

1 CORINTHIANS
CALLED OUT
SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM



Sermon: **Worship, Divine Order, and Gender (1 Corinthians 10:14-22)**

Date: **January 22, 2017**

Up until this point in 1 Corinthians, the apostle Paul has been addressing various issues in the Corinthian church. Some of these issues include church divisions, sexual immorality, marriage, and the eating of meat sacrificed to idols. This week's text marks a shift in Paul's letter. In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul moves on from these previous issues to now discuss church order. In this week's study, we will look at what Paul has to say about head coverings, gender distinctions, and church worship. Our culture is completely confused when it comes to gender. As the people of God, we have an opportunity to show the world a better way. God's view of gender, rooted in creation itself, is one of true beauty that reflects the glory of God to those around us. This week's study will explore the Biblical view of gender and how the practice of head coverings relates to it.

What you need for this study: Bible, Notebook, Pen

A Note From Pastor Jacob:

Dear Church Family,

I am preaching this text with the same interpretive method that I would use in any other section of 1 Corinthians. My interpretation is consistent with how many Christians have interpreted it since ancient times. There are godly scholars and pastors today who do not hold to my interpretation. Our own elders have a spectrum of beliefs about this text, and at this time none are in complete agreement with me on this. Therefore, we have no mandate for the congregation on the issue of head coverings. But we all agree that we can disagree in love. We all agree that head coverings are not a major issue. We all agree that each family should examine the text themselves. We all agree that we do not want anyone pronouncing harsh judgments on this issue. We have already learned of Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ factions in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:12), and we do not want covered-head and uncovered-head factions in Waterloo Region (1 Cor. 2:16). I believe our church is mature enough to disagree over this issue in love (1 Cor. 13:1-13) and still be united in our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, that is what we have done until now with this issue. Some have worn head coverings, and some have not. We have managed to love each other and live in peace. The only difference now is that I have publicly presented my position on this text. We are not to find our identity in this pastor or that elder or this scholar or that scholar or covered heads or uncovered heads, but we are to rest united in Christ (1 Cor. 2:21). My hope is that each person in our church will find the freedom to obey his/her biblically informed conscience on this issue without judgment from those who come to different conclusions. If your conscience permits, you are free to dissent from my application. May God find us united together in Christ and loving each other like Christ on the day of His visitation.

Lovingly in Our Lord Jesus,

Pastor Jacob

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Individual Bible Study

1. Please read 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and ensure that you've listened to Sunday's sermon.
 - a. Explain the difference between open-handed and close-handed issues.
 - b. Pastor Jacob said, "If you're more excited to hear about head coverings than Jesus, you need to repent." Why would he say that?
 - c. Define the words "covered" (v. 4) and "uncovered" (v.5).
 - d. What does "traditions" mean in verse 2 (compare with 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6)?
 - e. What word does Paul employ to connect verse 3 with verse 4-5? Why is this significant?
 - f. Typically, in his letters does the apostle Paul ground his applications in theological statements (Eph. 5:22-23; 1 Tim. 2:11-15)? Can you think of other passages in 1 Corinthians where Paul draws specific applications from theological statements?
 - g. What is Paul's specific application of theology in our text?
 - h. How does Paul's reference to head coverings reflect his understanding of gender (v. 3-5)?
 - i. Define "prayer" and "prophecy" (v. 4-5). When do Christians pray and prophecy?
 - j. Some people use this text to say women must have their heads covered at all times. How does that application contradict the context of chapters 11-14 (hint: 14:26, 40)? What type of contradictions and problems does that interpretation lend itself to?

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- k. Explain Paul's argument in verses 5-6? What is he not arguing? How does Acts 8:32 help us understand the meaning?
- l. What does the word "metonymy" mean? Are there any ways we commonly use metonymy in English? Why might we view the word "authority" in verse 10 as a metonymy?
- m. Review 1 Cor. 4:9; Eph. 3:10; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Tim. 5:21. How might those passages help us understand the reference to angels in v. 10?
- n. What do verses 11-12 teach us about gender equality? How is Christian teaching not feminist? How is Christian teaching not chauvinist?
- o. How does Paul use the phrase "Judge for yourselves" in v. 13? How might 1 Cor. 10:15 help us understand that?
- p. How is a woman's hair her glory (v. 15)? How is Paul linking female glory with head coverings?
- q. How do we know verse 16 is the last verse in this section? How does verse 16 apply to this section (see 1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; and 14:33)? Who are the "we" in verse 16?

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Group Discussion Questions

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the sermon and the Bible study this week?
2. Does anyone in your small group remember a time when women wore hats or head coverings to church? What was the experience like? When did it stop, if it did? Why did it stop, if it did?
3. What are the various views as to how to interpret this passage? Evaluate each of these views in terms of their validity (see numbers 10 through 14 in “For Further Study” section below for more information). What is your view of this text? Why?
4. How can we live in unity with different understandings of this text?
5. How will your conscience be biblically informed by this text moving forward?

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For Further Study (optional):

1. Pastor Jacob reflected, “Up until 10 days ago, I myself was not confident enough to make the following assertions. My family has had the freedom to wrestle with how to apply this, and your family should have the same freedom.” What does he mean by this?
2. How is the Scriptural view of gender rooted in the Gospel and God’s relationship with Christ (v. 3)?
3. How is Paul’s application of head coverings related to the biblical view of gender?
4. Please list all the actions that Paul specifically calls for in the text.
5. How does God’s view of order give us an opportunity to teach our world about the true beauty of order, as opposed to chaos?
6. Verse 6 in the ESV uses the phrase “cut her hair short” and “cut off her hair.” How does the KJV translate this? What does the footnote in the NASB indicate? How does Acts 8:32 translate the same word? What does this tell us about the meaning of v. 5-6? What does it tell us about what v. 5-6 does not mean?
7. How is Paul’s argument in v. 5-6 similar to his argument in Galatians 5:11-12?
8. According to verses 7 – 9, what are some differences between men and women?
9. Can you think of other places where Paul does make other applications about gender distinctions (Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Tim. 2:12-15; 1 Peter 3:1-7)? In those texts how does he root his specific applications in theology? In our text today how does he root his specific application in theology?
10. Some people dismiss the head covering as a cultural issue.

They say things like not wearing a head covering in Corinth was associated with prostitution, sexual immorality, or idolatry. The association is no longer valid today. So the head covering is not necessary

- a. Does Paul reference a particular cultural situation like prostitution or idolatry in his discussion on head coverings? Does he say that is the reason he wants women to wear them? What are his reasons?
- b. Does Paul mention a specific situation about head coverings like he does about division (1:11-12), sexual immorality (5:1-2a), or drunkenness (11:21)?
- c. What is the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture? How might that doctrine inform our application of this text and our evaluation of the cultural objection?
- d. Do you have conclusive biblical and/or extra-biblical evidence that this was a cultural issue?
- e. How much extra-biblical evidence would you need to dismiss something taught in the Bible?
- f. Can you think of any Biblical commands and teachings that contemporary scholars dismiss as cultural?

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11. Others dispute the relevancy of the symbolism of the head covering in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

What they say is that in 2017, head coverings no longer mean the same thing they did in first century Corinth. So women do not need to wear them to church. Some scholars insist that we replace them with something like a wedding ring, a modest skirt, long hair, or something else.

- a. Can you think of another place in Scripture where we can use this interpretive method?
- b. On what other Scriptural issues have you heard this interpretive method applied?
- c. What other visual and symbolic reminders does the Bible prescribe? Could we apply this same interpretive method to those visual symbols?
- d. If God assigns meaning to a symbol, does he permit us to assign another meaning? Does he permit us to replace symbols with new ones?
- e. How might the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture inform our evaluation of this position?
- f. New Testament scholar Leon Morris writes, "The application of this principle to first-century Corinth yields the direction that women must have their heads covered when they worship. The principle is of permanent validity, but we *may feel* that it's application to the contemporary scene does not yield the same result" (Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 1 Corinthians*, [Intervarsity Press, 2008], p. 154 [emphasis mine]).
 - i. Please evaluate that statement.

12. Some people say that head coverings were not commanded or practiced in the Old Testament so we do not need to practice them today.

- a. How has our access to God changed as a result of the New Covenant (Hebrews 7; 8; 10:19-22)?
- b. Has God ever instituted new symbols before as new stages of salvation history developed?
- c. Do you think Deuteronomy 29:29 can help us with the objection?

13. Some compare the head coverings in 11:2-16 to the holy kiss (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26).

- a. How might the holy kiss be compared to a head covering as far as present day relevancy?
- b. Do we know what a holy kiss is? Do we know how to cover a head?
- c. Can you detect any persuasive rhetoric when Paul speaks about the holy kiss? Compare that to the volume of persuasive rhetoric when Paul speaks about head coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.
- d. In referring to the holy kiss, does Paul also refer to God's headship over Christ, to divinely sanctioned gender distinctions, to angels, and mention apostolic "tradition" like he does with the head covering?

14. Some believe that "prayer and prophecy" means something other than how Pastor Jacob has defined and applied these terms. What else might they mean and how else might they apply? Please justify your explanation with Scripture.

15. Do you think Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; and Revelation 22:18-19 have any bearing on how we interpret and apply 1 Corinthians 11:2-16?