

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Question about facial hair...

Question about facial hair... - posted by ccchhhrrriiiss () , on: 2008/10/11 16:34

Hello all!...

I hope that the title of this thread didn't startle you.

My wife and I recently moved to the Northern California/San Francisco Bay area. We are still in the process of finding a congregation with which to fellowship and foster encouragement. Since we didn't have anything to do last night, we decided to attend a Bible study at a Spanish congregation in Menlo Park.

The large congregation meets in a finely ornate building (complete with banners, streamers and pillars housing fake flames, no less). We actually went without really knowing what kind of doctrinal views that the Church adheres to. Almost immediately, we noticed that the women all wore coverings upon their heads (not really hats or scarves, but pretty little see-through lace things that resembled the "kippahs" that many Jewish males wear). While I don't embrace that particular doctrinal view, I feel comfortable around those who do. And while I disagree with the interpretation of the passage of Scripture from whence that custom was derived, I do understand the argument for the position.

The Bible study was packed, but it was reminded me of a Sunday morning meeting more than a typical Bible study. There was a very orderly sequence to the meeting, containing the typical opening prayer, salutation, praise and worship, stand for the opening Bible verse, and sermon. All of the people were dressed in their "Sunday best" (nice suits, fine dresses, etc... -- which made me feel a little uncomfortable in jeans and a sweater). We opted to attend the smaller English "Bible study" following the praise and worship. There, the smaller group of mostly younger adults listened to a prepared message about the importance of tithing and the need for the Ten Commandments. The leader of the study seemed quite sincere, and the small group was quite respectful.

Following the Bible study, the leader and another woman approached my wife and me. They noticed that we were new and wanted to extend a welcoming hand to us. We told them that we found their address on the Internet, but that the Church's website (it didn't include any info except for the name and address). As they went through the list of meetings/ministries, I was struck by a remark of the Bible study leader. He offered to give me a call and explain the doctrines of the Church if I was interested in attending. After the meeting, my wife and I admitted that we enjoyed the fellowship with other believers, even if they held to different doctrinal customs than what we are used to.

This morning, I tried to find out what sort of doctrinal views to which the congregation adheres. From the meeting, I was fairly certain that they would consider themselves Pentecostal or apostolic. Sure enough, I discovered that this particular congregation was an apostolic congregation that adheres to the Oneness (no Trinity) position (actually evident in subtle ways throughout the meeting).

As I was researching the Church's doctrines, I noticed some peculiar practices (in addition to the Oneness and head covering views). For instance, the women can hold no position in the Church (not even a Sunday School teacher for children). Tithing is a requirement for membership. Women must wear dresses at all times and men are forbidden to wear shorts. Women are forbidden to wear any makeup or jewelry and must always wear their hair long. Men must always wear their hair short and trimmed. "Worldly" music is strictly forbidden, although the congregation seems to embrace worldly sounding Christian music.

I am familiar with most of these customs and the "modesty" passages that they maintain does reinforce them. However, I was struck with one particular custom: Men are forbidden to wear facial hair. This means no sideburns, no mustaches, no beard and no goatees. I did notice that none of the women wore makeup and that the men were all closely shaven. I noticed that some of the people who greeted me actually looked at my small, trim goatee. I also know several Mennonites in Tennessee who adhere to a "clean shaven" rule (well, at least for unmarried men). However, I don't know if I have ever heard of a Scriptural justification for such a practice.

I first grew my goatee after I sliced my chin on a live sand dollar after stumbling along on a beach in Puerto Rico. It left an ugly scar for a while (which people noticed), so I just hid it with a short goatee. After the scar went away, so did the goatee. But after cutting my chin while shaving one too many times, I decided to bring it back. It is just one less difficult p

lace to shave each morning (well, every second or third morning in my case). I was going to shave it for my wedding, but my wife asked me to keep it. I had worn the goatee almost the entire time that I knew my wife, and she thought that it would be fitting for the wedding photos.

Of course, I am not apologetic for my short little goatee. In fact, I don't really care about it one way or the other. I was simply wondering about the justification of such a doctrinal custom. Does anyone know upon which verses that such believers base their belief? We probably will not return to that congregation (since we both embrace the concept of a "Trinity"), so I don't know that I will have the opportunity to ask anyone there. Thanks for any help that you might offer!

:-)

Re: Question about facial hair... - posted by theopenlife, on: 2008/10/11 20:09

Very interesting story, Chris.

A question:

Whose beard was plucked during Christ's passion? I recall it was the same one that "pleased the Father", and "fulfilled every jot and tittle of the Law."

And I also remember David making provision for certain ashamed men to grow their beards back before returning to the city.

Didn't oil flow down Aaron's beard?

Sounds like the commandments of men replacing the simplicity of the faith. I smell Galatia.

Re: Question about facial hair... - posted by narrowpath, on: 2008/10/11 20:23

Here are 2 cents from a fellow goatie bearer in Christ.

Cent #1 Spiritual Christian will wear modest clothing and display proper relationships between men and women. It is an outward expression of an inward reality.

But adhering to a code of rules of modesty does not make anyone spiritual; it rather causes death through the letter by showing off your piety, vying for approval of men rather than God.

1. Peter 3:1 Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, 2when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. 3Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. 4Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, 6like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

Cent #2 A lot has been said about the trinity here on this forum. I do not quite like the word trinity per se because it smells a bit like a concept that oversimplifies the unfathomable depth of the total relationship between Father Son and Holy Ghost. Well, if they do not worship a triune (for loss of a better word) God, I would shun away from them.

Matthew 28:19

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

narrowpath

Re: Question about facial hair... - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2008/10/11 22:04

Quote:

-----I was simply wondering about the justification of such a doctrinal custom.

Why don't you ask *them*? Then come back and tell us. I would love to know their rationale.

I know there are Mennonite groups that say you should wear beards and then there are some that forbid it! The ones that say you should use as their basis the OT law then come along and say it occurs naturally and should therefore be worn. Others will object to it because they consider it a fad of the world and since you do not want to look like the world, you shave it off. It is interesting to hear members of both groups discuss this with each other...both will be appalled at the others' stance on this point! Actually, they don't have a whole lot to say to defend their position.

Yes, go ask them and see what they say! Sounds interesting!! And be sure to come back and tell us.

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2008/10/11 22:06

Brother Chris I have very much enjoyed your posts in the past and though I would comment on your topic here. The people in the church you went to are very sincere in their beliefs and are in bondage because of how they have been taught.

They are very dogmatic about their doctrines. Many of them believe that you must be baptized in Jesus name in order to be saved. Some go as far to believe that you must also receive the baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues in order to be saved. They are very deep into legalism concerning the scriptures and don't have the freedom of knowing that we are saved by faith in Christ and being justified by His blood.

It is sad really though because some of them are evermore trying to please God out of fearing that they won't measure up to salvation unless they do everything just right according to their teachers. We are blessed to be justified by faith and having peace with God. You are right though about not going back because many of them will try to persuade you very diligently. They are all about controlling everybody in their group to conform to their doctrines.

Blessings to you and yours my brother as go where God leads you!

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2008/10/13 0:34

Later, after posting this I thought of something else that may help a tad bit, but only a tad bit.

Around 1970 my dad felt convicted by the Holy Spirit that he needed to wear a beard. Hearing him share this incident will leave one no doubt that he really was convicted. He could not give a Biblical justification for wearing one, just that he felt the LORD telling him to. What benefit he derived from that, I do not know other than that he was obedient and that is the only reason to do what ever the LORD is asking of you.

ginnyrose

Re:, on: 2008/10/13 7:39

I have a goatee... salt & pepper colored. Keep it trimmed close, tho my wife complains from time to time that it's too prickly. If I have a meeting w/clients I shave the rest of my face, but generally only shave the rest of my beard twice a week. No religious custom, just don't like shaving very often.

The fact is, we are not under the law. Anyone who thinks they are spiritual, or judges another's spirituality by whether or not they have a beard is wrong.

That said, if someone feels convicted they should have a beard, and they do so unto the Lord... that's wonderful. Same for women with head coverings. I completely respect a woman who wears a headcovering if she has a conviction about it

. There is nothing wrong with it if it is done unto the Lord.

But they should not feel "more spiritual" than others, and should respect those who do not share their conviction.

And the same is reversed for those who do not share their conviction.

Krispy

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2008/10/15 2:50

Krispy wrote:

Quote:
-----Same for women with head coverings. I completely respect a woman who wears a headcovering if she has a conviction about it. There is nothing wrong with it if it is done unto the Lord.

Come on Krispy - to equate the wearing of the head covering with the wearing of the beard is not even on the same page!! You know better than that!

There is no NT scripture detailing whether a male should wear facial hair, unless you take into consideration the concept of being effeminate where the growing of a beard would counteract this appearance.

NT Scripture devotes sixteen verses to this subject - you know that! No female that I know who wears one would ever consider it to be in the same category of males who sport a goatee! You can do better than this in interpreting scripture...

ginnyrose

Re:, on: 2008/10/15 7:30

Quote:
-----NT Scripture devotes sixteen verses to this subject - you know that! No female that I know who wears one would ever consider it to be in the same category of males who sport a goatee! You can do better than this in interpreting scripture...

Yes, there are sixteen verses on this subject of head coverings... and in the end Paul concludes rather clearly that a woman's hair is her covering.

So in a sense it is the same because both are non-issues in my understanding. However, if a woman concludes otherwise, I respect that.

Thats all I meant, Ginny. Scripture does not command a woman wear a clothed head covering anymore than it commands a man to wear a beard.

If you disagree with that, thats fine. I dont break fellowship with anyone over this issue... because it isnt an issue.

Krispy

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/10/15 10:55

I am thinking as you krispy, that it is not something we break fellowship over. I am certain Jesus had a beard, since he fulfilled the law. I heard the command from God that one should not cut the beard, have to do with nakedness. That the beard was to cover the throat. I think we maybe miss the message from God if that is the case. We discuss beard or not. God wanted to cover us properly.

It is hard for us to understand, since nakedness is the normal today.

Surly we know God dont do any unnecessary when creating things, he created man with facial hair for a reason. If the only reason was to cover the throats of the priests in HIS presence then be it so. But its good to discuss. If nothing else it shows how serious God sees nakedness and showing of our bodies.

But i agree on this is something we need to be convicted about for ourselves. I think it is under the freedom, as with the food. The vision peter had in acts. Id like to se more brethren with beard tho :-)

Re:, on: 2008/10/15 11:59

I grew a beard... sorta... when I got out of the service. Kept it trimmed pretty close (I always have that "scruffy" look). But then it went mostly grey, so I shaved it down to a goatee. When I shaved I looked 10 years younger, lol. Premature grey. But hey, at least I dont have to deal with going bald!

Krispy

Re: Question about facial hair..., on: 2008/10/15 14:31

Hi all,

When I first moved to WA the first thing I wanted to do was find a good church. I didn't know the differences in denominations at that time so I went to at least 8 different churches. One was the United Pentecostal. That morning my little girls asked if they could wear lipstick so I let them wear a light pink, something just for color.

When I went to the church, the people were friendly but I noticed the women all wore dresses (no problem), had their hair in buns, no one wore any jewelry except wedding rings or a watch and definately no makeup. I did. The Sunday school class lesson was on being clean on the inside and outside.. I still remember the diagram of four cups, the first dirty inside and out going to the fourth clean inside and out. The teacher went on to explain how we need to be clean inside and out, but if I remember correctly the focus was on your appearance. Oddly, the church sermon was on the very same topic. I felt bad, not for myself with my makeup, but for my daughters. I felt they were being judged for wearing lipstick. Maybe just have been my perception.

Anyway, I learned later that if I had gone to that church for any length of time, they would have begun to pressure me to adhere to their standard. Since then I have become more modest in my appearance because of what Christ has done in me.

Do I still wear makeup? Yes. When Paul talked about women and their appearance, he meant that women should not place their focus on the outward appearance but on the inward beauty. So what does all that have to do with the topic? Man has a habit of pressing on others a standard that isn't in the Bible. Christ looked every bit the Jew (if he didn't he would never have been allowed to read from the Torah or even enter the Temple). No one could find fault with his appearance. The fault the Pharisees found was in his words.

Our appearance should never purposely offend others (unless it is something that is clearly permitted in scripture), nor should we try to impose our own preferences of appearance on others. If you feel inclined to wear a head covering, go for it. If you wish to have a beard, as far as I know there is no biblical prohibition. These are not issues of doctrine. If that church wants to have a dress code or rules regarding hair, fine. I have bigger issues with their "Oneness" and other doctrine. You don't have to attend that church. It isn't the only church and may not even be a good church. You have to pray about where God wants you to go and get involved there. Happy hunting...

Re:, on: 2008/10/15 14:49

Excellent post. I think any logically thinking Christian will understand what Paul was discussing when he addressed outward adornment. He never says not to wear jewelry or makeup, but to not let it define who you are.

We have a saying here in NC concerning makeup: "If the barn needs paintin'... paint it!"

By the way, the church you described is very much akin to Pentecostal Holiness. Strong emphasis on outward appearances. It's funny they don't wear jewelry etc... and miss the heart of Paul's message about not letting outward appearances define who you are in Christ... yet they do the very same thing by NOT wearing jewelry, make-up etc...

Well thought out post, and welcome to SI!

Krispy

Re:, on: 2008/10/15 15:09

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Well thought out post, and welcome to SI!

Krispy

Yea, I hate to go on feeling when it comes to clothing but if I feel undressed I put more on, if it feels sleazy it probably is, if I feel holier than thou than I'm probably overkilling it. Is that a word?

Re: Question about facial hair... - posted by JCGarc55, on: 2008/10/15 15:37

Hello Chris,
my friend and pastor noticed your post here but is not registered. We want to let you know you are more than welcome to visit our church. We are located in the South Bay in San Jose. You can visit our website to learn more about our church and there are free sermons you can download there as well. Here is our link:

(www.lgchurch.com) Lighthouse Gospel Church in San Jose, Ca

Sorry for my brevity but I'm at work right now. I hope you are able to visit. Actually we have a men's bible study this Thursday night at 7pm.

the Lord bless you!

bro. Jeremy

Re: - posted by luke133, on: 2008/10/15 18:09

I would just like to mention for Krispy's sake that it's not possible for hair to be THE covering because I believe in verse 6 Paul says that if a woman is not covered let her be shorn, for that is the same as if she were shorn or shaven. If you "plug in" the hair interpretation here it reads if her hair is cut off then let it be cut off for that is the same as if it were cut off. It's also worth noting that Paul uses a different Greek word for covering throughout the passage and then changes it in verse 15, which supports the interpretation that he is using the natural covering(v.15)to support his argument for an additional covering.