

Introduction

Over the years I have left the women's ministry up to women, but there was one particular occasion that I purposely called the women in the church together to deliver a message to them. We had just planted the Kennestone Community Church, and quite a few women had come out of a church where women were encouraged in their roles as wives and mothers, but were not allowed to do much outside the home. There is nothing wrong with being a submissive wife, and a great mom, but that is not all that women can do. Women can serve as deaconesses in the church. Women can teach, pray, prophesy, evangelize, and do many other things. Jesus had many women that followed and supported his earthly ministry. The New Testament is full of examples of women that were very involved in ministry. In Romans 16, Paul mentioned eight women by name that were making significant impact in the kingdom of God and in the church. Paul mentions Phoebe in Romans 16:1-2, and she was a deaconess in the church at Cenchrea. She had been a great help to Paul and many others. Next, he mentioned Priscilla and Aquila. Priscilla was the wife of Aquila, helped him plant three churches. Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos, a man who was mighty in the Scriptures, aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately (Acts 18:24-28). In Philippians 4:2-3, Paul said that Euodia and Syntyche had shared his struggle in the cause of the gospel. In Acts 12:12, Luke wrote that Mary, the mother of John Mark, hosted a church in Jerusalem. In the Old Testament, we have examples like Deborah, who was a prophetess and was the judge of Israel in her day (Judges 4:4). I wrote a purpose statement in my notes for that Ladies' meeting: **To expose women to the prominent position, role and work that women had in the New Testament. It is to encourage women to step out and serve the Lord in ministry. It is not to take anything away from their calling as a wife and as a mother, but to envision them for ministry as time permits.** I wanted them to hear directly from their pastor about the significant role that women played in the New Testament, and can have in the church today.

Our passage today is not about women's ministry and the opportunities they have. Instead, it is about authority and proper order. God did not give it to suppress women, or for men to Lord over women; He gave it to promote order. The passage is a difficult passage, and my introduction is to give perspective and balance to the passage. Some today would say that this is a male chauvinistic passage, and they struggle with its veracity and application. Some have come up with a different meaning of headship, because they do not believe that a woman is to submit to a man. I have titled it the Divine Order of Headship. Divine comes from the Latin word, *divus*, which means God. This Order of Headship is from God. I believe that the Scriptures are inspired by God, and profitable for teaching, correction, and training in righteousness, and this passage is part of the canon of God's word. Therefore, I accept it as God's order. Furthermore, the chain of command that is given goes up to God; He is the ultimate head and authority.

In the Divine Order of Headship, we will look at the Order of Headship. Second, we will look at the symbol of headship. Third, we will look at the basis of headship. Fourth, we will look at the mutual dependence of headship. Fifth, we will look at the lesson from nature.

Divine Order of Headship

1. The order of headship: (1 Cor 11:2-3)
2. The symbols of headship: (1 Cor 11:4-6, 10)
3. The basis of headship: (1 Cor 11:7-9)
4. The mutual dependence of headship: (1 Cor 11:11-12)
5. The lesson from nature: (1 Cor 11:13-16)

(1 Cor 11:2–16) “Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you. {3} But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ. {4} Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head. {5} But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved. {6} For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head. {7} For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. {8} For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; {9} for indeed man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake. {10} Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. {11} However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. {12} For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God. {13} Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? {14} Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him, {15} but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering. {16} But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.”

1. **The order of headship** (1 Cor 11:2-3)

Paul has confronted the Corinthians about their strife, division, immaturity, immorality, and idolatry. He begins this new section with a praise. Paul loves the Corinthians and wants the very best for them, so he has addressed some important issues. The question of authority and head coverings for women is another important and difficult issue, but he introduces the subject with a praise for them. He praises them for remembering him in everything, and for holding to the traditions that he delivered to them. This is not like a Thanksgiving or Christmas tradition that families have. The Greek word is *paradosis*, and means a precept, law, ordinance, or tradition. The King James translates it as ordinances and the NIV translates it as teachings. Paul commends the church for holding firmly to the teachings, ordinances, or traditions that he has given them.

(1 Cor 11:2) “Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, originates just as I delivered them to you.”

Paul now gives them a very important principle for them to follow, the divine order of headship. He said that Christ is the head of every man. Second, he said that the man is the head of a woman. Third, he said that God is the head of Christ. This is not talking about equality, value, or worth. This is a divine order of headship.

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

The Scriptures are very clear that God is a triune God. He is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus said that if you saw Him, you have seen the Father. He said that He and the Father were One. We know that the fullness of deity dwelt in Christ in bodily form. Jesus did not do anything on His own initiative; He only did what He saw the Father doing. He did not come to do His own will, but the will of the Father. Jesus submitted Himself to the Father. He was still God, and He was of no less value, worth, or equality. Even though He was equal with God, He submitted to the Father. It was a divine order.

(John 14:9–10) “Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? {10} Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.”

(Col 2:9) “For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,”

(John 5:30) “I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

Just as God the Father was head over Christ, Jesus is the head of man. In the same way that Jesus submitted to the Father, men are to submit to Christ. A man that is submitted to Christ allows God to direct his paths. He submits his will and desires to God. He submits his work to the Lord. He submits his finances to the Lord, and honors God with his wealth. He submits his time and energy to the Lord. These are just evidences that a man is submitted to the headship of Christ.

Next, man is the head of a woman. That does not mean that she is of lesser value, importance, or worth. It is simply a divine order. In the same way that men are to submit to Christ, a woman is to submit to a man.

Some people think that all women should submit to all men. I do not agree with that teaching. I believe that a woman is to be under her father’s authority, and when he gives her away in marriage, she is under her husband’s authority.

In Ephesians 5, Paul wrote that wives are to be subject or submit to their own husbands, as to the Lord. The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church. When a woman submits to her husband, it is ultimately submitting to Christ. This is not difficult for a woman to do when her husband is submitted to Christ. It is very difficult for a woman to submit to a man who is not submitted to Christ. I have always taught that we submit to a higher authority, and if a man is not submitted to Christ, and is asking his wife to do things in violation to what God says to do, she must obey God. In those cases, I believe it would be wise to discuss this with the elders of the church, as they represent the government of God. If we are going to go against an authority in our lives, we need to be doubly sure that we are right in our understanding of God’s will in that situation.

(Eph 5:22–24) “Wives, be *subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. {23} For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. {24} But as the church (hupotasso) is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.”

In Ephesians 5:22, the word subject is in italics because it is implied. However, the Greek word, hupotasso (Strong’s G 5293), is used in verse twenty-four. Just as the church is to be subjected or submitted to Christ, wives are to be submitted to their husbands. In a parallel verse, Colossians 3:18, Paul wrote, “Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.” Hupotasso is a compound word. Hupo means under, and tasso means proper order and arrangement, so it means to be under proper order and arrangement.

(Col 3:18) “Wives, be subject (hupotasso) to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”

In James 4, it says that God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. The word opposed is antitasso, which means against orderly arrangement. It is a military word that implies standing in arrangement and formation against you. Instead of having God standing against us, we should humble ourselves and submit or hupotasso, or get into proper order and arrangement under God.

(James 4:6–7) “But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “GOD IS OPPOSED (antitasso) TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.” {7} Submit (hupotasso) therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

Some people say that headship is about source, meaning that the Son came from the Father, and men were created by Christ, and a woman was taken from the rib of man. They would say that the source of a river is the point of origination. They do not think that a wife should submit to her husband; instead, they believe that we should all submit to one another. They believe a husband should submit to his wife in the same way that a wife should submit to him; it is mutual submission. While it is true that we are to all submit to one another, there is a divine order of headship that this teaching misses.

This is a divine order of headship. It is not about worth, value, or equality; it is about an order. Insubordination, which is another word for rebellion, means not under proper order. It is the antonym for submission. Christ is submitted to the Father. Men are to submit to Christ. Women are to submit to men. It is a divine order and arrangement.

2. The symbols of headship (1 Cor 11:4-6)

After stating the principle of headship, Paul touches on the symbols of headship, which are the coverings of the head. A covering is a divine symbol of headship and authority. He mentions two coverings, hair and hats. I want to start with something in verse six to help introduce this. Paul wrote, “but **if** it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off, or her head shaved, let her cover her head.” The word if is a very important, qualifying word in that statement. In some cultures, it is disgraceful for a woman to have her head uncovered. In particular, in the Middle East, women are to wear a burka over their head and face. Only their husband is supposed to see them without a covering. In America, it is not the custom for women to cover their heads and faces. If a woman comes to church without wearing a covering on her head, it is not disgraceful. In our culture, the symbol that shows that a woman belongs to a man is a wedding ring on her left hand.

(1 Cor 11:5-6) “But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved. {6} For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head.”

In the Corinthian culture, married women would keep their heads covered in public, and this notified people that they were married and belonged to a man. On the other hand, the temple priestesses, or temple prostitutes, would uncover their heads to let men know that they were available. They prayed and ministered without a head covering. So, when Paul said that every woman whose head was uncovered while praying or prophesying, disgraces her head. He is saying that the woman is out from under her husband’s authority and covering, and is essentially acting like one of the temple prostitutes, which was a disgraceful thing to do. Since that is disgraceful, she should cover her head.

Much is said about women's rights or suffrages today. This is not a new phenomenon; it has existed for thousands of years. In the Greek and Roman culture, women did not have many rights. They were about like a slave, something that you owned. One of the ways that women rebelled against the culture was to shave their head or wear short hair. Paul said that every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, and is one and the same as the women whose head is shaved. He is saying that a woman who does not cover her head is identifying with the women who were rebelling to the cultural customs and the temple prostitutes who were not under authority and were living immorally. Therefore, in that culture, women should have their heads covered when praying or prophesying.

At the same time, Paul also addresses the men. He said that every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head. Jewish men wear a hat, or kippah (means dome), which is prescribed in the Talmud. So, for any Jewish men that were part of the congregation in Corinth, this was a change in practice. In the same way that it was a disgrace for a woman to have her head uncovered, for a man to have his head covered was a disgrace in that culture.

(1 Cor 11:4) "Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head."

When I was on the PGA Tour, one of the rules that we had was we could not wear our hats inside the clubhouse. We could wear a hat in the locker room, but anywhere else in the clubhouse we were not allowed to wear one. This code of hat etiquette came from the church, where men were required to remove their hats when they entered a place of worship. I have seen some men wear hats into a church service, but then take them off during a prayer or the reading of the word. The U.S. Flag Code says that men should remove all hats during the National Anthem and the citing of the pledge of allegiance. Women are not required to remove a hat during either of those. The U.S. Flag Code is not a rule of law, but is an advisory to proper etiquette.

In verse ten, Paul tells why this symbol of authority should be observed. He said, "Therefore, the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels." This is still another verse that scholars have a difficult time with. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:12, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I have been fully known." This is what I dimly see about this verse.

(1 Cor 11:10) "Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels."

(1 Cor 13:12) "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known."

Angels are messengers of God. The Greek word for angel is angelos (Strong's G32), and it means messenger. We see in Hebrews 1:14 that angels are ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation. That means that God sends out angels to help you and I. There are things going on around us that we may not even be aware of, but these angels are serving and ministering to us. Their ministry may be an encouraging word, a message about something that is going on, like the message the angels brought to the shepherds at the birth of Christ. They may have a message of direction, like the message Joseph was given to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt, or when they could return. The service might be to deliver someone from a situation, like when Peter was led out of prison in Acts 12. Those angels have

supernatural powers to remove chains, and cause iron gates to open. God has given you and I angels like that to minister to you and I.

(Heb 1:14) “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?”

(Acts 12:7–10) “And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter’s side and woke him up, saying, “Get up quickly.” And his chains fell off his hands. {8} And the angel said to him, “Gird yourself and put on your sandals.” And he did so. And he said to him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.” {9} And he went out and continued to follow, and he did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. {10} When they had passed the first and second guard, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, which opened for them by itself; and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.”

These messengers have access to the throne room of God. They are not always before the throne, because God sends them here and there to give a message or to do something for Him. In Matthew 18:10, Jesus said we are not to despise one of these little ones, because their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven. So, these angels are in the presence of God. Throughout the Bible God sent out the angels to say or do things.

(Matt 18:10) “See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven.”

In Daniel 9, Daniel had been praying and fasting for more understanding and God sent Gabriel to him to give him that understanding. In Daniel 10, an angel was sent to Daniel with a message, but he was detained by the Prince of Persia, which is a demonic spirit. We also see that Daniel had an angel, and his name was Michael. In the spiritual realm, there are territories and jurisdictions. There are both angels and demons assigned to them. We also saw that little ones had their own angels, and Daniel had his own angel. We see in Revelation that the churches had angels. Some people say that this refers to the lead pastor of a church, since he is the primary teacher or messenger in the church. I don’t dispute fact that the lead pastor is a messenger, but I believe that there are also angels assigned to churches.

(Dan 9:20–22) “Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, {21} while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. {22} He gave me instruction and talked with me and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding.”

(Dan 10:20-21) “Then he said, “Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come. {21} However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.”

(Rev 1:20) “As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”

(Rev 2:1) “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:”

I gave a brief overview of angels because I think it will help understand my take on this particular verse about having a symbol of authority for the sake of angels. I believe there was an angel assigned to the church in Corinth, and there may be several. I believe that believers are assigned angels. Among many things that they do, these angels help protect us. When a person is out from under spiritual covering, they are vulnerable to spiritual attacks. That is why in James, we are exhorted to submit to God, resist Satan, and he will flee from us. Submission is important when being attacked spiritually. The symbol of authority quickly identifies that a person is under proper spiritual authority. I believe that having a symbol of authority is for our own protection.

(James 4:7) “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

I believe that many people today do not understand spiritual covering. There are a lot of people who claim to be believers that are not under spiritual covering. They believe that they do not have to belong to a church body. We are exhorted to obey and submit to our leaders, as those who keep watch over our souls and will give an account. I believe that in church membership, people submit themselves to the leaders of the church, and the leaders take responsibility for watching over their souls. In the same way that women were exhorted to have a symbol of authority for the sake of angels, people need to be part of a local church body where they are under the protection of the angel(s) of the church, and the spiritual protection of the elders.

(Heb 13:17) “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

3. **The basis of headship** (1 Cor 11:7-10)

Next, Paul gives the basis of headship. He said a man ought not to have his head covered since he is the image and glory of God. This goes back to Genesis 1:26, where God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...” Since man was created in God’s image, and is in the image and glory of God, he should not hide or cover the glory of God. The basis of headship is the divine order in creation.

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

(Gen 1:26) “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Men are to rightfully take their place of headship, and lead their families. A man who wore a hat, or covered his head, was communicating that he was abdicating his role of headship, which would be considered a disgrace. This verse is an encouragement for men to take their rightful role in leading their families. In 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, Paul is addressing order within a

service, and he tells women to keep silent, and if they have questions, they should ask their husbands at home. Husbands need to be able to answer those questions, as they are the spiritual leaders in the home. That passage does not mean that women cannot speak. In our passage today, Paul said that if a woman prays or prophesies, she should have her head covered, so obviously woman could speak in church. In that culture women sat on one side and men on the other side. Paul was discouraging people from talking during the meeting, which could be a distraction in the service. Paul was promoting order in their church services, not suppressing the voice of women in church.

(1 Cor 14:34–35) “The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. {35} If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.”

Next, Paul said that the woman is the glory of man. Men were created for God, and women were created for the glory of men, and for his sake.

(1 Cor 11:7–9) “For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. {8} For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; {9} for indeed man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake.”

When God created Eve to be a companion and helper of Adam, for it was not good for him to be alone. God caused a deep sleep to come over Adam, and he took one of his ribs and fashioned into a woman the rib that He had taken from him. Eve was taken from his side. She was not a lesser being; she was an equal to stand at his side. She was to become one with him. God blessed them and told them to be fruitful, and it was something that neither could do on their own. God also told them to rule over the whole creation. This assignment was given to both of them, not just Adam. When they became one, they could bear children, and accomplish the purposes and assignment that God had given them.

(Gen 2:21–23) “So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. {22} The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. {23} The man 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.”

(Gen 1:27–28) “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. {28} God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

4. **The mutual dependence of headship** (1 Cor 11:11-12)

Even though woman was created for man’s sake, and has a symbol of authority over her, she is not inferior or of less value than man. There is a mutual dependence of headship. Paul wrote, “However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.” He went on to explain that the woman originated from the man, and this refers to God creating Eve from Adam’s rib. Then he said that men have their birth through women. The only man that was not born was Adam. Every man and woman after that came through a woman. Men

cannot function and carry out God's plans by themselves, and women cannot carry out their function without men. We are mutually dependent upon each other. Even though there is a divine order in the headship, there is a mutual dependence on each other.

(1 Cor 11:11-12) "However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. {12} For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God."

Paul said that all things originate from God. Adam, who was created in God's image, was created by God. Eve, who was taken from Adam's rib, was fashioned into a woman by God. All men and women after that were given birth through the woman, and again, children are a gift of God. We know that God fashions babies inside the womb of a woman. God knows the number of days that He is ordaining for us, and everything about us, before we are even born. God knows our calling before we are born. Jeremiah said that the Lord called him before He formed him in his mother's womb. The Apostle Paul said that God had set him apart from his mother's womb. God has a plan and purpose for every life, and all of us originate from God.

(Ps 139:13-16) "For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. {14} I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. {15} My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; {16} Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them."

(Jer 1:5) "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

(Gal 1:15) "But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased"

5. **The lesson from nature** (1 Cor 11:13-16)

Paul concludes by giving a lesson from nature. He said, "Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Paul wanted the Corinthians to have a conviction of their own and make a judgment of what is proper. The Greek word is *prepo* (Strong's G4241), which means becoming, befitting, or suitable. It is always better to have people make changes because they see the need, and have a conviction to make the change. Paul knew that in their culture they knew about the temple prostitutes unveiling themselves. He knew that they knew why some women chose to be unveiled and cut their hair short. Since they knew that it was dishonoring for a woman to be uncovered, he wanted them to judge for themselves.

(1 Cor 11:13) "Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?"

Then Paul asked the question, "Does not nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering." These verses have also proven to be difficult for scholars to understand. What did Paul mean by nature? In addition to what nature teaches us, there are many questions about the application of it. How long can a man's hair be? At what point does long hair on a man dishonor him. Did Samson's hair dishonor him? Does a man taking a Nazrite vow dishonor himself when

he grows his hair long? How long does a woman's hair have to be for it to be a glory to her? What is considered to short?

(1 Cor 11:14–15) “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.”

I had a friend on the PGA Tour that had been part of a church where the men were not allowed to have their hair touch their collar. Most people view that as legalistic, and think that those decisions should be left up to individuals. They were attempting to apply this verse and honor God. To avoid differences in opinions about what is acceptable, they established a standard. I have never concerned myself about hair. I have been more concerned about getting men to read and study God's word, to become leaders in their homes, and to become spiritually mature. Most pictures that we see of Jesus show Him with long hair. We do not have any photographs from that day, but many scholars believe that the pictures are not accurate. There are sculptures and statues of the ten greatest emperors of Rome, and they do not have long hair. The Roman soldiers did not have long hair. It was not normal for Jewish men to have long hair at that time. In all probability, Jesus probably did not have long hair.

In explaining how nature teaches us, some scholars focus on hair growth and the testosterone of men. Hair grows in a three-phase cycle. In the first stage, the hair follicles are formed and grow. In the second stage, called the resting stage, the hair remains in place. It continues to grow but it remains in place. In the third stage, called the fall-out stage, the hair falls out. Then, the cycle repeats itself. In men, the testosterone hormone speeds up the cycles, and stage three occurs much quicker. In women, the female hormone, estrogen, causes the hair growth cycle to remain in stage one. Therefore, a woman's hair grows faster than a man's hair over the same period of time.¹ Medical researchers say that it is the male hormone, dihydrotestosterone, or DHT, which causes baldness. If the DHT in a man gets high, it will cause him to lose his hair. They can prescribe a DHT blocker, which will slow down the DHT in men, thus slowing down the hair loss.²

Paul may have been speaking of baldness when he said, “Does not nature itself teach you...” Statistically, 67% of men show a male path baldness by age thirty-five. By age fifty, 85% of men will suffer from male baldness patterns. Male path baldness is androgenetic alopecia, and it is a *“well-defined pattern, beginning above both temples. Over time, the hairline recedes to form a characteristic “M” shape. Hair also thins at the crown (near the top of the head), often progressing to partial or complete baldness.”*³ Nature itself could easily mean the normal pattern of men losing their hair on the top of their heads.

Paul also said that nature teaches us that long hair on a woman is glory to her. How long does a woman's hair have to be for it to be a glory to her? What is considered too short?

(1 Cor 11:14–15) “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.”

¹ John MacArthur, <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/1845/the-role-of-the-godly-woman>

² Imaware, <https://www.imaware.health/blog/how-testosterone-affects-hair-loss-in-men>

³ <https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/androgenetic-alopecia/>

I believe God is more interested in the character of the woman than the length of her hair. He is more interested in whether she fears Him than whether she has long hair. Solomon wrote that a woman who fears the Lord should be praised. I am more interested in the inward beauty that Peter wrote about. He said wives should be submissive to their husbands, and have chaste and respectful behavior. He said their adornment must not be merely external, like braiding the hair, wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses, but should be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle, quiet, which is precious to God. In the Corinthian culture, a woman wearing long hair was glory to her, and helped reveal that inward beauty, that submissive spirit that is precious to God. In other cultures, long or short hair may not mean that at all.

(Pr 31:30) “Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.”

(1 Pet 3:2–4) “as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. {3} Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; {4} but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.”

Conclusion and Applications

Paul concluded by saying, “If one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.” Paul and the other apostles taught these same doctrines in all the churches, so this was not just a teaching for the Corinthians. These principles apply to our churches today. Their culture may be different, but the principles apply. If you are going to be a follower of Jesus Christ, you need to be under proper spiritual covering. You need to be under the headship of God. You need to be under the headship of Jesus. You need to be under the headship of the church, and Jesus is the head of the church. Men need to be submitted to the elders of the church. They should not be wearing hats in church, meaning, they need to take their place as spiritual leaders. They need to take the initiative to pray with their wives. They need to be prepared to answer spiritual questions that their wives have. They need to properly represent Christ in the home and in the church. Women need to be submitted to their husbands. They need to be the glory of their husbands. These are God’s principles and practices, and apply to all churches.

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

Prayer

Father God, thank You for Your word. Thank You for Your divine order of headship. Jesus, thank You for always submitting to the Father, and being our example of being under spiritual authority. Thank You for being the head of the church, and showing us what real spiritual leadership looks like. Thank You for laying Your life down for us, and showing men what we are to do for our wives. Thank You for nurturing us and cherishing us. Thank You for interceding for us at all times. Jesus, we bow our hearts before You, and submit our lives to Your Lordship. We declare that You are Lord. It may be our hair, or it could be our dress, or our manners, but help our submissive and humble attitudes be evident to all around us, including angels that You have sent to minister to us. We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Introduction (Rom 16:1-2, Acts 18:24-28, Phil 4:2-3, Acts 12:12, Judges 4:4, 1 Cor 11:2–16)

1. **The order of headship** (1 Cor 11:2-3, John 14:9–10, Col 2:9, John 5:30, Eph 5:22–24, Col 3:18, James 4:6-7)

2. **The symbols of headship** (1 Cor 11:4-6, 10, 13:12, Heb 1:14, Acts 12:7–10, Matt 18:10, Dan 9:20–22, 10:20-21, Rev 1:20, 2:1, James 4:7, Heb 13:17)

3. **The basis of headship** (1 Cor 11:7-10, Gen 1:26, 1 Cor 14:34-35, Gen 2:21–23, 1:27-28)

4. **The mutual dependence of headship** (1 Cor 11:11-12, Ps 139:13–16, Jer 1:5, Gal 1:15)

5. **The lesson from nature** (1 Cor 11:13-16, Pr 31:30, 1 Pet 3:2-4)

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