

1 Corinthians Chapter 11

1 Corinthians 11:1 "Be ye followers of me, even as I also [am] of Christ."

Paul is saying, he tried to live a life before them that they could follow. We know we have discussed, over and over, that the best sermon a person can preach is the life they live that others can see. I believe that is what Paul is saying here. He had tried to be a Christian example that they could follow. Paul is saying, follow the pattern that I have given you, because my walk is full of Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:2 "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered [them] to you."

"Ordinances" here, means traditions. In the strict sense used here, a synonym for God's Word. The definition is: Ordinance (Christian), Protestant term for religious ritual.

In the strict sense used here, traditions are a synonym for God's Word (compare 2 Thess. 2:15). The New Testament sometimes uses the word in a negative way, referring to man-made ideas or practices, especially those that conflict with Scripture (compare Matt. 15:2-6; Gal. 1:14; Col. 2:8).

Paul is answering the letter they had written them, and says that they need to remember the traditions he had set up for them. In all of this, these are traditions of men.

2 Thess. 2:15: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."

1 Corinthians 11:3 "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman [is] the man; and the head of Christ [is] God."

Christ is the head of the church as its Savior and Lord. He is also the Lord over every unbeliever. Someday all will acknowledge His authority.

"Man": Men have authority over women in the basic order of creation. The husband is the head of the house. In this sense, he rules over the woman. This is in the flesh realm, and not in the spirit.

Ephesians 5:23 "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body."

As the Lord delivered His church from the dangers of sin, death and hell, so the husband provides for, protects, preserves and loves his wife, leading her to blessing as she submits.

"God": Christ has never been in any way inferior to the Father. But in His incarnation, He willingly submitted Himself to the Father's will in humble obedience.

The family on earth is a replica of the family in heaven. Father God is over all. All believers in Christ are the bride of Christ. We are all sons of God by adoption. Male and female genders are in the flesh for the earth, and have nothing to do with the spirit of mankind. The family on earth should still observe the man being the head of his family. The law of the land at the time that Paul wrote this was the basis for part of this tradition. The problem is that many do not differentiate between the spirit and the flesh. Paul is trying to teach them a way to live peaceably upon the earth. In many of the countries in the world today, this tradition is still the law of the land.

1 Corinthians 11:4 "Every man praying or prophesying, having [his] head covered, dishonoreth his head."

“Covered ... dishonoreth”: This is probably a reference to men wearing a head covering, which seems to have been a local custom. Jews began wearing head coverings during the fourth century A.D., although some may already have been wearing them in New Testament times. Apparently, Corinthian men were doing the same, and Paul informs them that it is a disgrace. Paul is not stating a universal law from God, but acknowledging a local custom, which did reflect divine principle. In that society, a man’s uncovered head was a sign of his authority over women, who were to have their heads covered. For a man to cover his head was to suggest a reversal of proper roles.

This is also saying that a man should not pray in public with his hat on. We read that the head of man was Christ. When he is praying or prophesying, it should be obvious that Christ is his head and show proper respect.

1 Corinthians 11:5 "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with [her] head uncovered dishonoreth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven."

Wherever and whenever women do pray and proclaims the Word appropriately, they must do so maintaining a proper distinction from men.

“Uncovered”: In the culture of Corinth, a woman’s covered head while ministering or worshiping was a symbol to signify a subordinate relationship to her husband. The apostle is not laying down an absolute law for women to wear veils or coverings in all churches for all time, but is declaring that the symbols of the divinely established male and female roles are to be genuinely honored in every culture. As in the case of meat offered to idols (in chapters 8 and 9), there is nothing spiritual about wearing or not wearing a covering. But manifesting rebellion against God’s order was wrong.

“Dishonors her head”: “Head” may refer to her own self being disgraced by refusing to conform to recognized symbols of submission or to her husband, who is disgraced by her behavior.

1 Corinthians 11:6 "For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered."

“Shame ... to be shorn”: In that day, only a prostitute or a feminist would shave her head. If a Christian woman rejected the covering that symbolized her submission in that culture, she might as well have shaved her head, the shame was similar.

1 Corinthians 11:7 "For a man indeed ought not to cover [his] head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man."

Though men and women were both created in God’s image (Gen. 1:27), it is man who bears the glory of God uniquely by his role. Like God, he is given a sphere of sovereignty as the earthly sovereign over God’s created order.

Genesis 3:16 "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."

**1 Corinthians 11:8-9 "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man."
"Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man."**

What Paul is probably referring to here is the fact that God made man from the dust of the earth. He made him in His own image. Woman was taken from the rib of man next to his heart. She was not made from his heel bone, for him to walk on her, neither was she made from his head bone to rule over him. She was to walk with him side by side as his helpmeet.

The word "woman" means taken from man. They two shall be one flesh. The man and his wife are one in the flesh. Man, was lonesome, and God made him a mate.

Genesis 1:27 "So God created man in his [own] image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

The word “man”, in this verse, means a human being, or mankind. Later on, another word is translated man which means a male person.

Genesis 2:23 "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."

Even though the woman came from the rib of man, she was also made in the image of God. God created man (mankind), in his own image from (Genesis 1:27, see above).

1 Corinthians 11:10 "For this cause ought the woman to have power on [her] head because of the angels."

The man’s head is to be uncovered, to symbolize his being made in the image and glory of God; and the woman’s head is to be covered to acknowledge that she was made of man, and that she is in subjection to him. By acknowledging such, she is not a helpless slave to her husband; but, rather, by humbling herself in such a way, she has power on her head because of the angels. God places the angels to help and protect her in her needs.

1 Corinthians 11:15 "But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for [her] hair is given her for a covering."

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 (Matt. 18:10). Who were present at the creation and when God designed the order of authority for men and women.

Matt. 18:10 "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."

1 Corinthians 11:11 "Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord."

Now we see that Paul is saying something entirely different. Surely one could not be without the other. Woman could not be without man, but man could not be without a woman to birth him either. All believers, male and female, are equal in the Lord and complementary in the Lord's work. Their roles are different in function and relationships, not in spirituality or importance.

1 Corinthians 11:12 "For as the woman [is] of the man, even so [is] the man also by the woman; but all things of God."

We know that God is Creator of all mankind. It is not any of our business how He goes about it. God had all of this figured out from the foundation of the world. This is all part of the plan God had for mankind. Long before the temptation in the Garden of Eden, God told man to populate the earth. There is no sin in the creative act, if it is done in the way God planned from the beginning. The sin in the garden was not the fact that this husband and wife slept together, but in the fact, they disobeyed God.

1 Corinthians 11:13 "Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?"

"Is it comely": Aside from apostolic command, Paul asked, in effect, "Isn't it self-evident that women should not be uncovered?"

1 Corinthians 11:14-15 "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?" "But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for [her] hair is given her for a covering."

The term can convey the idea of basic human awareness, i.e., the innate sense of what is normal and right. The male hormone, testosterone, speeds up the loss of hair in men. Estrogen causes women's hair to grow longer and for a longer time. Women are rarely bald, no matter how old. This physiology is reflected in most cultures in the custom of longer hair on women. God has given her hair as a covering to show tenderness, softness and beauty.

If a man had long hair, it would be as if he is saying, he is ashamed of Christ who is his head. "Nature" in the verse above, means something within you. Your own good sense tells you long hair on a man is a shame.

I believe the reason that Paul has brought the thing about the hair up is, he is trying to explain that women should not wear their clothes and cut their hair to appear to be a man and that men should not wear long hair and appear to be a woman. He is speaking out against homosexuality and lesbianism.

If you are a woman, be proud that you are a woman, do not try to be a man. The same goes for the man. Be proud that you are a man. Do not try to be a woman. God did not make any mistakes, when He made you. In the Old Testament, there was an occasion for a man to grow his hair long, when he took the Nazarite vow. He was humbling himself before God for a period of time. At the end of the vow, he would cut his hair and sacrifice it. This was very much like the fast Christians enter in today, when praying for some specific thing. The long hair here, was short lived.

Again, the meaning of "Uncovered" as it was explained (in verse 5). In the culture of Corinth, a woman's covered head while ministering or worshiping was a symbol to signify a subordinate relationship to her husband.

1 Corinthians 11:16 "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God."

"No such custom": Neither the Lord, the apostles, nor the churches would allow female rebellion. Women were to maintain their distinctively feminine hairdos; and when custom dictated, they should wear a covering.

1 Corinthians 11 Questions

1. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of _____.
2. What is the best sermon a person can give to others?
3. What had Paul tried to be before him?
4. What does "ordinances", in verse 2, mean?
5. Traditions are of _____.
6. The _____ is the head of the wife in the family.
7. Who makes up the body of Christ?

8. What part of the Bible is true?
9. Who make up the bride of Christ?
10. What does verse 4 mean about the man not having his head covered?
11. Is there anything wrong with a woman praying or prophesying?
12. What is the woman's covering?
13. Why did they shave a woman's head?
14. God made man from the _____ of the _____.
15. Woman was made from _____ _____.
16. In Genesis chapter 1 verse 27 man means what?
17. What does woman mean?
18. Why are there male and female genders on the earth?
19. Does not nature itself teach you, that, if a man has long hair, it is a _____ unto him?