

# **“But I Would Have You to Know”**

## **1 Corinthians 11:2-16**

This passage is one of, if not the most difficult passage in the Pauline Epistles (and, to some extent, in the New Testament as a whole). Part of the difficulty is that it seems to contradict other portions of the New Testament, and it is clearly contrary to much of what is seen in society today – influence that has permeated every facet of the modern church.

One of the truths that this text teaches is that just because someone does something in the name of the Lord, or in the name of the church, doesn't make it right – no matter who they are and no matter where they are. In fact, that seems to be the underlying purpose of this text. The church in Corinth had a lot of good things going for it, but it had adopted a lot of things that were not scriptural and were not being done to the glory of God – 10:31. Remember that the final portion of verse 33 reads, “that they might be saved.” And then this text immediately follows – that is not coincidental. A lot of what the church has done in the age's past, and especially what is being done today in the name of “the church,” is being done outside of clear scriptural mandates and ordinances.

Whether we like this or not, whether it fits our political correctness or not, whether it fits our personal opinions or views or not – this is truth, nonetheless, and will be taught as truth regardless of the consequences.

Keep in mind, the Bible does not, cannot, contradict itself, so if portions of this seem to contradict other portions of Scripture, understand that it does not.

One basic principle of Bible interpretation (hermeneutics) is that for any seeming contradiction, the overwhelmingly clear mandate of Scripture is the foundation – the more obscure are to be interpreted within that light.

Because I am a biblicist, and I believe the Bible is to be taken as literally as possible unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, this portion of this letter will be viewed in that light. What it says is what it means.

Verse two serves as an introduction to this portion – as a verse of transition, if you would. It maintains that same principle of doing all things for the glory of God, but transitions to another area of ministry than what is dealt with previously.

The Apostle was praising the church (the leadership in particular) for considering all that he had taught them, both in person and in writings, and that they had kept most of those “ordinances” that he had taught as he had “delivered them.” What he gives in the verses that follow are areas in which they were still lacking.

What follows is dealing with public worship – a church service, if you would – and there was a certain way in which things were to be done so “that [others] may be saved.” The whole point of this text is to make sure we, as a church body, and as individuals members of that body, don’t do anything that would cause unbelievers not to come to Christ, nor do anything that would cause a believer to stumble.

There are certain things that are “right” that the Apostle Paul wanted them to know that they needed to correct.

## **I. THE RIGHT ORDER – VS. 3**

**A. "The word [for 'head'] κεφαλή in each case means the head next above. This must be borne in mind, for Christ is THE HEAD of the Christian woman, as well as of the Christian man. God is the Head of Christ, not only according to His human Nature: the Son is, in his Sonship, necessarily subordinate to the Father: ... From χριστός [Christ], the order descends first: then, in order to complete the whole, ascends up to God." (Alford).**

Ephesians 1:22

<sup>22</sup> And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

**B. "The head of every man is Christ"**

1. The word for "head" is used 76 times, and the overwhelming majority of those times it is speaking of the physical head of the body. When it is speaking metaphorically is where the debate is found.
2. Considering its use in ancient Greek writings of the Apostle Paul's day will help us with an understanding of its use in this text. "[The] linguistic evidence, which suggests that the idea of 'authority over' was not native to the Greek κεφαλή [head], has led numerous scholars to see behind Paul's use of the 'head' either the meaning 'source, origin' or 'to, crown, completion.'" (See "Hard Sayings of the Bible," page 600-601 for a more in-depth study of this usage.)
3. Not only is Christ the supreme authority

(as seen in other texts of the Bible), he is the source of man because we are made by Him. It was He that formed Adam out of the dust of the ground with His hands.

#### Colossians 1:16–18

<sup>16</sup> For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

<sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

<sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

#### Genesis 2:7

<sup>7</sup> And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

### ***C. "And the head of the woman is the man"***

1. If the word for "head" does, in fact, mean source or origin, then this verse fits better with the rest of this text – especially vs. 8-9.
2. This is not to say that there is not an order of the sexes taught in Scripture, but this is dealing with more than that.

#### 1 Peter 3:7

<sup>7</sup> Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that

your prayers be not hindered.

3. This is not to show authority as much as it is to simply state a biblical, creational fact – woman was taken from man; man was the “source” for the woman.

#### Genesis 2:22

<sup>22</sup> And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

#### 1 Timothy 2:13

<sup>13</sup> For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

4. Some versions of the Bible, and some very gifted scholars have this, as well as Ephesians 5, speaking of husbands being the head of the wife, but that analogy doesn't fit in the entirety of the passage as well as does the meaning of “head” being source or origin. And, making the “man” here the husband, and “woman” the wife, also seems to be outside the confines of the usage of those two words in the rest of the passage. Although the Greek word used here for both “man” (άνήρ) and “woman” (γυνή) are translated in places as “husband” and “wife,” respectively, the times they are used in that way it is abundantly clear from the context that it is referring to husband and/or wife.

#### Ephesians 5:22–23

<sup>22</sup> Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

<sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

#### ***D. "And the head of Christ is God"***

1. The analogy of supreme authority or even general authority breaks down if used here. This is speaking of subordination of position rather than power or authority of one over another.
2. When God the Son came to earth to become a man, He subjugated Himself as such and became subordinate to the Father, in that He had to follow the same rules and physical laws as mortal man (except in those occasions where those laws were rescinded to demonstrate that He was God – miracles, for instance).
3. That said, He never stopped being God – equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit.
4. The only definition of the Greek word for "head" that fits here is that of source or origin. The Father was the source of Christ's being and work on earth.

#### **John 1:1-4**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

<sup>2</sup> The same was in the beginning with God.

<sup>3</sup> All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

<sup>4</sup> In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

#### **John 1:14**

<sup>14</sup> And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,)

full of grace and truth.

John 8:42

<sup>42</sup> Jesus said unto them, *If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.*

John 13:3

<sup>3</sup> Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

John 16:27

<sup>27</sup> *For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.*

***E. "It would therefore seem best to translate 1 Corinthians 11:3 as 'I want you to understand that Christ is the source of man's being; the man is the source of woman's being; and God is the source of Christ's being.' When read like this, it lays a solid foundation for, and sheds light on, the rest of the passage..." (Hard Sayings of the Bible).***

## **II. THE RIGHT DECORUM – VS. 4-6**

***A. These verses have as their foundation the word "dishonoureth."***

1. The word for "dishonoureth" (καταισχύνω), in this context means "to offend against decorum" (Zodhiates). In its general use, it means to shame, make ashamed, confound, dishonor, or disgrace.
2. Suffice it to say, there is a right way and a

wrong way to look and act in the worship of our Lord. There may be a lot of history and background for this text, but the basic principle is still the same today. The culture of dress and look is what's in view, and that should be the standard today as well. What is considered to be the decorum for worship today? Do we dishonor ourselves, and, more importantly, do we dishonor our Lord?

***B. The next point to consider in these verses is the issue of "praying and prophesying."***

1. This seems, without much debate, to be dealing with public worship, especially if one takes the second portion of the chapter into context.
2. Within that public worship, it is seen as containing two parts – public prayer and public "prophesying." The issue of prayer is self-explanatory.
3. For the New Testament church today, the term "prophesy" would point to the preaching and teaching that is done in a public forum. Although there were still those prophets that were still receiving revelation of future events from the Lord, when John finished the book of Revelation, that particular part of the ministry of a prophet ceased, and the ministry of proclaiming the Word of the Lord became the principle use of the word.

Matthew 7:22

**22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord,**

have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

Acts 13:1

<sup>1</sup> Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Acts 15:32

<sup>32</sup> And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.

1 Thessalonians 5:20

<sup>20</sup> Despise not prophesyings.

***C. Next, we come to the most difficult and controversial point in these verses – the issue of “man” and “woman” praying and prophesying in public worship.***

1. Don't forget – the Bible cannot contradict itself, and the clearest of the texts is where we should draw our understanding from and use them as a light on the more difficult ones.
2. There are two other relevant texts to this one – one just three chapters later in this letter to the Corinthian believers (which we will study in detail when we get to that passage), and one in First Timothy – a letter written to “Pastor Timothy” on how women ought to behave in a worship service. There is no ambiguity, no vagueness in either one of those texts, so

this one before us must mean something other than allowing women to preach in a worship service. What has happened in theology today (and for many decades in the past, for that matter) is that many have used THIS text as the litmus test, and made the other two read something different because this one fits their theology better. Interpreting Scripture like that is poor, at best.

#### 1 Timothy 2:12

<sup>12</sup> But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

#### 1 Corinthians 14:34–35

<sup>34</sup> Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

<sup>35</sup> And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

3. Following are notes from my doctoral dissertation on the text in 1 Timothy 2:9-15:

a) Women are to look godly – vs. 9.

(1) *"Adorn themselves" – more than just how a woman is dressed. It is dealing with the whole appearance of the woman, from her hair to her shoes (1 Pet. 3:1-6).*

(2) *"In modest apparel" - the word for modest (κόσμιος) is "well arranged, seemly, modest." It comes from a root*

*word that is used of the way God fashioned the universe with everything in place and for a purpose; how He ordered it and made it beautiful.*

*"Apparel" signifies a long robe which reaches down to the feet. This is not saying that is all women can wear to church, but it is signifying a woman is to cover anything that would distract, which is a serious problem in the modern worship service.*

*The phrase, "adorn themselves in modest apparel," is teaching that women are to dress in such a way as to portray Christ, not the world. Immodest apparel, then, would be anything that draws attention to the body, rather than to the Lord. This is a principle that is to be carried throughout life, not just in church.*

*(3) The middle and end of verse nine give detail to help understand the first part.*

b) Women are to act godly – vs. 10-14.

*(1) Verse ten sums up verse nine. Women are to come to church attracting attention to their godliness, demonstrated by their good works, without attracting attention to their person, or body (Prov. 31:31; Acts 9:36; 1 Tim. 5:9-10).*

*(2) In the next five verses (2:11-14), Paul is letting Timothy know that women are not to have a place in the church in which they would, by their position, have any authority over men. This was not for that time only, as some teach.*

*This is a truth that has been held down through the ages, from Bible times until now. It is not saying that woman should not teach; just not teach men in a setting where pastoral authority would be exercised.*

- (3) *As to their position in the church (2:11), women are to learn in "silence" (quietness), "with all subjection" (ὑποταγή). Their position is one of subordination to that of a man, as it relates to teaching. This is so counter-cultural that it is difficult for even godly ladies to understand, but the reason this is in the Bible is to make sure the Word of God is able to accomplish its purpose without hinderances from those that may cause conflict by being "out of place" in the church.*

*There are some that teach verse twelve in a way that would lead women to believe they are to be silent in the church, period. They teach that women are not to speak at all in a service, outside of singing hymns. Some go as far as to say that women are not even to give a personal testimony of what the Lord has done for them. That is not what is meant at all. "Silence" (ἡσυχία) "has to do with maintaining quiet in the assembly, and does not forbid a woman to take an active part in the work of the church in her own sphere and under the limitation imposed upon her in the contextual passage" (Wuest).*

- (4) *Paul starts verse twelve with the statement, "I suffer not" (do not allow). He is speaking as the apostle that founded the church in Ephesus, and*

*with the authority God gave him in that position. Some say that this was his opinion. Even the Bible in Basic English interprets it as "in my opinion." This was not his opinion; this was the Holy Spirit giving truth to the church through him. The word for "suffer" (ἐπιτρέπω) always means to allow somebody to do something they want to do. Using the negative with the word "suffer," it is clear that Paul is emphatically stating that the Holy Spirit is instructing the church to not permit, or allow, a woman to teach.*

*The term "teach" (διδάσκω) in this context is pretty straightforward: to teach in a position of authority as a pastor. That is the primary point that is being made: women are not to be pastors. The word is most often used in the New Testament in connection with teaching doctrine to others and is a responsibility only men are to have. As a reminder, this is speaking of teaching in public worship, specifically in position of pastor/teacher. If this meant that a woman could not teach at all then 1 Cor. 11:5 would be out of place: "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." The Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) would also be a contradiction, of sorts, based on the statement that those that win others to Christ are to teach them all things that Jesus commanded. Other scriptures, like Acts 18, 2 Tim. 3, Titus 2:3, would also be apparent contradictions to this verse, if women cannot teach at all when it comes to*

*biblical things. The Scriptures allow women to teach, just not in the authoritative way as a pastor/teacher.*

*"To usurp authority over" (2:12) comes from a single word (αυθεντέω) that means self-doer, master, autocrat (a ruler who has absolute authority); to domineer. This is the only time in the New Testament this Greek word is used. It is a word that is used in other classical Greek writings where it deals with having, or exercising, dominion over; or have authority over. "A woman should attempt nothing, either in public or private, that belongs to man as his particular function" (Clarke).*

*The issue of "silence" comes back in view in the last part of verse twelve: "to be in silence" (quietness, stillness, tranquility). Not mute (unable to utter anything at all) but keeping silent as opposed to teaching. At the time of the writing of First Timothy, women were becoming bolder and more vocal in the church, and they were not accepting the teaching that they heard, so the admonition is they were to accept the teaching of the Word of God from those qualified to teach in the church, and be in "quietness" with it; that is, do not stir up trouble over it (Acts 22:2; 2 Thess. 3:12). "Some of the women in Ephesus probably overreacted to the cultural denigration they had typically suffered and took advantage of their opportunity in the church by seeking a dominant role in leadership."*

*(5) Verses thirteen and fourteen give the reason women were forbidden to be in*

*authority over men in the church: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." Verse thirteen is the God-ordained order from the very creation of the world, and it is still the order. Adam (man) was first formed (first in order, first in authority, first in rank, chief), then Eve (woman).*

*Verse fourteen is, in part, why man has the authority to teach and to lead the church, and why women are to be in subjection to the leadership of the God-ordained man He has put in authority in the church when it comes to doctrine and teaching: because the woman was deceived and was in the transgression. Eve was deceived, Adam was not. He chose to take of the fruit willingly, without deception, and because of that, mankind was plunged into sin. The truth remains, however, that Eve was deceived, and part of the curse upon the woman for that deception was that she would be in subjection to man. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. The word for husband in this verse is the Hebrew word most often translated as man. It is a very common word (used 1,714 times) and the vast majority of times it is translated as man, in various forms. Only sixty-six times is it translated husband. The point to be made, within the context of 1 Tim. 2:14, is that, even though husband is the right word to use in Gen.*

*3:16 for the curse on Eve, it draws on a much larger context of Scripture that women, because of the curse, will be in subjection to men. And that is especially true within the church order, as God has given it.*

**D. The issue, then, is what is meant by the head being covered or uncovered.**

1. There are two Greek words used for "covered" in this text.
  - a) The first one in verse four (κατά), speaking of men, is a very common word that means down, or down from – indicating motion from a higher to a lower place. In relation to the covering on a man's head, it is speaking of a head covering that would have descended down from the top to the bottom – we would know this as a veil. This was not only not common but was something shameful for a man to do in that culture.
  - b) The second word for "covered" (in various forms) – κατακαλύπτω – means to cover with a veil or something which hangs down. This is a compound word with the first part being the word from verse four – down from – and the word καλύπτω, to cover.
  - c) The word for "uncovered" is this same Greek word – κατακαλύπτω – with the alpha privative at the beginning to negate it.
2. Vs. 4 – men who take part in public worship – whether it be as the speaker or participant – were to do so with their head uncovered. That was the standard issue of

decorum of the time that the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth.

- a) The reason for this is found in verse seven – for “he is the image and glory of God.” The idea of “glory” in this text points back to the source or origin of man being Christ, and that of woman being man (in creation) – something we will come back to when we study that verse.
- b) It seems that at the time of the church in Corinth in particular, with what had been said already about their liberty in Christ, and that they were all equal in Christ (for salvation), that some of the leadership may have been wearing a head covering to show their “solidarity” with women (and women, conversely, were uncovering their head to show their equality with men in leadership). This is, in part, what is addressed here.

“By this he gathers that if men do either pray or preach in public assemblies having their heads covered (which was then a sign of subjection), they robbed themselves of their dignity, against God's ordinance.” (Geneva Bible notes)

“By dishonouring the head, may be understood the minister's own head: he betrayed his superiority, and lesseneth the honour and dignity of his sex, by using such a gesture in divine offices, as is a token of inferiority and subjection; for in that country, at that time, it was a sign of subjection to have the head covered, but a sign of power and dominion to have the head uncovered.” (Burkitt)

- c) Although the decorum may have been

different then, for the pastor/teacher to stand in the pulpit, in the place of God for the people of God on earth today and dress in a way to show they are just trying to be relevant to the culture is as equally appalling to the Holy Spirit and to the work of the Lord.

3. Women who do so are to have their head covered, showing deference to both their subordination to the Lord, to the Word of God, and to the authority that God has designated in the church.
  - a) The issue of them “prophesying” – or preaching/teaching – in a public worship service is not especially addressed here, as much as simply demonstrating they were to follow the decorum God had established.
  - b) Some today, and several theologians of the past decades, have used this text to show that God did not rule against women pastors. This does not show that at all. This simply points out that no matter what part of worship in which women are taking part, there was a right way to do so. The issues of preaching/teaching are addressed elsewhere. Women are not prohibited from teaching – they are just prohibited from doing so in a position of authority that only the pastor has (1 Tim. 2).
4. The latter part of verse five and verse six bring out a culturally relative point from that day and that city. For a woman to be “uncovered” (unveiled) in public was countercultural to many at the time – both Jews and Greeks – often being viewed as a harlot by the general public.

- a) There are some great scholars that view this point of the head being uncovered as dishonoring her husband, or man in general, as the "head." They interpret the "head" metaphorically of her husband, or man, and although that may be an application of the use of the terminology, that doesn't appear to be the right interpretation here. The last phrase of verse five and all of verse six show that the view is her literal "head."
- b) The Geneva Bible notes makes this observation: "And in like manner he concludes that women who show themselves in public and ecclesiastical assemblies without the sign and token of their subjection, that is to say, uncovered, shame themselves. The first argument taken from the common sense of man, for so much as nature teaches women that it is dishonest for them to go abroad bareheaded, seeing that they have given to them thick and long hair which they do so diligently trim and deck, that they can in no way abide to have it shaved."
- c) Whether a godly lady wants to wear a head covering other than her hair is between them, the Lord, and her husband. This is one of those texts that has a historical context that must be taken into account within the greater context of this letter to the Corinthians. I think verse 15 gives us a good idea of the use of the "covering" – a woman's hair is given to her as a covering.
- d) One other thing to mention in verse six in relation to the term "shorn or shaven." This does not necessarily mean what it does today where they shaved their head smooth. It simply means they cut their hair

close to the scalp, as a man would his. "Cutting the hair very short was the custom of prostitutes so that they could be easily identified by potential customers" (Zodhiates). The analogy made here to the church is that there was a right way to worship, a right decorum, for both men and women.

- e) The point being made in these verses is that of humility and recognition of authority for both men and women, and worshipping within the confines of that authority – Christ-man; man-woman.

### **III. THE RIGHT VIEW – VS. 7-12**

***A. As seen in the first six verses, God has ordained a right order of authority in the church, and He has ordained a right decorum (behavior in keeping with good taste and propriety) when it comes to public corporate worship. In these verses we will see that understanding the right order and the right decorum will lead to a proper view of relationships both in the church and in society as a whole.***

***B. Verse seven connects these verses and this point with the previous portion in the principle of head covering.***

1. Let me state again at this point: this will not seem right, or culturally correct, in this country (and most countries of the West), but it has been the truth, and still is the truth, whether it fits society or not.
2. "For a man indeed ought not to cover his

head”

- a) The word for “indeed” – μέν – is used here a conjunction of affirmation, confirming with emphasis the truth seen earlier that men should not cover their head while in worship.
  - b) Something of note here – does this mean that a man is prohibited from wearing a hat in the worship service? Even though my opinion is that they should take their hat off (the decorum issue), if we are going to interpret this within the historical context as we do that of women being covered, then we cannot require a hat removed off of men if we aren’t going to require a covering on women, other than their hair. A lot of men, especially younger ones, today wear hats all the time – winter, summer; indoors, outside. The hat, or the covering, isn’t the issue as much as the attitude of the heart is. It is always best to give God the benefit of the doubt in cases like this so I wouldn’t wear a hat in a worship service but it isn’t because of this text in particular – I just don’t think it’s appropriate.
3. “Forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God”
- a) To the point earlier – men (most likely the leadership of the church) were apparently covering their head in solidarity with the freedom women have in Christ, confusing that liberty in Christ for salvation and the right order and decorum in worship and society.
  - b) “He is the image” - εἰκὼν – a representation, a resemblance. This is used

by Jesus in the Gospels (Matt. 22:20; Mark 12:16; Luke 20:24) when He asked whose image was on the coins at the time, speaking of a likeness stamped in metal.

Albert Barnes gives the following:

The phrase "the image of God" refers to the fact that man was made in the likeness of his Maker (Gen. 1:27); and proves that, though fallen, there is a sense in which he is still the image of God. It is not because man is truly or pure, and thus resembles his Creator; but it evidently is because he was invested by his Maker with authority and dominion; he was superior to all other creatures; (Gen. 1:28). This is still retained; and this the apostle evidently refers to in the passage before us, and this he says should be recognized and regarded. If he wore a veil or turban, it would be a mark of servitude or inferiority. It was therefore improper that he should appear in this manner; but he should he so clad as not to obscure or hide the great truth that he was the direct representative of God on the earth, and had a superiority to all other creatures.

#### Genesis 1:27–28

**27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

**28** And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

- c) "And glory of God" - και δοξα θεου – again, the following is from Albert Barnes:

The word "glory" in the classic writers means:

- (1) Opinion, sentiment, etc.;
- (2) Fame, reputation.

Here it means, as it often does, splendor, brightness, or that which stands forth to "represent" God, or by which the glory of God is known. Man was created first; he had dominion given him; by him, therefore, the divine authority and wisdom first shone forth; and this fact should be recognized in the due subordination of rank, and even in the apparel and attire which shall be worn. The impression of his rank and superiority should be everywhere retained.

4. "But the woman is the glory of the man" – as stated earlier, within the greater context of this passage, there is the sense of origin and order of authority found in the term "glory of the man" here.

Albert Barnes:

The honor, the ornament, etc. She was made for him; she was made after he was; she was taken from him, and was "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh." All her comeliness, loveliness, and purity are therefore an expression of his honor and dignity, since all that comeliness and loveliness were made of him and for him.

This, therefore, ought to be acknowledged by a suitable manner of attire; and in his presence this sense of her inferiority of rank and subordination should be acknowledged by the customary use of the veil. She should appear with the symbol of modesty and subjection, which are implied by the head being covered. This sense is distinctly expressed in the following verse.

#### Genesis 2:20–24

**20** And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

**21** And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

**22** And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto 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.

**24** Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

“Original sin” resulted in more subordination than God originally created with woman and that subordination is still the rule today. It is that rule that mankind (men and women) rebel against today, even in our churches, it seems.

## Genesis 3:16

<sup>16</sup> Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

***C. Verses eight and nine confirm the previous point, clearly stating the order of the sexes – in particular, in the public worship of the church, but in general, throughout society.***

***D. Verse ten is another puzzling verse here.***

1. "For this cause" – points back to the previous three verses. The cause is that of the right order of authority – Christ, man, woman.
2. "Ought the woman to have power on her head"
  - a) As stated earlier, some commentators, and even some versions (the ESV for one) have this as, "That is why a wife ought to have..." As far as I'm concerned, that is an interpretation not a translation, and a poor one at that.
  - b) The word for "power" here - ἐξουσία – is one that means authority. "Used here of the symbol of power..." (Vincent). Translated by some versions (NASB, LEB, ESV, for instance) with that thought in mind – "symbol of authority" (relating to the covering).
  - c) The covering that a woman is to wear (be it her hair or another covering) is to show

her subjection and humility in worship. Understanding her position (“for this cause”) will lead a godly woman to have “power” over her own sometimes self-serving interests and bring those emotions into subjection. This has to do with self-control (temperance) and knowing our place in the right order.

### 1 Corinthians 9:27

<sup>27</sup> But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

3. “Because of the angels” – the first part was fairly straightforward, but this one is not.
  - a) Most authors and scholars have an opinion on this, but few agree with each other, and several simply state they have no idea what it means. Although we cannot be absolutely positive on what some Scripture means because much has been lost in context of history and in translation, but as teachers, it is our responsibility to formulate an explanation, a plausible interpretation, that fits the rest of the Bible, and this text is no exception.
  - b) The word translated “because” – διὰ – is “a primary preposition denoting the *channel* of an act; *through*” (Strong). This is a very common word and is most often translated as “through” – 94 of the 248 times it is used. 56 of those times it is translated “because.” In its use here (with the accusative τοῦς), it is seen as “on account of.” “Of the ground or motive, the moving or impelling cause of anything” (Zodhiates).

- c) Of the myriad of explanations and opinions on "the angels," two make the most sense, compared the preponderance of evidence of Scripture, and with the context of this passage itself. Why the Apostle Paul used this with no further explanation we may never know on this side of heaven, but the church then would have known what he meant, and there is clearly something "lost in the translation" here.

(1) *A.T. Robertson: This startling phrase has caused all kinds of conjecture which may be dismissed. It is not preachers that Paul has in mind, nor evil angels who could be tempted (Gen\_6:1.), but angels present in worship (cf. 1Co\_4:9; Psa\_138:1) who would be shocked at the conduct of the women since the angels themselves veil their faces before Jehovah (Isa\_6:2).*

#### 1 Corinthians 4:9

<sup>9</sup> For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

#### Isaiah 6:2

<sup>2</sup> Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

(2) *John MacArthur: "Women are to be submissive by wearing the symbol of authority so as not to offend these most holy and submissive creatures who watch the church (cf. Matt. 18:10; Eph. 3:9-10), who were present (Job 38:4, 7)*

*at creation, when God designed the order of authority for men and women.”*

Matthew 18:10

**10** Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

Ephesians 3:9–10

**9** And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

**10** To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

Job 38:4

**4** Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

Job 38:7

**7** When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

***E. Verses 11 and 12 continue with the issue of submission but the Apostle addresses it from a slightly different viewpoint – that both man and woman are incomplete without the other, as it was at the very beginning of creation.***

1. “Nevertheless” – “This adversative clause limits the preceding statement. Each sex is incomplete without the other.”

(Robertson)

"The verse is meant to correct any tendency on the part of men to domineer. Man and woman are 'all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:28)." (Pulpit Commentary)

#### Galatians 3:28

<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

#### Ephesians 5:21

<sup>21</sup> Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

2. "Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man" – "without" (χωρίς) means separately from, or by itself. Man is not to be separate from woman, cannot be complete without; and woman is not by herself, complete, without the man. This is most often applied to marriage, which is why some consider the issue of man and woman in this text to be husband and wife, but it can also be seen much more generally than that. God needs everyone, man and woman, to be humble in their position and recognizing of each in their service.

"The man and the woman were formed for union and society. They are not in any respect independent of each other. One is necessary to the comfort of the other; and this fact should be recognized in all their contact." (Barnes)

3. "In the Lord" – this is the key. As to the

first point – the right order – there is a proper order of things as God has designed, and as that order takes shape in the local church, all are to do their part “in the Lord” – with Him in mind.

“The Arabic version reads it, ‘in the religion of the Lord’; and the sense is, that the one is not without the other in religious worship, and in the enjoyment of religious privileges; that though the woman may not pray publicly and expound the Scriptures, yet she may join in prayer, and hear the word preached, sing the praises of God, and enjoy all ordinances; for in Christ no distinction of sex is regarded, men and women are all one in him, and equally regenerated, justified, and pardoned, and will be glorified together.” (Gill)

4. “For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman”
  - a) “For” – what is to follow is to show proof of verse eleven.
  - b) “The woman is of the man” – the word for “of” (εἰς) – or “is of,” “is” being provided by the translator for clarity – is one that means out of, or, as is meant here, “was taken out of” man.

#### Genesis 2:21

<sup>21</sup> And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

- c) “Even so is the man also by the woman” –

man is born of the woman. "Since the woman was taken from the man, she is of him, yet man is born, or comes into the world through the woman. That man had the priority in time and position, yet no man can be born without woman. They mutually depend for existence upon each other. So the two constitute but one real self-propagating being." (Lipscomb)

Job 14:1

<sup>1</sup> Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

Job 15:14

<sup>14</sup> What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?

5. "But all things of God" – "[This expression seems designed to suppress any spirit of complaint or dissatisfaction with this arrangement; to make the woman contented in her subordinate station, and to make the man humble by the consideration that it is all owing to the appointment of God. The woman should therefore be contented and the man should not assume any important superiority since the whole arrangement is of God.]" (Lipscomb)

#### **IV. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE – VS. 13-16**

***A. As with other areas of our own personal lives, and other areas of actions in and by the local church (and those that belong to the church family), having the right attitude towards what is right and proper when it comes to corporate worship will***

***help prevent a great deal of trouble in the church. One of the obvious divisive issues in the church at Corinth was one over whether women wore a head covering or not while they were part of church worship. The issue may be different today but the steps to stay above the divisiveness is given not only in this passage but throughout the New Testament church epistles.***

***B. Decide – Sense – “Is it comely?”***

1. There’s an appeal to sense and logic here by the Apostle Paul. He is telling the church they need to decide for themselves whether they will follow him or not – whether they will do what’s right or not.
2. “Judge in yourselves” – “Each man within himself, in his own judgment” (Alford).
3. “Is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?”
  - a) “Comely” – the word used here (ἠρένω) is one that, in its primary meaning (as a primary verb), means “to tower up (be conspicuous)” (Strong); “to be eminent, distinguished, to excel” (Zodhiates). As used in the New Testament it carries the idea of what is becoming or proper. Connecting it with the primary sense as it is used in this letter to the Corinthian church, the question is asked if it was the proper thing to do to make a spectacle out of themselves in defying the right order and decorum for women to pray in public worship with their head uncovered. They “stood out in the crowd” – which is what it

seems was their goal, and that is the reason for this whole rebuke.

- b) "That a woman pray unto God" – as pointed out earlier in this outline, what is missing here is significant. It doesn't say "that a woman pray or prophecy" – it seems if there is no significance to the lack of mention (of prophesying – preaching) here then he would have been consistent in using the two together, as he did in verses four and five. One reason for only mentioning prayer in this verse, in this context, is to emphasize women weren't to prophecy in a church worship setting. Another reason could be because he would bring that issue up later in his letter (chapter 14).
- c) "Uncovered" – goes back to verses 4-6.

### ***C. Determine – Nature – "Doth not even nature itself"***

1. Along with deciding what is right and sensible, a determination needs to be made, based on the evidence, as to how to act with that knowledge.
2. Another question asked here by the Apostle to the church (the leadership in particular), in response to an apparent issue they were having with women in the church being out of order in their worship, was a simple one – "Doesn't even nature itself tell you what is right in this matter?"
3. "Nature" speaks of the law of creation, the natural laws of God that were established in creation. There is a natural law that

dictates certain differences between male and female, and one of those is as simple as hair length – short on men and long on women.

4. Nature is seen as “teaching” (διδάσκω) that it is a “shame” for a man to have long hair. The word used here (ατιμία) means without honor or disgraceful. It’s a pretty strong word, used to demonstrate the importance of understanding and following the laws of God.
5. The issue of what is “long” is not dealt with in this text because of the apparent knowledge the readers would have had when they read it – they knew what he meant. No matter what we may consider long or short, the issue is that there is a distinct difference between male and female and the one is not to look like the other – that violates God’s laws on several different levels.

A note to be made here: the Nazarite vow of the Jews had, as one of its core values, that men would not cut their hair as long as they were obligated to the vow. This was done as a token of humiliation, setting them apart from the normal laws of nature. The law of the Nazarite is the exception, not the rule. The rule is given here.

#### Numbers 6:1–5

<sup>1</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

<sup>2</sup> Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall

separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD:

<sup>3</sup> He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried.

<sup>4</sup> All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk.

<sup>5</sup> All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.

6. Verse 15 seems to be the clarifying verse for the issue of what is meant for a "covering" as a general rule – the woman's long hair.

a) A woman's long hair (in relative terms to that of man's) is called "a glory to her." The use here of "glory" (δόξα) is in the sense of honor – the long hair on a woman is what God gave her to honor her position in creation, not to denigrate her, but to elevate her.

b) "For her hair is given to her for a covering" – her long hair is the covering that God intended as the veil mentioned earlier in this text.

*(1) The word for "covering" here is different than that of "covered" earlier. This word (περιβόλαιον) literally means to wrap around, as an enveloping garment. It is*

*used here for a veil, or a shawl.*

*Henry Alford quotes another author in explaining this word: "In this passage," says Stanley, "the Apostle would refer to the 'peplum,' which the Grecian women used ordinarily as a shawl, but on public occasions as a hood also, especially at funerals and marriages..."*

(2) *Clearly, a woman's long hair is sufficient for the church today to satisfy the "covering" requirement of Scripture for public worship.*

(3) *Spiros Zodhiates makes this observation in relation to the issue of being "covered" from verses four and five: Paul stresses that what is spoken by a woman, whether in public prayer or in prophecy, must be an outward demonstration of her inward saintliness. A woman who had her hair cut short was styled in the same manner as a prostitute or one of low morals. Such were the priestesses at the temple of Aphrodite at Acrocorinth. If one of these was saved and came into the local congregation of believers, she was not to speak with her short hair, but to cover her head as a substitute for the long hair which would take some time to grow. This is why in 1Co\_11:15 the long or womanly hair is considered in lieu of a wrapping called peribólaion (G4018).*

#### **D. Duty - customary – "We have no such custom"**

1. There was no teaching by any qualified apostle, nor in any other New Testament

church at the time that would allow the women neither usurp the authority of men as pastors/teachers, nor, more specifically, that would allow them to act in a way that would be against the proper decorum and order in the church.

2. "But if any man seem to be contentious" –
  - a) This is not gender specific. The word for "any man" is neutral, and would be seen as "any one" – whether male or female.
  - b) "Contentious" – only time in the New Testament this word is used. It is a compound word from two Greek words: φίλος, a to be fond, a friend; and νεῖκος, a quarrel. So, literally, this is someone who is fond of quarrelling, or loves to argue.

John Gill makes this observation:

That is, if anyone will not be satisfied with reasons given, for men's praying and prophesying with their heads uncovered, and women's praying and prophesying with their heads covered; but will go on to raise objections, and continue carping and cavilling, showing that they contend not for truth, but victory, can they but obtain it any way; for my part, as if the apostle should say, I shall not think it worth my while to continue the dispute any longer; enough has been said to satisfy any wise and good man, anyone that is serious, thoughtful, and modest...

3. The final clause of the verse is pointing out that the customary practice of the church at the time was to follow the order and decorum laid out in this portion of the

letter.

Conclusion: Throughout our study of this portion of this letter to the Corinthian church it has been made clear that there is a right way to do things in worship, a right way to act, a right way to think, and when we do we bring glory to God. When we don't, we are showing that we are more concerned about our own selves rather than others – a direct violation of what is taught in the Bible.

It's time we, the true New Testament church, stand for what's right, and do that right in the right way, with the right view and attitude.