

- ✍ Even the conversation of gender is a hairy subject nowadays, but the Bible does not shrink back from dealing with all kinds of issues and sets us all straight on how God intends things to be. Anymore, it is safer to bring up politics or religions than it is to speak on gender roles.
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**1. The only chance we have to settle the conflict is to disregard male and female opinions altogether and follow the opinion of God.**

- ✓ 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:2-16 is one of the more controversial passages in the New Testament because people are not sure how to take it. Some take it to be totally cultural having no meaning or application for us today. Those that feel this way totally dispense with the passage, but that brings up other issues like “didn’t the Holy Spirit know what He’s doing when He inspired the text of Scripture?” Isn’t it true that Holy Spirit knew the future and inspired what we would need to hear throughout all generations? Others take it completely literal or their version of literal and say that all women must submit to all men, that women cannot cut their hair ever, and that they have to wear a hat or hair covering at all times. Where do you stand on this?

**2. Let’s handle the word properly and see where it tells us to stand.**

- 1) First of all, there certainly are some strong cultural overtones in this passage that we cannot ignore. The Bible was written in a very specific time period and culture which we have to take into account. A very important rule of Bible interpretation is that our interpretation of the text has to have made sense to the original hearers. Corinthian Cultural issues:
  - 2) It was culturally acceptable in that day for a woman and especially a married woman to wear a head covering because it made a statement, the statement it made to other men was that that woman was unavailable. Our heads covered have sent signals in our culture as well. In our culture, at least in the recent past, it was considered very rude for a man to wear a hat inside of a building, whereas a woman could wear a hat without the same offense.
  - 3) It was also culturally acceptable and routine in Corinth for women to wear their hair longer than men. The exception to this, especially in the case of the City of Corinth, was for a female prostitute to not wear a head covering and to also shave her head which proclaimed her line of work. In the Corinthian church, some women felt it was ok to do away with the norms of the culture, because of their freedom in Christ, and rid of head coverings since all were equal in the sight of the Lord and that, whether they were male or female, they were children of God. We are all the same in Christ and there will be no distinction between male and female in heaven, but this isn’t Heaven! We still are controlled to a certain extent by the norms of our cultures and have to abide by certain standards in order to not harm the cause of Christ. We cannot ignore culture for the sake of our freedom in Christ because our goal is reach people not exercise our freedoms. Paul says most of the things he says here not because what was going on was immoral, but because, in that culture, it was harming the cause of Christ. This is a very important principle: we aren’t just controlled by what is biblically moral but also by what is socially acceptable. We shouldn’t do anything that could be misinterpreted, as much as it is within our control, we shouldn’t go places that would be misinterpreted; we shouldn’t wear anything that could be misinterpreted; “what would Jesus’ wear” should be our rule of thumb. It is defeating to cause of Christ for His children to come across as rude, rebellious or immoral.
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**3. An unveiled woman in Corinth was symbolic of not only moral looseness but also rebellion especially against her husband.**

- ✓ We have seen something similar to this in our culture but in the opposite direction and in the opposite sex, if a man wanted to show his rebellion in our culture in past years, he wore his hair long. We see the opposite as well, most of the radical feminist you see (not all) wear their hair very short to make a similar statement.

**4. Consider God's order of things:**

- ✓ 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:3, in a team, there has to be a designate leader or there will be confusion. Husband and wife are one body, but there can only be one head that the body follows, God's designated head is the husband. Headship is leadership; headship means we go first; we are to be first at giving ourselves up for our spouses. We are to be first to be holy and practicing spiritual disciplines. We are to be first in setting the example of righteous living and leading the way to Heaven. Headship is not privilege; it is responsibility. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:3, this is not an issue of superiority/inferiority; not any less than it would be wrong to assume that Christ is Inferior to the Father. From the beginning, the Bible makes it clear that the sexes are equal but that their roles are not the same.
- ✓ The man was created first, so, he's the head; the woman was created to complete the man and they are together called "man" or "mankind." That is why Paul says that a woman is the glory of man, he is completed by her, made beautiful by her, made to look smart by her, kept out of trouble by her, etc. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:4, head coverings were a symbol of authority in that culture. Since men were not under any earthly authority, they wore no head covering. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:5, the woman is subject to an earthly authority, her husband, and, in that culture, she needed to wear a head covering to honor that rule. In that culture, to not wear a head covering meant you didn't believe your husband was the head and thus you were not subject to God's created order.

**Be careful what your actions say, what your dress says, how you act, where you go, these all say something about you and reflect directly on Jesus who has saved you. Again, is it immoral for a woman to go without a head covering? Of course not, there are not head covering rules in the commandments. In our culture, do you see a woman without a head covering as a loose or rebellious woman, no. But in the Corinthian culture, regardless of what was meant by not wearing a head covering, what was interpreted was that that woman was in rebellion towards her husband, loose morally and available.**

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