

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Gender Roles and Order in the Church

Have you ever read, passages of the Bible and scratched your head afterwards. – What was that all about?

A) 1 Corinthians 11 v1-16 is one such passage.

B) Head coverings, length of hair – what is that all about – how does that apply to today – why does it even matter.

C) Hope tonight is to bring some clarity to a confusing passage as well as to see the overarching points that applies to us even today.

D) We are picking up with V.2 –

E) We saw last week that v.1 of chapter 11 actually went with the discussion in Ch.10

1) Right and wrong use of Christian liberty – Paul ended that conversation that began in ch.8 – Follow my example

2) Imitate me as I imitate Jesus

Pickup in Verse 2 New subject – new problem

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you. 3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. 5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. 6 For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. 7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. 8 For man is not from woman, but woman from man. 9 Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. 10 For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. 12 For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.

13 Judge among 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 anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

Paul begins with Praise

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.

A) In essence Paul begins by saying “I praise you for remembering me in everything for holding the teachings just as I passed them on to you.”

B) Awesome - “I’m your pastor. I love you. I’ve taught you. You’ve listened to me.

C) But the problem they were dealing with now that Paul is addressing there in Chapter 11 – 1) is they were taking their cues from culture and not from scripture.

2) Always a great way to get messed up.

It is important to understand that there is both a cultural aspect to Paul’s instruction as well as a Spiritual aspect.

A) Cultural aspect that sets up the stage for this conversation had to do with the rampant feminism that was part of the Roman Empire

B) We think of feminism as being a modern day issue but that is not true

1) Feminism has existed from the beginning of the human race

C) Historic record tells us that it was a major issue in the Roman empire as well

First of all it was customary in that first century culture for women to wear veils in public as a sign of their modesty

A) Reserving their beauty to be seen by their husband or future husband.

B) Women in the Roman Empire would often take off their veils or other head coverings as a sign of their independence.

C) Much as in our own day, some women were demanding to be treated exactly like men and they attacked marriage

1)and the raising of children as unjust restrictions of their rights.

Some Women even started to cut their hair in order to look like men.

A)They asserted their independence by leaving their husbands and homes, refusing to care for their children,

B)living with other men, demanding jobs traditionally held by men, wearing men's clothing and by discarding all signs of femininity.

C)What was also interesting to note in relationship to this conversation and text is that in that culture woman typically had longer hair than men

1)That was the cultural norm –

D)What is also interesting to understand that plays into the context of this conversation is that the Prostitutes in the temple of Aphrodite –

1)shaved their heads as Part of their allegiance to their goddess

E)So in that culture the only women who had short hair were the feminist and the prostitutes had shaved heads.

Before we continue further, let me say this: Feminism on most fronts is a reaction to two things

A)It is a reaction to Male Chauvinism that has dominated the mind set of humanity throughout the ages

B)A mindset that treats women as a lesser human being - sometimes even property to be used and abused.

1)Which was never God's design or original intent

C)In fact one of the beautiful things about the gospel and the ministry of Jesus is that He elevated the view of women in the world.

1)Jesus talked to women and in a kindly manner in public both were unusual in that culture

D)The first person that Jesus appeared to after his Resurrection was a woman

1)Commissioned her to spread the word that he was alive and risen

E)See in a minute in the beginning of creation – God placed a high value on women.

Throughout history women have been devalued by men. Seen as lesser and objects of sexual pleasure, or servitude.

A)Many of the problems we have in our society today stem from this devaluing of women.

B)Statistics point this out -. The World Health Organization says that one-fifth of the world's females are physically and/or sexually abused by men at some point in their life.

C)Additionally, the U.S. Surgeon General says that domestic violence by males against females accounts for more adult female emergency room visits than traffic accidents, muggings and rapes combined.

D)And thirdly, the U.S. Department of Justice says that 30 percent of all women who are murdered are killed by husbands, ex-husbands or boyfriends.

E)So the feminists say, "You know what, men are horrible to women." I say, I fully agree.

1)Definitely a problem

So Feminism is a reaction to how poorly women have been treated by men through the ages.

A)But feminism is also a reaction of both men and women's failure to properly understand and embrace – God's divine roles for men and women

B)That is the spiritual aspect that Paul is going to bring into this conversation as he discussing the topic of headship.

3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

C)To help them understand this matter of headship –

Paul takes his listeners back to the beginning Genesis 1-2 – discuss order/ equality

. 8 For man is not from woman, but woman from man. 9 Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.

So to understand Paul's argument – keep your place here – turn to the book of Genesis chapter 1

A) Scriptural background to headship and God's Divine order as it relates to men and women.

B) Picture that God has ordained in the marriage relationship.

²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

C) So the first thing I want to point out is that God created both men and women in his image – **to be image bearers of God.**

1) Men and women are equal in that calling. V.26 Image bearers

D) The next thing I want you to see is that men and women have been given an equal blessing. ²⁸ Then God blessed them- not blessed ADAM – THEM ²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them. Part of the blessing is what he is going to say next – given them a mission

²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

The mission: Be fruitful – fill the earth – have dominion over it

A) Sum up this way: Love God – Love each other – every way –

B) Take care of what I have put into your hands!

C) Same mission he gave to the first married couple he has given to every married couple in Christ – Love God/each other/ take care....

So Equal in their calling

Equal in their blessings

Equal in their mission – obvious different roles to play

Chapter 2 There is an order to this Equality

A) Chapter 2 God is retracing the steps of creation with a little more detail

B) V.15 – Starts talking about man –

¹⁵ Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Sidenote: Instructions about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—was given to the man Adam – and it would be his responsibility to share that with his wife, when she came into the picture. –

Early picture of man's spiritual headship and responsibility in the marriage relationship.

¹⁸ And the LORD God said, "*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.*" ¹⁹ Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *was* its name. ²⁰ So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

Adam is given the task by God of naming the animals – two by two – mr and mrs lion – elephant – no Mrs Adam

A) He needs a Helper – Helpmate – Helper doesn't not mean -maid - cook /One to clean up after his messes.

B) Great misunderstanding of this word - Helper - in the Hebrew it is the Words Ezer Kenegdo

1) It is a title given to the woman that greatly elevates her role.

C) Helper = **Ezer – meaning of strength and power** – the wife is a strength and power comparable to her husband

Ezer appears twenty-one times in the Old Testament—twice in reference to the first woman,

A) three times in reference to nations to whom Israel appealed for military support,

B) and sixteen times in reference to God as the helper of Israel.

Examples: the Hebrew term *Ezer*, or “helper,” is employed to describe God, the consummate intervener—

A)The helper of the fatherless (Psalm 10:14)

- King David’s helper and deliverer (Psalm 70:5),
- Israel’s shield and helper (Deuteronomy 33:29)

B)In Genesis 2, *ezer* is combined with the word *kenegdo* to mean something like “a helper of the same nature,” or a corresponding character.

1)*Kenegdo* literally means “as in front of him,”

2)suggesting that the *ezer* of Genesis 2 is Adam’s perfect match, the yin to his yang, the water to his fire.

C)Everything about this title implies mutuality, harmony, and partnership.

That was God’s design seen in the very first married couple

A)Marriage was to be a partnership – God gave the first married couple an Equal calling/ blessing / mission.

²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

²³ And Adam said: “This *is* now bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called Woman,
Because she was taken out of Man.”

B)Adam wakes up and sees this beautiful naked creature and says – WO Man – this is awesome

C)Eve responds – WHOA – man – Slow down – chill out –

1)Men and women have been having the same response ever since

Now notice what it says next V.24

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

²⁵ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Notice – the order here: A man shall leave his father and mother –

A)Paul tells us that the marriage relationship is a picture of Jesus and his church

B)This is the first sign – Man leaves – man sacrifices – man has the responsibility to care for his wife.

C)Why? Picture: Jesus would leave heaven – place of comfort and come to this earth in order to cleave – to attach himself to a bride

1)To do that – he would have to die

D)Ephesians Husband Love your wife as Christ Gave himself ...

1)Picture Jesus loved us - gave himself for us – We RESPOND TO HIS LOVE

E)That is the picture God wants us to have in Marriage –

A husband is a servant leader – He leads by lovingly giving his life – in service/ sacrifice

A)The wife lovingly responds to that by submitting and respecting her husband.

B)Marriage is a partnership – Man and woman Equal in calling, equal in blessing/ equal in mission

C)But it is an ordered Equality – men are to lead – not because they are better, smarter, more godly

D)It is a design that is a picture of Jesus and his Church – we don’t want to mess up that picture

E)Men are called to be leaders in the relationship – and it is a matter of responsibility –

1)The greater of the responsibility is put on men

The whole chaos that infiltrated the world happened when man didn’t fulfill his role.

A)Adam’s problem – he was passive – Eve wanders over to the tree she is not supposed to be at

B)First note of feminism – She is taking matters into her own hands.

C)Adam’s problem is he was being passive – instead of leading he lets Eve take the lead.

Genesis 3:6 ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

D) All this started with Adam's passivity – not fulfilling his role to lovingly lead his wife.

E) Note this: Who was deceived Eve, who ate first Eve – who gets the Blame – Adam

¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin Romans 5:12

Note this: ¹⁸ Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment* came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life.

Romans 5:18

It is this theological truth that Paul has in mind as he discusses the subject of Headship in 1 Corinthians turn back to 1 Corinthians-

A) hopefully bring this altogether

³ But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

Headship has to do with order not equality

A) Here is the picture: Jesus and God the Father are one – they are equal.

Jesus is equal with the father

B) But he willingly made himself subject to his father as a man –

1) I can do nothing apart from my father

C) God is the head of Christ

1) Christ is the head of man – Jesus is the head of the Church – really he is over all things. Ephesians 1:22

D) The man is head over the woman – that is God's order

Buy an appliance – comes with instructions – often times the warranty is connected to the instructions

A) Instructions say – push button A before B –

B) But you are one of those guys who don't like to read the instructions – I can figure this out

1) So you press button B before button A – not only does it not work - blows up

C) You try to take it back – they say – You didn't follow the instructions – pressed button B – before A

1) Sorry no refund – or replacement

The Bible is the instructions – might not make sense to us – but if we follow it – we will see – it works perfectly

A) Headship has to do with order not equality

B) There is an order in God's design – and if we follow it – it works -

C) So Headship has to do with order not equality

And Coverings had to do with God's glory instead of our glory. ⁴ Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.

A) Cultural – the idea of head coverings for a man was not a normal part of society - that came later in Jewish culture

B) Man to wear a head covering – when praying or prophesying dishonors his head – Jesus – why?

1) It would draw attention to himself – not normal in that culture - **Why is he wearing that?**

⁵ But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. ⁶ For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.

A) Notice first of all – that a woman is allowed to pray in the church – prayer is talking to God about men

B) And she is able to prophesy in the church – Prophecy is talking to men about God.

C) Only thing that the Bible really forbids a woman from doing is being a pastor in the Church – role reserved for men.

1) Timothy / Titus qualifications

D) Reserved for men not because he is smarter – godlier – better communicator – again God's design

But a woman can pray and prophesy – lead ministry – and definitely teach woman and kids –

A)But here Paul says – there in Corinth when a woman in the church was to pray and prophesy she was to have her head covered.

B)Why that was the cultural norm – again the only woman who didn't wear head coverings were the feminist – prostitutes

C)If she is not wearing her covering – she is dishonoring her husband -if single her dad

1)She is illustrating – I don't want to be under the headship of my husband -**Rejecting God's plan – rejecting his glory**

D)Let her be shaven

1)Might as well– she is acting like the women in culture running around in defiance of their husbands

E)This is really the heart of the issue here – **application for today – woman in the church – are to appear different from the world**

7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.

A)The word glory here is reflection or outshining – The man is to be the reflection of Jesus – not drawing attention to himself

B)The woman is to be the reflection of her husband –

C)Husband – not happy with your wife – She is grouchy etc – look in the mirror she is a reflection of you.

D)Again – God's design – Men are the reflection of Jesus – love their wives

1)Wives are going to reflect the love of their husbands in their – behavior and countenance

8 For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Order: Man was first – the woman came from the man

A)Not head to be over – not foot TO be under - side – to be right next too

9 Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.

A)The woman was made to be the Ezer Kenegdo to the man –

B)Not saying – Men don't need woman -not a general statement- he is rehearsing the created order

1)God determined the man needs a woman.

C)Ordered equality – partnership – working together to fulfill God's mission for them as a couple

D)When they are fulfilling their roles and working together it is a beautiful thing to behold –

In the church setting that Paul is referring to here – in the worship setting of church – we are reclaiming what man messed up/garden

A)Yielding ourselves to the order that God established

B)Part of our worship is proclaiming – we are yielding ourselves to God's way.

10 For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.

C)The head covering is a symbol of her being under authority – that was the cultural norm

1)Important Because of the angels?

D)The Angels are sensitive to disorder they saw first hand the damage it can bring – Lucifer rebellion ‘

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

12 For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.

A)The man is not independent from the woman/ woman from man

B)They are one in the Lord – partnership – a team

C)Uniquely brought together by the Lord

Natural observation – that culture

13 Judge among 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.

A) In that culture - When a woman prays with her head uncovered – she is doing two things

B) #1 She is drawing attention to herself –

1) Her hair was her glory – it was to be kept covered – revealed only to her husband - For him to see her beauty

C) Similar Revealing clothing – Your body is for your husband

1) Not flaunting – especially in this environment

So on the one hand – if a woman were to have her head uncovered in church and especially praying or prophesying –

A) People would notice – why is she doing that – she would stand out

B) Ladies didn't go out uncovered – why is she doing that

C) So problem drawing attention to herself #1 – and being in defiance of her husband – both are not godly

1) **God doesn't get any glory and that is the goal**

Likewise for a man to have long hair – in that culture – was uncommon

A) He is dishonoring himself – drawing attention to himself

B) Coming across feminine –

C) That was the issue in Corinth – the cultist and the feminist were – confusing the gender roles and appearances

D) Paul is saying we need to protect the definite distinctions that God has created as a part of his design

16 **But if anyone seems to be contentious, Lover of strife we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God. This is the common teaching and practice**

Application for today:

The cultural issues of head coverings and hair length are not an issue today in our culture – doesn't apply

How-ever – Gender roles do matter

A) God made men and women equal in Calling/ blessing/ mission

B) But he made them different in appearance and function for a reason –

1) Part of the **design and order to carry out the mission**

C) We need to respect that and celebrate the differences and resist the tendency of the culture to do away with the differences

Marriage there is an order

A) Husband is the servant leader

B) Wife is the Ezer Kenegdo – Amazing role – partner – she is to embrace her role –

1) Her husband is to value her role

Church

A) Our Goal is to glorify God and bring attention to God – not ourselves

So Men and women need to be mindful of our appearances

A) Not wear clothes that are too tight or revealing

B) These days Skinny Jeans – muscle shirts - that goes both ways –

C) We want the attention to be on God and not on us

But Over react – look unkempt – same effect –

A) Be normal

Lastly – God is concerned with order in the church – we need to be concerned about that as well.

A) When we are following God's design and order – things work

B) And God is glorified