

1 CORINTHIANS: MOVING FROM THE CARNAL TO THE SPIRITUAL STATE

Part XXIV: Heeding God's Roles For Men And Women In The Church

(1 Corinthians 11:2-16)

I. Introduction

- A. Paul had to address Christian liberty on the issue of the role of women in Church worship, for the Corinthians had become so self-indulgent that some women were not acting in an edifying way in the worship services.
- B. Paul corrected this matter, revealing important guidelines on the role of women for our insight (as follows):

II. Heeding God's Roles For Men And Women In The Church, 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

- A. Paul began his discussion on the sensitive topic of the roles of women and men in the Church by complimenting his readers on their loyalty to heeding his former teachings, 1 Corinthians 11:2.
- B. However, moving from this compliment to an area of need in the body at Corinth, Paul established the divine administrative order for the role and the state of women and men in the Church in 1 Corinthians 11:3:
 1. First, God the Father is the head of Christ, 1 Corinthians 11:3c.
 2. Second, Christ is the head of every man, 1 Corinthians 11:3a.
 3. Third, the man is the head of the woman, 1 Corinthians 11:3b.
- C. Accordingly, Paul claimed that every man who prayed or prophesied in the Church meeting having his head covered like a woman customarily did dishonored his head while every woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered did so shamefully as if she were clean shaven in her head, 1 Corinthians 11:4-5.
- D. Some teach that this directive meant there is an intrinsic identification of a woman with a head covering, not just a cultural one, that women today should cover their heads in Church. However, we differ with this belief:
 1. Genesis 2:21-25 reveals that when God created and brought the woman to the man, they were both naked, so the woman did not have her head covered as she was not intrinsically indecent, meaning head coverings contained the **cultural** meaning in **Paul's** era that a woman was correctly submissive to the man!
 2. Some may claim that as man fell into sin, the head covering became intrinsically required for the woman as a sign of her submission, but God had already put the woman in submission to the man back at creation:
 - a. God brought Eve to Adam so he could name her, indicating his sovereignty over her, Gen. 2:22, 19.
 - b. Also, Paul in 1 Timothy 2:12-13 appealed to creation as the basis for women being subject to men today.
- E. As such, Paul emphasized in 1 Corinthians 11:6-7 and 11:13-15 the importance of women observing this cultural norm of his day in order to signify their **submissive** role to men in Church worship services.
- F. Paul added that the woman came from the man, not the other way around, for Eve was made from Adam's rib, and the woman, Eve, was created for the man, Adam, indicating the need for women to heed their role of ministering in submission to and for their husbands, 1 Corinthians 11:8-9; Ephesians 5:22.
- G. Paul's statement that the woman ought to have "authority" figuratively "over" (*epi*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 603; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 285-289) her head because of the angels in 1 Corinthians 11:10 NIV, ESV is hard to understand, but it most likely means that God's holy angels observe believers in worship and would be offended if a woman did not function in submission to men in the Church worship services, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 529; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 1 Corinthians 11:10.
- H. To balance his call for women to submit to men, Paul extolled the lofty **value** of **both** women **and** men, for both genders come into existence in part by way the respective opposite gender, 1 Corinthians 11:11-12.
- I. Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 11:13-15 on the indecency of women praying to God with their head uncovered and men having long hair reflect the era's **cultural** rules, meaning the believer must watch that he presents himself in his **cultural** context in an honorable way. Long hair for men has become increasingly tolerated today, but Paul implies the natural argument against it: the development of male pattern baldness as men age argues for the need for them to wear their hair short lest they look dishonorable in **any** culture!
- J. Paul closed this section by stating that in no other Church were women customarily praying or prophesying with their heads uncovered, so the Corinthians were to align with this Christian norm, 1 Corinthians 11:16.

Lesson: God directs that we believers in our Church worship must function aligned with God the Father as our Ultimate Head, Christ as our Head under the Father, men as our heads under the Father and Christ and women under the headship of the man, Christ and God the Father. This order is to be reflected in our cultural practices.

Application: May we align with the order God assigns us as to our role as men and women in our Church services, for this affects not only our testimony before the world and other believers, but before God and the holy angels.