

# 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 - The Roles of Husbands and Wives in the Assembly

## A. Authority Announced vs 3

- the head of the man is Christ
- the head of the woman is the man
- the head of Christ is God

## B. Authority Abused vs 4-6

- by the man while praying or prophesying - vs 4
- by the woman while praying or prophesying 5-6

## C. Authority Expressed vs 7-10

- the uncovered head of the man reflects His position in the creative order.

- the covered head of the woman reflects submission to her husband's authority.

## D. Authority Limited vs 11-12

- with respect to spiritual equality vs 11
- with respect to physical equality vs 12

## E. Authority Exemplified vs 13-15

- through the veiling of a woman vs 13
- through the shortness of a man's hair vs 14
- through the length of a woman's hair vs 15

## F. Authority Resisted vs 16

## The Text ( King James)

1 Corinthians 11

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

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

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.

4 Every man praying or prophesying, having [his] head covered, dishonoureth his head.

5 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.

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.

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.

8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.

9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on [her] head because of the angels.

11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

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

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

14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

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

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

## Some Greek Definitions

Definitions below are from Strong's Concordance; **Notes** are comments added.

3862 paradosis {par-ad'-os-is} AV - tradition 12, ordinance 1; 13 1) giving up, giving over  
**Note:** Traditions are customs which have been delivered or handed down. Traditions can be good or evil, biblical or unbiblical. Of course, the traditions handed down by Paul are biblical. See 2 Thess 3:6!)

**Note:** This is probably best interpolated: "Every man praying or prophesying, [anything] on [his] head having, puts to shame his head" (Berry)

177 akatakaluptos {ak-at-ak-al'-oop-tos} AV - uncovered 2; 2 1) not covered, unveiled

**Note:** these two words = not covered /veiled  
 3756 ou {oo} AV - not 1214, no 136, cannot + 1410 55, misc 48; 1453  
 2619 katakalupto {kat-ak-al'-oop'-to} AV - cover 3; 3 1) to cover up 2) to veil or cover one's self

1849 exousia {ex-oo-see'-ah} AV - power 69, authority 29, right 2, liberty 1, jurisdiction 1, strength 1; 103

(Same as vs 5 above)  
 177 akatakaluptos {ak-at-ak-al'-oop-tos} AV - uncovered 2; 2 1) not covered, unveiled

5449 phusis {foo'-sis} from 5453; TDNT - 9:251,1283; n f AV - nature 10, natural + 2596 2, kind 1, mankind + 442 1; 14  
**Note:** The word nature can be in reference to the external creation and/or our internal nature (that which is innate within us) - in this case, Paul is probably referring to that which is instinctive within us. See also Rom 1:26; 2:14.

4018 peribolaion {per-ib-ol'-ah-yon} from a presumed derivative of 4016; n n AV - covering 1, vesture 1; 2 1) a covering thrown around, a wrapper 1a) a mantle \*1b) a veil  
**Note:** **Not** same as vs 13 & 5 \*1b in Strong's Concordance is disputed - this word and its root always refers to mantles, vestures, clothing, and being arrayed in clothing. A woman's hair is not a substitute for a veil.

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# Hair Today - Gone Tomorrow!

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## ***Important considerations when thinking on 1 Corinthians 11:1-16***

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### Thoughts to Remember

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- The *general* subject of this passage is authority. Paul's desire is that we appear and conduct ourselves in a manner which reflects our belief about God's order. In a time and culture where rebellion against God and His institutions is very popular, believers should take special care to set the proper biblical example. The *immediate* subject under discussion is how we appear and conduct ourselves in public worship.
- The *two* specific customs under discussion are 1) length of hair on men and women, and; 2) the veiling of women. Each must be treated separately:

#### **The Length of Hair on Men and Women**

The general agreement that women wear long hair and men wear shorter hair has been traditional in all civilized customs and cultures during almost all of history. In Bible times men who wore long hair (or women who shaved their hair) did so always to connote *an exception to normal circumstances*. (Nazarites, mourning, distress, and adulteresses all made exceptions to the norm. Jesus, however, was not a nazirite and did not wear long hair as depicted.) The Christian who asks "how long is long?" and "how short is short?" should be reminded that our goal is not to get as close to the limit as we can, but rather, our desire should be to have the kind of hair length which would cause no confusion as to our gender and our stand on the issue.

#### **The Veiling of Women**

The customs surrounding the use of veils and head coverings for men *did* vary widely among the Greeks, Romans, and Jews. Jewish men, for example, still cover their heads in worship and Jewish women do not. Our natures do not instruct us concerning head coverings as they *do* concerning hair length.

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### Thoughts to Forget

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- We cannot place *culture* in a higher position than scripture. No Christian ever has a right to say that we do not have to obey a Bible command because of *cultural* problems associated with it. To do so is to make the Word of God of no effect, based upon our traditions.
- We cannot rightfully say that "*a woman's hair is her veil, and*

*that as long as she has hair she is wearing a veil.*" This would contradict the command of verse 6. (The word *covering* in verse 15 is not the same Greek word used for veil in verses 1-14.)

- We cannot absolve ourselves from obeying this passage because some male animals in nature have longer hair than females. Paul is lilely referring to *our* natures as human beings.

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### Thoughts to Ponder

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The issue is authority and order, with our position regarding length of hair and the use of veils representing our position on submission to authority. The question is this. If the symbol changes does the mandate change? **In other words, if the wearing of a veil no longer symbolizes the recognition of the man's headship in our society, does the mandate to wear a veil change?**

#### **Those who say NO often argue:**

- We have no right to alter the Word of God to suit our opinions and purposes.
- It is the duty of the Church to live up and maintain the standard. If Christian women would wear veils, both the angels and the world would be given occasion to know why.

#### **Those saying YES often argue:**

- When two principles or commands *seem* to conflict we should choose the higher. An example of this may be found in Luke 13:14-16. In the minds of many the wearing of head coverings today does not testify to the submissiveness of the woman so much as it identifies her with a particular sect. It actually sends the wrong signal.
- We do not greet brethren with a "holy kiss" (Romans 16:16, 1 Cor 16:20, 2 Cor 13:12, 1 Th 5:26). Because the *symbol* has changed and wearing veils would not convey Paul's intended purpose.

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# Our Positions on Hair Length and Veils

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## What is This Teacher's Position on Hair Length and Veils?

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### My Personal Views Regarding Hair Length

I do not believe there is any biblical basis for a man to wear long hair and a woman to wear short hair. (It would be difficult to take a Nazarite vow in the Grace economy.) I believe that the goal is **not** to push the limit to see how long or short our hair can be, but rather, to keep it at such a length that no issue or confusion exists. I do not believe we have any right to negate the Word of God based on supposed *cultural* changes.

### My Personal Views Regarding Women and Veils

*By definition* I believe a veil is not the woman's hair itself, but any covering selected to go over the hair. Again, the issue is not "*how much hair does it cover?*" but rather, "*does the veil convey my submission?*"

I believe the biblical instruction given in 1 Corinthians 11 was given to women participating *in a public service* who were either *praying or prophesying publicly* and that Paul did not instruct women to wear veils at all times in the church service or in other public or private places. (The context of 1 Cor 11 has to do entirely with public worship and public behavior.)

**Regarding prophesy:** I believe the *gift* of prophecy as associated with biblical signs has vanished in accordance with the completion of the Word of God because implicit in prophecy was the ability to *receive* as well as *proclaim* the Word of God. (1 Th. 5:20, *then* Rev. 22:18,19)

**Regarding prayer:** I have made it a practice never to ask a woman who does not have her head covered to lead in prayer in a *public* worship service. The issue is authority. On the other hand, I have no objection to asking a woman to lead in prayer in a public church service whose head *is* veiled. A woman wears the veil as a testimony to the fact that she is in under the authority of the man at any time when that might be questioned or misconstrued - particularly when praying (i.e. leading in prayer) or prophesying - and that this was Paul's intent. I do not believe that Paul expected women to wear veils at all times - only at those times when the issue of authority could be confused. At other times, her long hair is sufficient to reflect her place in the creative order.

There is a new trend in evangelical church circles to have women lead the singing, take up the offering, help serve communion, and similar activities. In this age when feminism is a dominant plank in Satan's New Age agenda, these practices may poten-

tially send the wrong message to the community - even though these practices are not, in and of themselves, forbidden in the scriptures. This issue will occur once again when we deal later with the matter of women keeping silent in the public assembly.

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## What is *Your* Position on Submitting to Authority??

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### 1. Have Each of us Submitted to the Authority of Christ?

If one has not received Christ as Saviour the issue of hair length and veils is as relevant as what the dark side of the moon looks like. A person is either a part of Satan's rebellious world system or he is a part of the body of Christ. The gospel in a nutshell:

- Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 10:36-38)
- He shed His blood and died on the cross to take away our sins. (Romans 3:25)
- The Father raised Him from the dead. (Galatians 1:1)
- We cannot make up for the bad we have done with our efforts at being good, but we can have the goodness (the righteousness) of Jesus Christ given to us by faith. (Ephesians 2:8-10, Rom 5:1, Romans 3:22)
- Acknowledge your sinfulness and believe what Jesus Christ did for you! (Acts 17:30, Romans. 10:9,10)

### 2. Men, Have We Submitted to Christ's Headship in our Marriage and in our Home?

The issue of veils is a very small issue indeed stacked up against the question of the average Christian man's performance at home! A man who submits to Christ's headship makes it easier for a woman to submit to his headship.

### 3. Women, is it Your Desire to Take Every Opportunity to Indicate your Submission to Your Husband's Headship?

Do you truly want to be in submission to him? If you do - you will dress and worship in a manner which reflects your heart's desire.