help us better understand the matter of head coverings and veiling. Of course, there is nothing stated in the Bible that Eve wore a veil or head covering in the beginning of creation as a sign of her submission to Adam. How do I know this? It’s because both of them were created without clothing!

Genesis 2:25

“And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”

God did not dress the first married couple because sin had not been introduced in the world and produced shame upon one’s nakedness. We

can be sure that Eve did not wear any kind of head covering or veil. She did not wear anything. So in taking us back to Genesis Paul could not be establishing a customary practice of wearing head coverings since this does not fit the Genesis arrangement regarding authority. Something natural that God gave to the woman at the time of creation gives us the lasting or enduring sign of submission and it is the woman's hair length (1 Cor. 11:15).

We can be sure that veiling or wearing head coverings did not originate in Eden as God's sign of submission; however, it began to be practiced in the customs adopted in society throughout the passing years. Since veiling is not supported in the Genesis record as God's creative design for submission, we must judge for ourselves whether or not we should adopt this custom for our personal homes and churches. One thing is certain; the matter of veiling or wearing artificial head coverings is not by creative design; it's by customary design.

Therefore, the artificial veil is NOT necessary for a woman to wear as a sign of her submission to her husband unless she feels bound to a certain heritage and culture. The Genesis arrangement does not require any head coverings but one's custom (1 Cor. 11) and conscience (Rom. 14) might dictate that a woman wear one. But as we will see in this study, a natural veil is given to the woman that she can wear to indicate her submission to her husband (her longer hair). A woman has the liberty to not wear an artificial covering. Instead, she can display the natural covering that God gave to women in Genesis to represent God's order or authority and submission.

Paul concludes and wraps up all of his teachings in this chapter by saying that "we have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (1 Cor. 11:16). In other words, when going back to Genesis, as Paul is emphasizing in this chapter (1 Cor. 11:3, 12), one should not argue against Biblical authority and the expression of this authority within society, whether it is wearing an artificial veil as some cultures dictate (as outlined in vv. 4-12 – referring to Corinth), or when women use their own natural hair as a sign of this authority and submission (as outlined in verses 13-15 – referring to all the churches). Paul is teaching that a woman's hair can replace the head covering and serve as a proper symbol of God's plan for authority and submission. Both are legitimate forms of expressing God's chain of authority for marriage, the church, and society.

In the final analysis, Paul is teaching that there is no apostolic command that says veiling must become binding upon all the churches. There is no universal practice of wearing head coverings. Only that which is presented in Genesis regarding the natural veil which God gave to the woman is binding upon women and the churches. Genesis gives the blueprint for the distinction among the sexes and portrays the only veil that God expects a woman to wear to represent her submission and femininity. It is the natural God-given veil or covering of her hair.

Don't argue against any apostolic instructions. None of the churches have developed this custom or practice. They have accepted God's truth from God's messengers.

It's not wrong to wear an artificial veil; it's just not necessary.

Now let's simplify the verses in 1 Corinthians chapter eleven with a brief outline and explanation.

God has given every woman a natural sign of submission in the length of her hair.

This truth is explained in six ways.

I. The Foundation of Submission (1 Corinthians 11:1-3)

The Book of Genesis is the foundation for submission. God created submission as part of the Genesis arrangement. It's not sexist; it's Scriptural. When I find my proper place of submission and practice it, I have the smile of Heaven upon me. And if God is pleased, this is all that really matters.

1 Corinthians 11:1-3

“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. But I would have you know, that the head (*leader and authority*) of every man is Christ; and the head (*leader and authority*) of the woman is the man; and the head (*leader and authority*) of Christ is God.”

God's Chain of Command

When Paul speaks of the "ordinances" he is referring to apostolic instruction and the teachings or central doctrines of the faith that he has shared with them (2 Thess. 2:15), one of them being male/female creation, and how God designed a woman to be submissive in the marriage relationship (Eph. 5:22-23) and also the church ministry (1 Tim. 2:11-13; 1 Cor. 14:34-35).

Paul is speaking of God's order that was established for mankind way back in the Book of Genesis. Man was designed by God to be the "head" or leader of the woman and the woman was to possess a submissive role to him. Paul uses this term "head" to express and teach male authority over women and female submission to this authority, not only in the home, but also in the local church.

The devil has got many Christians to believe that what humanism has taught regarding marriage is normal and natural (there are no roles in marriage and each partner can take charge). Folks, this is absolutely abnormal and unnatural according to God's marriage arrangement as found in Genesis.

God has given a definite chain of command. God the Father, God the Son; the man, and then the woman. This means that God the Son has taken a place of submission to God the Father, that the man is to be submissive to God the Son, and that the woman is to be submissive to the man whom God has placed as her head.

Now, when I say this in this day of woman's lib, I know that there are some people who would say, "Oh no, we don't agree with this at all. A woman is not inferior to a man." I would agree that a woman is not inferior to a man. Paul is not talking about inferiority, superiority, or spirituality here; he is talking about functional roles in the marriage.

If you know anything about Christian theology, then you already know that God the Son is not inferior to God the Father but willingly took on the form of a servant (Philippians 2:6-7) and His submission had absolutely nothing at all to do with inferiority (John 10:30). When the Bible says that a woman is to be subject to the man it doesn't mean that she's inferior. What it means is that she is to be in submission to the man.

Now, somebody will also come along and say, "Well, 1 Corinthians 11:3 and the submission of a woman was a local situation." This is another deceptive lie from hell. No, it was not a local situation. Somebody says, "That was a historical custom." No, it was not a historical custom since its roots go all the way back to the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3:16 a reflection of the original arrangement is reiterated to the woman: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis 3:16). Now, you might say, "That is demeaning." But dear friend, do you think being like Jesus is demeaning?

Adrian Rogers said:

"You are never more like Jesus than when you're submissive. You are never more like the devil than when you're rebellious."

We should remember this in our marriages and relationships today. Now here is God's divine order. First, Christ is the head of man. This means that every man is to submit to the teachings of Jesus Christ and follow Him (Luke 9:23). When a man is under Christ's authority he will not live for the world and he also should not live like a tyrant over his wife. He will be a follower of Christ's example and live like Jesus Christ showing sympathy and sacrificial love toward his wife (Eph. 5:25).

The headship of Jesus Christ over the man is very important so a marriage can function properly. If man is not a follower of the works, words, and ways of Jesus Christ then nothing will function properly in the marriage relationship. Furthermore, he will not deal with his wife lovingly and sacrificially as Christ dealt with people while on earth.

Second, the woman is in submission to the man's authority. The place of headship was given to the man and the woman is under his authority. The analogy of the head to body illustrates submission of the woman to her head (the man). The body is dependent on the head to function and is subordinate to the head. Headship means the man is to lead and direct the woman and the woman is to be man's helper and in subordination to his authority. This was God's design from creation (Gen. 2:18-23), as Paul will verify in this portion of Scripture (1 Cor. 11:8-10), and as he does in other texts of Scripture (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Tim. 2:11-13). Since man has authority over the woman he has the God-given right and responsibility to give proper direction to his wife and the wife should follow his leading.

Third, Paul also mentions that Christ, being God Himself, is in submission to the Father's will and purpose. Although there is equality in the Godhead (Eph. 1:3; Heb. 1:8; Acts 5:3-4) there is also functional submission that occurs. In the Godhead, One Person has the place of authority and Another (Jesus) takes the place of willing subordination or submission (Phil. 2:7; Luke 22:42; John 4:34). These examples of headship and submission were designed by God Himself and are fundamental in His arrangement of the Godhead, universe, and the marriage relationship.

Application:

- Where do I fit into God's chain of authority?
- Am I willing to fulfill my role in God's chain of command?
- As a man, am I really placing myself under the authority of Jesus Christ so I might be the kind of loving, serving, compassionate, and holy leader that God wants me to be?
- As a wife, am I ready to place myself under my husband's authority and stop trying to break the link or chain of God's authority?
- As a woman, am I willing to follow church authority (male leadership) instead of trying to override God's order?

Most of the problems in the marriage relationship and church are problems that occur in relation to authority. What is our view of authority? Are we responding in a Biblical, humble, and obedient fashion to authority? The authority figure for the man is Christ and the authority figure for the woman is to be man who represents Christ to her in the marriage. God's established authority is set in the context of His roles for the sexes and the relationships they are to have in the home and church.

II. The Practice of Submission (1 Corinthians 11:4-6)

1 Corinthians 11:4-6

“Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with *her* head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.”

The mention in these verses of women praying or prophesying is sometimes used to prove that Paul acknowledged the right of their

teaching, preaching, and leading in church worship. But Paul makes no mention here of the church at worship or in the time of formal teaching. In fact, he does not deal with the church gatherings until verse 1 (“that ye come together”). In the following verses (vv. 4-5) Paul is evidently dealing with daily living, worship, and ministry that occurs outside the corporate local gatherings for he does not mention the church coming together for worship until a later verse (1 Cor. 11:17-18). This is because women were NEVER given the authority to prophesy or teach during the corporate gathering of believers (when the entire church came together) since this practice would usurp the headship and authority of man established by God in the beginning (1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:11-14). However, a woman could serve in various ministries and phases related to church life and ministry without usurping man’s authority.

The Outward Sign

In these verses Paul is going to speak of a head covering. What does this represent? A covering is something worn over the head which is a symbol of authority. In spiritual matters, when a woman wears a covering it demonstrates or shows that she is under the husband’s authority. The covering represents the authority that is over the woman. In the culture of first-century Corinth wearing a head covering was a woman’s way of stating her devotion and submission to her husband and would also demonstrate her commitment to God. According to the custom, wives were required to cover their heads when they went outside their homes. Otherwise, they would be acting like men and would appear to be taking the authority that belonged to their husbands. Thus, a woman in Corinth who walks in the public eye or worships in public without covering her head would disgrace her husband.

1 Corinthians 11:4 deals with the local custom of a head covering and begins by declaring that a man should never wear a covering: “Every man praying or prophesying, having his head (physical head) covered, dishonoureth his head (his spiritual head who is Christ by demonstrating he does not want to follow the divine order and live under Christ’s authority and lordship).”

Since the man is to represent the Lord Jesus Christ on earth while living under Christ’s authority and lordship, he should never wear a covering on his head. This is because it does not reflect God’s arrangement or order.

The man was not to be in submission to the woman but to Jesus Christ. However, the woman was expected to wear a covering on her head in Corinth since it was a sign of her submission to her husband.

Because some ancient rabbis had misinterpreted Exodus 34:33–35, they taught that Jewish men should cover their heads when they prayed because Moses veiled his face in the presence of God's glory. However, it was in the people's presence, not God's presence, that Moses wore the veil. The Jewish tradition of men covering their heads to pray is therefore a human tradition - not a divine one.

Even today, as men, we continue to show or demonstrate respect for God and His House when we come to worship Him by removing our hats. This practice originates from a general understanding of 1 Corinthians 11:3 which explains that the man's head is Jesus Christ and therefore man should worship Him with his head uncovered to demonstrate God's chain of authority.

1 Corinthians 11:5 goes on to say this about the local custom:

“But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth (outside the corporate church service) with her head (physical head) uncovered dishonoureth her head (she dishonors her husband by demonstrating she does not want to follow the divine order and live under her husband's authority and leadership): for that is even all one as if she were shaven (demonstrating shame and disrespect for God's order, like the prostitutes in Corinth, who did not care about submission and sexual distinction).”

It's well known that in Corinth only a prostitute or an extreme feminist would shave her head. In fact, the Talmud indicates that a Jew considered a woman with a shaved head extremely ugly, and Chrysostom records that women guilty of adultery had their hair shaved off and were marked as prostitutes. Aristophanes even taught that the mother of unworthy children should have her hair shorn.

1 Corinthians 11:6 concludes:

“For if the woman be not covered (with the artificial veil or head covering in Corinth), let her also be shorn (shaven): but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven (demeaning her of her femininity and womanhood), let her be covered (the artificial veil).”

Here is Paul's point. In Corinth the veil or head covering was practiced as a symbol of the acceptance and understanding of headship and submission. Covering the head appears to have been a customary symbol of subordination in Corinthian society, as in much of the ancient world. The important thing to see in this set of verses is that in Corinth there was a specific practice of wearing an artificial covering or veil. It was part of the custom of Bible times.

One writer said:

“In Paul's day numerous symbols were used to signify the woman's subordinate relationship to men, particularly of wives to husbands. Usually the symbol was in the form of a head covering, and in the Greek–Roman world of Corinth the symbol apparently was a veil of some kind. In many Near East countries today a married woman's veil still signifies that she will not expose herself to other men, that her beauty and charms are reserved entirely for her husband, that she does not care even to be noticed by other men. Similarly, in the culture of first–century Corinth wearing a head covering while ministering or worshiping was a woman's way of stating her devotion and submission to her husband and of demonstrating her commitment to God.”

Bible Customs and the 21st Century

How do we deal with a passage such as this which gives directives regarding a local custom? How do we handle “culturally conditioned” material? We must remember that the Bible is its own authority and can set limits on which practices are culture-bound, law-bound (Old Testament), New Testament-bound, and which ones are not.

One way we can determine which commands are to be repeated or observed for today is by examining where the command or situation is given and if it is repeated elsewhere in Scripture in a similar way. The whole of New Testament Scriptures should be the test for whether or not a woman is obligated to wear a headdress and not some isolated passage taken by itself. The interpretive principle is this; if any portion or passage of Scripture seems unclear, it should be interpreted by that which is clear and definite. Since the rest of the New Testament is silent on Christian women veiling, and since Paul clearly says a woman's hair is an ample sign for her covering (1 Cor. 11:15), the conclusion must be drawn that women in all churches and succeeding church generations must *not* wear veils or head

coverings when worshiping or in society. Rather, they must maintain a feminine hair length that brings honor and dignity to both the beauty and submissive character of womanhood.

In this passage Paul is setting limits on the cultural practice of head coverings. Although they were worn in Corinth they are not necessary in all the churches (1 Cor. 11:16) since God has already spoken on the matter of the natural veil as being a sufficient expression of submission to male authority. Nevertheless, Paul wanted the men and women to follow the established local custom of Corinth of head coverings since the custom reflected the role relationship between man and woman and the divine order of headship and submission that God had established way back in Genesis.

The application of headship to the culture and custom of that day and time was for women to veil. In other words, the cultural and conventional practice of a woman covering her head as a symbol of subordination to man is a reflection of the natural order. Since man is the head of woman she should adorn herself with a head covering to symbolize her submission to her husband. Failure to do so would bring shame upon her head (her own husband).

As stated at the beginning, whether or not a woman wears a head covering will be determined by one's custom or past heritage. But one must also understand that no woman should be bound to ancient customs in the 21st century. Instead, as Paul declares in this passage of Scripture, a woman has liberty to express the true Genesis arrangement which is to possess a hair length that serves as a natural veil or head covering that is given to her from God.

Application:

- According to your background and heritage do you sense the need to wear an artificial veil?
- What is your conscience telling you?
- Do you understand that you have liberty to not wear an artificial veil?
- Are you content to illustrate the Genesis arrangement and wear the natural God-given veil?

III. The Reason for Submission (1 Corinthians 11:7-9)

The next set of verses explains the headship picture or analogy of man as being a leader and in doing so gives us the reason for submission.

“For a man indeed ought not to cover his head (not wear any physical veil or covering to acknowledge that Christ is his Leader and Lord), forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God (created in the image of God in a way the woman was not – to reflect God’s glory in being a leader): but the woman is the glory of the man (she reflects the God-given honor and dignity given to the man for his leadership position and role when wearing an artificial veil and demonstrating her submission). For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man (indicating male headship and authority).”

Man’s Special Creation

Paul is stating the reason for headship (male leadership) in the home and church ministry. It’s because man was created first (Gen. 2:7) to be a leader. He reflects God’s image in this specific and unique way in which the woman does not. Although the woman also was created in God’s image (Gen. 1:26) the woman does not reflect the unique image bearing capacity to lead like the man. God intended the man to reflect this creative capacity and not the woman.

Also, the woman was created from the man (Gen. 2:21-22) and was also created for the man to be his helper (Gen. 2:18). All of this points to the headship of the man over the woman (1 Tim. 2:11–13). The woman came from the man, she was to be for the man, and live under his authority. When Eve stood before Adam there was no doubt in her mind that he was to be her leader. Eve was not created as a feminist but as a feminine woman who lived under Adam’s authority.

Since this was true in the Genesis arrangement, the appropriate expressions for leadership and submission were to be practiced. For some woman it was the *artificial* covering (the custom of Corinth) while for other women it was a *natural* covering (a woman’s hair - the continuing sign of submission that women should display in all churches). For the men it was NEVER appropriate to wear an artificial veil or covering on their heads.

This was the custom of Corinth. To cover his head would suggest that he was not willing to follow the divine order given in Genesis which for the man was to follow and represent Christ before others and demonstrate Christlike leadership.

In addition, men were to keep their hair short (1 Cor. 11:14) since this properly represented God's order and was the continuing sign of the man's submission to Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 11:3). Long hair on men is an outward sign that he is living in rebellion against Jesus Christ who should be his Head. Lastly, if a woman failed to wear the artificial veil (the Corinthian custom) or refused to wear her hair longer (a natural veil) to represent God's natural veil (1 Cor. 11:15), this too would indicate rebellion against God's order and design of female submission to male authority and leadership.

Application:

- How was the man's creation different than the woman's?
- Are you willing to follow God's order of authority and submission?
- What are the distinguishing and lasting features which portray God's natural order of the sexes?

IV. The Angels and Submission (1 Corinthians 11:10)

This verse has puzzled many people over the years. Let's try and simplify what it's teaching.

1 Corinthians 11:10 says:

"For this cause ought the woman to have power (a symbol of authority) on her head because of the angels."

This passage is interpreted in an unusual way by those who want women to continue to veil throughout the passing church generations. Some suggest that angels assist women to veil and live in submission to their husbands. However, this is not the case. The word "power" speaks of the sign of authority (a covering or veil) that she is in submission to the man in the marriage relationship and the leaders and teachers in the church setting.

It's wrong to assume that the angels assist women in submitting as some might suggest from this verse. We do not depend upon angels for

assistance but upon the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:25). The Scriptures clearly reveal that a woman is filled with the Spirit so she can submit to her husband (Eph. 5:18-23). The woman is to wear the sign of authority (in Corinth an artificial veil – 1 Cor. 11:10) and elsewhere the natural veil (longer hair – 1 Cor. 11:15) because (on account of) the angels are watching women fulfill their role of submission.

We do know that the angels of God are all about us. People often think of angels as remaining in Heaven and only coming to earth on rare occasions to bring some message. But this is not true (Heb. 1:13,14). We do know that angels are spectators of the church (1 Cor. 4:9; Eph. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:21). Angels come to church with us! Angels are watching you and me worship and fulfill our God-given duties as Christians. They are interested in the way God's people are serving the Lord and worshiping the Lord. They are especially interested in submissive behavior since they are creatures of submission. The elect or good angels are servants of the Most High God. Angels submit to God's leadership and perform His will (Psalm 103:20; 104:4; Gen. 28:12).

Angels are examples of *creaturely subordination* to God and when they see rebellious women in the church or home they *take offence* to such actions. For this reason, the Corinthian women needed to wear a head covering in the church assembly. It's because angels are viewing what is taking place among women in the marriage relationship and church ministry in regard to their submissive behavior.

Since Paul was arguing from the facts of Creation, he brings up the angels, since they too are created beings that have learned submission from their original creation. As a woman was created to be submissive to a man so angels were created to be submissive to God. Therefore, submission is very important to angels. They are watching women in the context of the home life and church ministry to see if they are fulfilling their God-given role of submission.

Angels are watching to see if women are fulfilling their submissive role as God intended from the Genesis creation. The point seems to be this. The women of Corinth needed to cover themselves because good angels are an example of subordination and would take offense if they viewed insubordinate women who claimed to be serving God. Angels are supposed to learn from the church, but they will not learn anything about

submission, if God's women are not following the Biblical mandate that God has called them to uphold.

Application:

- Do angels only exist in Heaven?
- Why do angels watch women submit to their husbands?
- When do women offend the angels?

V. Mutual Submission

1 Corinthians 11:11-12 goes on to say:

“Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God” (*God is the ultimate giver of life and the plan for marriage*).

Satan will try to get men to carry the teaching of male authority to extremes and actually misrepresent the leadership role over women. Therefore, Paul reminds the men that they are to serve their wives and meet their needs in life. In Greek and Roman societies most women were little more than slaves, the possessions of their husbands, who often bought and traded their wives at will. Some Jewish men held women in such low esteem that they developed a popular prayer in which they thanked God that they were not born a slave, a Gentile, or a woman.

Paul reminds us that men and women are to function together as a divinely ordained team. They serve each other and they serve with each other. Elsewhere Paul reminds us that there must always be a mutual submission that takes place in the marriage relationship (Eph. 5:21 – “submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God”). Paul is not blending together the roles of the sexes but reminds us how marriage partners are to serve one another. In other words, we are to remember, as men, that we do not live unto ourselves.

We are to submit to our wife's needs (not lead) and sacrificially care for her in the marriage. We serve each other! We are all to be servants of others. We need to also remember this in the context of church ministry and life. We serve others and this means that we don't always get our way. In fact, women have much better ideas than men do on various matters and the

men should listen to their suggestions. We are to serve together in ministry and in doing so we will also serve one another (Gal. 5:13).

Application:

- What are some areas of mutual submission in the marriage relationship?
- How can we serve others in the marriage and even our local church?
- How can mutual submission in specific areas benefit the marriage relationship?

VI. The Creation and Submission (1 Corinthians 11:13-16)

We now come to the crux of the matter regarding artificial head coverings. Paul wants us to make up our own minds regarding this issue. In these verses Paul is moving away from Corinth, culture, and the customary head covering to God's initial creative design regarding sexual distinction and the order of things as they relate to male and female.

1 Corinthians 11:13-16

“Judge in yourselves (make up your own mind about the artificial veil): is it comely (fitting or appropriate) that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself (that which is inwardly and intuitively known by all people and stamped upon our heart) teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame (disgraceful) unto him (because it shows a man rejects God's divine order and also demonstrates rebellion against Christ's authority in his life)?

But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her (it gives to her a sense of honor, dignity, and respect as a woman since it demonstrates her femininity and submission to God's original design in Genesis): for her hair is given her for a covering (literally – “instead of a covering” – instead of the artificial covering).

But if any man seem to be contentious (argumentative against Paul's teaching on Biblical authority), we have no such custom (no custom of rejecting apostolic teaching on any matter – artificial or natural head coverings replacing the customary practice), neither the churches of God (which means the churches in that day and throughout the future church centuries cannot argue against the creative design and covering that Paul taught regarding a women's hair length).”

Let's take a closer look at some of these statements.

Personal Liberty

The fact that we can make a personal judgment about women wearing an artificial veil (“Judge in yourselves” – 1 Cor. 11:14) means this practice was a local custom that was not considered to be binding upon all churches for all generations. In other words, make the call in your own church and local region whether or not it's proper for women to veil. If it's not a cultural matter then there is no real purpose in wearing the artificial veil, since you already have the natural veil, which is the continuing sign of submission to God's ordained order and authority in both the home and local church. This means that a woman has liberty to not wear an artificial covering. She must make her own personal judgment on this matter in accordance with her husband, church, culture, and heritage (Rom. 14:5 – “let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind”).

The Nature of Things

Paul reminds us that “nature itself” (1 Cor. 11:14) or the normal order of established morals or natural inclination which God has placed within every human being (Rom. 1:26-27) will teach us that long hair on a man is shameful but long hair on a woman is not shameful. The word “nature” (*phusis*) carries the idea of instinct, an innate sense of what is normal and right. This is an appeal to human consciousness. It is significant that naturally every worldwide culture emerged with the same sense of understanding regarding long hair on men. To state it simply; this is the way things are.

Paul is arguing that God has intuitively placed within the entire human race a sense of what is right and wrong in the manner of masculinity and femininity. Born within the conscious of all humanity is the inner written code of what is feminine and what is masculine. This is especially true in relationship to hair lengths. Every person knows there is to be a distinction among the sexes. This is Paul's point.

Everybody knows that a woman should have a fuller head of hair and the man should have shorter hair (1 Cor. 11:14-15). This is intuitively placed within all of mankind so that there can be a unified sign of submission for all ages and all time.

From Corinth to Creation

In 1 Corinthians 11:14-15 Paul now compares the woman's natural covering (her hair length) to the order of creation. He is moving from the *cultural* practice to the *creative* purpose established in Genesis (1 Cor. 11:3). When a woman wears her hair longer than a man's hair length, as in the creation account, she demonstrates God's divine order established in Genesis and this becomes her sign of submission to her husband and male leadership in the church. Wearing shorter hair is a sign that she rejects God's divine order and her submissive role in marriage and church life.

The opposite is true for men. Long hair on men is shameful and leaves a man without honor. It is a dishonorable thing for a man to let his hair grow long since it defies God's order of authority and portrays a man in rebellion against Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 11:3). The word translated "shame" (*atimia*) literally means "without honor." Long hair on men is in direct opposition to God's creative design and brings shame to him. This is because he outwardly demonstrating before others that Jesus Christ is not his Lord and that he does not adhere to male leadership over the woman. His long hair is sending the message of rebellion to God's order and chain of authority that he also portrays himself effeminate instead of masculine.

Long-Haired Hippies

When a man tries to veil or cover his head with longer hair (like the hippie movement of the 60 and 70s) he dishonors his head (Jesus Christ) by conveying the message that he does not want Jesus Christ to rule his life and be Lord over his everyday living (1 Cor. 11:3). Long hair on men is rebellion. You can't put sugar on something that is rebellion. Men, cut your hair and stop being a sissy!

As a boy, I remember seeing the hippies driving down the street on their chopper bikes with high handle bars. They wore helmets and their long hair would be sticking out of their helmets and blowing in the wind as they drove by. We must remember that the hippie movement was a rebellious movement against God, government, and guns and the sign of their rebellion was their long hair, drugs, and rock music (the devil's trio).

John Phillips gives us this informative comment: "During the hippie craze in our Western society, those who dropped out of the Establishment

deliberately adopted an interesting and significant way of displaying their revolt against the established norms of society. The men let their hair grow long. That long hair of theirs was worn as a badge and symbol of their contempt for the norm—what Paul calls here "nature." Along with this long hair went a militant drug culture, a flagrant defiance of all established moral standards, a preoccupation with poverty, dirt, and squalor, a fascination with the occult, a craze for rock music and filthy lyrics, and orchestrated mass demonstrations against everything that displeased them. The total breakdown in our society of the Judeo-Christian ethic stems from those days and the failure of the Establishment to deal firmly and decisively with the problem. The symbol of the revolt was everywhere evident—men with long, unkempt hair.”

Our society within this nation began to lose its outward display of authority in the fifties, sixties, and seventies. One old-time preacher expressed that these were times of “Bopped hair, Bossy Wives, and Women preachers.” Today we have more of the same! Both men and women, instead of stressing God’s order of authority by appropriate or fitting hair lengths, are in clear rebellion against God’s order and design for sexual distinction and authority. Of course, we can misrepresent God’s order out of ignorance but it does not change the matter. A Christian should be taught to represent a distinction among the sexes or God’s plan for manhood and femininity and properly reflect God’s authority in the home, church, and society.

A woman’s longer hair, which acts as a covering over her head, is a symbol of her femininity and submission to God’s will as it relates to Biblical authority. Again, we must get the bigger picture of what Paul is teaching. Paul is *moving from man’s custom to the natural order* of things that God designed to represent the sexes and the Genesis order. A man should not veil his head (vs. 7) with an artificial veil since he represents male leadership over the woman and is following his head who is Christ. In a similar way, nature teaches us that he should not try to veil or cover his head with long hair, since this does not reflect God’s order (1 Cor. 11:3), representing male leadership and expressing that Christ is Lord over his life.

Long hair on men conveys the message of rebellion against God’s command for sexual distinction (vv. 14-15), God’s creative order of male headship and female submission (vs. 3) and against Jesus Christ who is to be the man’s Leader and Lord (vs. 3).

Sissies!

They used to call men “sissies” when they wore their hair long. Paul says that if a man wants to look like a woman (a sissy) he would be sending a clear message that he did not want to follow what God said concerning male leadership and submission to Jesus Christ (vs. 3). From the days of Absalom to our present day, long hair on men has been a mark or sign of rebellion (2 Samuel 14:26).

The practice of wearing shorter hair on men, according to God’s natural design, can be traced back as far as Moses. How do I know this? It’s because under the Mosaic Law long hair was only permitted in the rare case of the Nazarite vow which allowed a man to wear his hair longer. In this special case it was not a mark of rebellion but of consecration. However, this was not the “natural” (1 Cor. 11:14) or the normal pattern that God designed for mankind and should not be used to promote long hair on men today. In fact, as soon as the period of the vow was over the Nazarite had to cut off his long hair and burn it (Numbers 6). This is because it was not natural or according to the norm.

When the New Testament says that long hair is dishonorable on men (1 Cor. 11:14) it revokes the Nazarite practice which was part of the Old Testament Mosaic Law.

McQuilkin has stated:

“All Scripture should be received as normative for every person in all societies of all time unless the Bible itself limits the audience.”

This is true regarding the Nazarite vow and also first century veiling that was practiced in Corinth. It was not a universal expression of God’s will for all time.

Yes, the conventional practice of men wearing their hair short and women wearing their hair long goes back a very long way. It was the established custom in Jesus’ day and in Paul’s day. Both Greeks and Hebrews wore their hair short. In the first century, some Spartans and philosophers had long hair, but this was contrary to common practice. Vincent remarked: “In the sculptures of the catacombs the women have a close-fitting head-dress, while the men have the hair short” (cited by A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 4:162).

Short hair has always been God's creative design for men. This is why Paul could speak of it as something that was "natural" (1 Cor. 11:14) even during his day. Everyone knew it since God had placed this arrangement in the inner conscience of mankind. Of course, one can become calloused and rebellious to this teaching but this does not change God's original purpose for male and female distinction.

How Long is Long? - How Short is Short?

Folks, the distinctions of the sexes have not changed. God is saying that a woman is to look like a woman, a man is to look like a man and the unisex idea, the merging and the blending of the sexes, is an idea that was hatched in Hell. Don't become a gender bender in your local society. Of course, we could get into a big and long discussion about how long is long for the men and how short is short for the women. Somebody will say, "Well, I know certain churches where if your hair touches your collar, then you're out of fellowship with God." I also know people who teach that if a woman were to cut her hair at all she would be sinning against the Lord. Of course, these are extremes.

So how is the best way to define the sexes? Here is how. As Christians we should represent masculinity and femininity in the best possible light. Instead of trying to blur the lines, mark out clear lines! Mark out a clear distinction between what God presents to us concerning a woman's longer hair covering and a man's shorter hair length. Instead of being questionable in your appearance, be declarative in your belief system regarding God's order of authority and express yourself (make your appearance) within clearly marked boundaries. In other words, make a clear distinction so there can be no doubt you are defying God's order. This is what Paul is teaching and is good practical advice for us today.

Don't express yourself as a man if you are a woman. Likewise, don't express yourself as a woman if you are a man. Stop the unisex stuff! Make a clear distinction. God wants men to be masculine and God wants women to be feminine according to His design, not Hollywood's design, or some modern hairdresser who could care less about God's order for the sexes and the distinctions God has made between men and women.

1 Corinthians 11:6 reminds us that it is "a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven" simply because it takes away from her God-given femininity and

womanhood (“her glory” - 1 Cor. 11:15) but also demonstrates she no longer wants to live under God’s order or authority that He has established for society (1 Cor. 11:3).

Let’s get very practical at this point. When you see a man going down the street you ought to have no difficulty saying, "There goes a man." When you see a woman from behind you ought to have no difficulty saying, “There goes a woman.” It is shameful for a man to wear his hair in an effeminate way and shameful for a woman to wear her hair in a manly manner.

Someone said:

“We used to have a *she* or *him*; now, we have *shims*.”

Are you “shim” (a she-him) by the way you look and what you are conveying to God and others? Men, stop being effeminate and ladies stop being manly. It’s as simple as that. There is a natural order to follow which God has intuitively placed in our conscience and planned in Genesis when He made the first man and woman. This order is that men are to wear hair short and women are to wear it long. This reflects God’s initial creative order for the sexes (male leadership and female submission). Our hair length which represents femininity and masculinity is a reflection of our belief system regarding God’s established plan of authority.

One poor preacher after performing a wedding could not determine who was the bride and who was the groom and said, "Would one of you please kiss the bride?"

A Woman’s Dignity

Now listen closely to the teaching of Genesis. A woman's display of her femininity (her longer hair) is a sign that she's not trying to be mannish. It’s a sign that she's not trying to say, "I refuse the place of submission that God has given me" in marriage, in church, and in society.

The Bible says her hair is her “glory” (her honor and dignity as a woman) because it not only makes her look like a woman (feminine); it also conveys the message that she wants to be like Jesus Christ (submissive). Long hair was a woman’s glory because it gave visible expression to the differentiation of the sexes and was also a symbol of her submission to

God's order of headship. Ladies, being submissive is not wrong. It's right. We are never more like the devil than when we have a rebellious spirit. Your longer hair is a sign that you not only want to live in submission to male leadership but that you want to be like Jesus who submitted Himself to the Father's will and lived as a servant of others.

God knows how to make feminine ladies. He did it back in Genesis and He wants 21st century women to follow His creative blueprint for sexual distinction and submissive roles. As ladies, you have a certain "glory" (1 Cor. 11:15) and beauty when you keep yourself feminine. Do you realize that the length, color, and style of a woman's hair have always been admired by men? This is part of the "birds and the bees." God has put something in a man that just makes him want to see a soft and feminine lady. This is God's way and design. Ladies, the hair is your "glory" (your honor, dignity, and beauty as a woman). Don't cut it away so you look more like a man than you do a woman. When you do this you lack the glory of womanhood which is designed to reflect the Genesis order and God's arrangement of for the sexes.

Unisex and Unicycles

I remember watching a parade many years ago in our hometown. At one point many people came riding down the street on unicycles. Of course, unicycles have only one wheel and they become a way to illustrate how many today, both male and female, are trying to ride on one sexually common wheel. Many are throwing out the traditional two wheels and are trying to recreate one wheel that lacks sexual distinction and roles. They have broken down the common distinctions and roles between men and women causing a unisex look and equal roles within marriage.

The idea being pushed in our generation seems to be that the boys ought to halfway look like girls and girls ought to halfway look like men and we should obliterate the difference between the sexes. The unisex philosophy is born in hell. In Genesis God created the distinction among the sexes and the sign of submission but ever since this day Satan has been trying to destroy the Genesis distinction. Why? It's because Satan is leading mankind in rebellion against God.

Friend, what has ruined our world? Rebellion! What will ruin your marriage? Rebellion! What will ruin the church? Rebellion! It's rebellion to God's order

and design. You can't fix something when you are in rebellion against God! You might be able to patch things up but not really fix them without following God's design. Think about this the next time you have marriage problems or church problems.

Witchcraft!

First Samuel 15:23 says, "For rebellion *is* as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is* as iniquity and idolatry." Why would rebellion be compared to witchcraft? It's because those who practice witchcraft open themselves up to demons or Satanic intrusion into their lives. Witchcraft is nothing but trafficking with Satan and when you place yourself in the sphere of Satan you will possess a rebellious spirit. This is because you have opened yourself up to demonic influences.

Ladies, when you rebel against your husband in the marriage and do not allow him to lead, you become like a witch practicing witchcraft who has opened herself up to Satan. When you rebel against God's Word, you're practicing witchcraft; you are trafficking in demons, allowing them to influence you.

Ladies, whether you realize it or not, when you cut your hair as a woman, lack feminine charm, and present yourself as a man, it becomes a sign of rebellion against God's established order for the sexes (1 Cor. 11:3). You must understand this. It goes against God's design and order for submission of women. It portrays rebellion to God's purpose for women, marriage, and the home. Does misrepresenting God's order mean anything to you?

Men, whether you realize it or not, when you wear your hair long, become effeminate in your appearance, and present yourself as a woman, it also becomes a sign of rebellion against God's established order for the sexes (1 Cor. 11:3). You are rebelling against God's purpose for male authority and leadership. You are allowing the Evil One to influence you in some measure since all rebellion against God's ways is fueled by Satan. Men, you think of this the next time you want to keep your hair looking more like a woman than a man.

Paul closes 1 Corinthians 11:15 by concluding that a woman's hair length (her longer hair) serves as her covering or "for a covering" (literally, "instead

of a covering”; *anti peribolaïou*). Once again, the Christian woman’s hair is to be considered a proper substitute for a head covering. This is according to the Genesis design – not the cultural expression.

Warren Wiersbe accurately assesses this verse:

“In other words, if local custom does not dictate a head-covering, her long hair can be that covering. I do not think that Paul meant for all women in every culture to wear a shawl for a head-covering; but he did expect them to use their long hair as a covering and as a symbol of their submission to God’s order. This is something that every woman can do.”

Contentious People

1 Corinthians 11:16 concludes:

“But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.”

The word “contentious” means there were those who were arguing against everything Paul was teaching regarding authority, whether it dealt with wearing the cultural expression of wearing veils in public and church or keeping their hair feminine to demonstrate submission. We do know that feminist groups were rising up and having an influence on the churches in that day. Paul is probably speaking directly to those who were denying his teaching on Biblical authority.

The phrase “no such custom” has been interpreted in various ways: 1) No other custom except artificial veiling should be practiced in the churches 2) No custom to argue against apostolic authority on the matter of artificial head coverings 3) No custom to argue against the Biblical teaching on authority, as outlined in Genesis, which is reflected in both the artificial and natural head covering. Option three makes the best sense when reading through this chapter.

In essence, there is no custom or practice to argue against apostolic teaching and this was true as Paul went back to Genesis and taught about God’s plan for Biblical authority. Whatever the apostles taught was true. Period. This means that what Paul taught regarding authority in the home, church, and society was true. Furthermore, since God in the Genesis arrangement set the example and pattern for authority and submission (the

natural veil given to the woman – her hair – vs. 15) one cannot argue against what Paul taught about the natural head covering.

As previously mentioned, some suggest that Paul is referencing how women should wear the artificial veil or covering and that there is no other custom that the churches should follow, even contemporary churches that exist today. It's apostolic authority and something that must be obeyed by every woman today. Women of all churches and all times must wear a head covering when going out and worshipping in church.

Others suggest that Paul was maintaining the status quo position on head-coverings which came from a universal church practice in that day. He was simply saying that we must not argue over customs. Believers should conform to the *expected* customs of Christian behavior and church order and not argue and rebel against them. If this is the case the whole matter of head coverings should only be viewed as a custom and cultural mandate that only relates to early New Testament Christianity and is comparable to other customs or issues such as the offering of meat to idols and the strangling of animals (Acts 15:29). In other words, the custom has no bearing on local churches today as it did back in the culture of New Testament times.

Some interpreters suggest that Paul is summing up the entire explanation he gave regarding both cultural and natural veiling as an appropriate expression of Biblical authority. This summary (don't be argumentative) relates to both contemporary churches in that day but also churches that exist today. His advice is not only rooted in the historical culture of Corinth but has application for the churches today, many who do not practice wearing artificial head coverings. I think this is the best explanation to this statement. It is a broad or sweeping statement that includes both artificial and natural veiling which both represents God's established order of authority and submission.

Macarthur seems to espouse this view:

“Neither the Lord, the apostles, nor the churches would allow female rebellion. Women were to maintain their distinctively feminine hairdos; and when custom dictated, they should wear a covering.”

One thing seems certain; only a local interpretation of head coverings at this point seems to miss the main argument of Paul who is looking back to

creation and the natural veil or covering that God has given to the woman (vv. 3, 12). Therefore, Paul seems to take the local head covering practice and brings it up-to-date for all churches of all times. He does this when explaining the natural veil given to a woman at creation. In other words, Paul addresses the local custom of that day (vv. 4-13) but then opens up his teaching by applying the principle of headship and head coverings to all the churches which is based on the Genesis revelation (a woman's hair is her covering- vs. 15).

It seems better to view this statement ("no such custom") as not only applying to the what Paul taught about customary veiling but also the natural veiling of a woman's hair length based on the Genesis record (1 Cor. 11:3, 12). However, it is the principle of women's subordination to men that Paul is enforcing for all churches for all times, *not the cultural mark or symbol* of that subordination.

Here is Paul's point. Some people, primarily those who were promoting feminist theology and moving away from Biblical authority, were being "contentious" (vs. 16) or argumentative against what Paul said throughout this entire chapter regarding Genesis, authority, artificial veiling, and the natural veil which is a sign of the woman's submission to authority. There were those who did not take the Genesis arrangement seriously especially when it came to God's chain of authority. They did not believe that God made a distinction among the sexes to represent authority in the home, local church, and society. Historical evidence shows that there was a strong feminist movement even in this day that was very apparent in Corinth and some were questioning the whole idea of Biblical authority.

There were people that wanted to argue and challenge Paul's teaching regarding Biblical authority and his teachings regarding veiling. They not only refused to wear the cultural veil but also wear their hair longer as a sign of submission and following God's plan for authority. They were being argumentative about God's plan for authority. Of course, Paul was not against cultural practices of veiling as he previously outlined and sought to regulate (vv. 4-12) but he was not setting a cultural mandate for all the churches to follow regarding artificial veiling. He was actually counteracting culture and the status quo with God's creative example of veiling when coming to the end of this section of Scripture (vv. 13-16). He marks out the true head covering and distinction among the sexes as God created male

and female. His final argument is that the natural head covering (a woman's hair) is also a symbolic picture of God's plan of authority (vs. 15).

When looking back to what he taught in this entire chapter (creation, authority, artificial or natural coverings), Paul settles the whole issue of questioning anything he taught by saying "we have no such custom."

Paul is referring to the "custom" or practice of arguing against apostolic teaching over this matter of Biblical authority, veiling in Corinth, and also the natural God-given veil that gives a proper distinction among the sexes (vv. 13-15). In other words, it's not the "custom" *to argue against apostolic authority* on any matter (Acts 2:42). It's the apostolic way or the highway! Stop arguing against what God says about God's plan for authority. Stop arguing against God's creative design for the sexes.

There have always been appropriate expressions of God's arrangement of Biblical authority as established in Genesis. One of them is the cultural expression of artificial veiling while the other is the natural covering given to every woman. Both of these accurately symbolize the order of authority which is the natural God-given veil or covering. However, God's natural head covering can take the place and has precedence over the artificial head covering since it is God's original design of Genesis and teaches Biblical submission and authority (1 Cor. 11:3, 12, 15).

So the principle of submission as evidenced in the natural woman's hair length is to be permanent and is transferrable to all the present-day cultures, since Paul referred to creation as the basis for headship and submission (vv. 3, 9, 12) and also because of the matter of angels watching women submit (vs. 10). Paul is not undoing what he said about the cultural practice of head coverings, but he is moving from culture back to creation and the natural order of things. He is including this teaching for all the churches that would not follow the cultural practice.

Here's the point; Paul refuses to be challenged on his teachings that are based on the Old Testament Scriptures regarding creation, authority, the distinction among the sexes, and veiling – both cultural and natural veiling (a woman's hair length). He knows that the rest of the apostles support him and therefore confidently writes the personal pronoun "we" (vs. 16) as a reference to all the apostles.

When reviewing Paul's conclusion, we know that what he taught from a cultural perspective in verses 4-12 should NOT be practiced universally among the "churches" as explained in verses 13-16. Creation rules out artificial veils as a mandatory or binding law upon women and "the churches of God" (vs. 16). This is because God at creation did not give an artificial veil to Eve but a natural covering that would illustrate her submission in the marriage relationship.

This entire discussion of veiling may have been somewhat unique to Corinth and Paul was aware that his letter may have been passed around to other churches, so he includes this disclaimer: "A woman's hair is given for a covering" (vs. 15). And then he adds, "Don't argue against what I've said" (we don't have this custom to question apostolic teaching). The apostles and the other churches were firmly committed to the practice that women should wear longer hair to represent the natural head covering and that they should be distinctively feminine in their appearance.

In short, while Paul deals with those who were against all expressions of Biblical authority, he teaches that both expressions, the cultural expression of Corinth (artificial veils) and the continuing practice of all the churches (wearing a natural veil) are both suitable expressions that symbolize the role of Biblical authority in the home, church, and society. Since this is true we are NOT to dictate the local custom of *artificial* veiling to the churches today; instead, we are to teach what the Bible says about the woman's *natural* covering or veil. In modern cultures where the wearing of a hat or veil does not symbolize subordination this practice should not be required of Christians.

The woman's natural head covering or veil (her longer hair) is designed to represent God's order, her submission to her husband's authority, and her submissive role to male leadership in the local church. Also, the man's shorter hair properly represents God's order and his submission to his Head (Jesus Christ). A man's attempt to cover his head with longer hair breaks the chain and message of the divine order and is an indication or sign of his rebellion against Jesus Christ.

This is why fundamental churches still teach against excessive short hair on women and longer hair on men. This is why I must mention it in this study. The distinction among the sexes MUST be maintained since it reflects God's established order of headship in the Book of Genesis. Every

woman and man should take note of this and want to represent this established order in Genesis by maintaining sexual distinction in the best possible light.

God is a God of order (1 Cor. 14:33, 40) and God's order should be reflected in our femininity and masculinity, in our daily living, and in our homes and local churches. This is how practical it should become in our lives.

Betty Freidan, the organizer of the N.O.W. (National Organization for Women), a feminist organization with radical ideas, said: "The changes necessary to bring about equality were, and still are, very revolutionary indeed. They involve a sex role revolution for men and women, which will restructure all of our institutions: child-rearing, education, marriage, the family, medicine, work, politics, the economy, religion, psychological theory, human sexuality, morality, and even the very evolution of the race."

Do you see the movement that has overtaken our country today? People are saying, "We don't care what Paul said; we don't care what God said; we don't care what the Bible teaches; we're going to have our rights." However, rights are never rights when they become wrongs!

Application:

- Is sexual distinction rooted in culture or creation?
- In what distinct way are the sexes separated?
- Have you been representing masculinity or femininity in the best possible light?
- In what ways can you improve your physical appearance to better reflect God's creative purpose for your life?

Conclusion

Let's conclude this study. Paul was NOT transferring the custom of veiling or head coverings to our present day as a mandatory requirement for women. Rather, he was applying the Genesis truth about the principle of headship and submission to all the churches throughout the future centuries. Paul drew a distinction between culture (1 Cor. 11:5-10) and creation regarding the matter of head covering (1 Cor. 11:13-15). This is obvious since he does not continue to argue for women to veil since this was NOT part of the original Genesis arrangement (1 Cor. 11:3).

The whole of New Testament Scriptures should be the test for whether or not a woman is obligated to wear a headdress and not some isolated passage taken by itself. The interpretive principle is this. If any portion or passage of Scripture seems unclear it should be interpreted by that which is clear and definite. Since the rest of the New Testament is silent on Christian women veiling, and since Paul clearly says a woman's hair is an ample sign for her covering (1 Cor. 11:15), the conclusion must be drawn that women in all churches and succeeding church generations must NOT wear veils or head coverings when worshiping or in society. Rather, they must maintain a feminine hair length that brings honor and dignity to both the beauty and submissive character of womanhood.

In summary, the *artificial* veil was traditionally and culturally bound while the natural veil (the woman's ample hair length) is transcultural and is the command of the apostle which aligns itself with God's creative design. Yes, a Christian woman should veil or wear a covering. She should express both her femininity and submission to God's divine order of male headship both in the home and leadership in the church by wearing the God-given veil. This is her longer hair which covers her head.

No, a Christian woman does NOT have to wear an artificial covering or veil since Paul is teaching that a woman's hair is given to her "for a covering" (1 Cor. 11:15 - a natural, God-given covering) to illustrate the lasting and unchanging picture of the sexes, submission, and God's chain of authority within the home, church, and society. It's not wrong to wear an artificial covering; it's just not necessary.

What is most important is that we are willing to place ourselves under God's teaching about Biblical authority. Men, Jesus Christ is to be Lord of our lives so we can accurately demonstrate Christ's authority over our lives. As a result, we can become more like Christ and be the kind of leader that God wants us to be. Ladies, as you wear the appropriate sign of submission on your head that is in accordance with your custom and conscience (an artificial covering) or your personal liberty (your natural hair length), you should do so remembering that the angels are watching you, to see if you represent a person who knows how to submit and serve God as they do.

Lastly, and most importantly, God is watching both men and women in our marriages, homes, churches, and society to see how seriously we take our

roles, through the outward expressions of masculinity and femininity, and also through our inner attitudes.

Hebrews 4:13 declares:

“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

As Christians we are to represent God’s order of authority and submission in the best possible light. Don’t blur the lines. Make clear lines of distinction and boundaries for your life today in a time when all the lines and boundaries are disappearing.