

**General Topics :: Question Concerning Head Covering:****Question Concerning Head Covering: - posted by 4GIVEN1, on: 2010/4/28 9:54**

What does the bible teach? Is it important? If so, why? If not, why not? Please share your conviction on this matter.

Re: Question Concerning Head Covering:, on: 2010/4/28 11:04

Paul makes it clear in scripture that God has given the woman her long hair as a covering. However, if someone wears a head covering because in their heart they are honoring God by doing it, go for it.

1 Corinthians 11:15

Personally, I don't think it's a sin either way. It's a heart issue.

Krispy

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2010/4/28 11:06

Greetings 4Given1

This topic has been discussed in past threads, if you are interested you could also do a search and pull up the older threads as well to read through:)

Krispy: after reading what you posted about a woman's hair being her covering I got to thinking, do you think then it would be sinful for a woman to cut her hair? I mean if it is her covering? This is a question that has been on my mind and that I have thought about.

God Bless

mj

Re: - posted by 4GIVEN1, on: 2010/4/28 12:16

5But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

6For 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.

then what do these verses mean with hair being the covering?

they sure dont seem to imply that hair is the covering

Re: , on: 2010/4/28 12:38

4given... you ignoring how Paul wrapped up his discourse... which is in verses 15&16. Context. Context. Context.

Krispy

Re: , on: 2010/4/28 12:41

MJ... how long is long? How short is short? I think each person needs to seek out the Lord on these things and do what does not hinder your relationship with God. If your conscience bothers you because you have short hair... grow it long. If you have shorter hair and you are in a right relationship with God and you feel no compulsion to grow it long... then let no one judge you.

That's a Biblical principle that Paul taught as well in other places.

Krispy

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/4/28 12:48

4GIVEN1,

I understand your point and agree.

In the history of the church it was understood to be this way. Headcoverings were worn by Christian women regardless of denomination. It has only been in the recent 60 +/- years that this practice has been abandoned by Christian woman. And with its abandonment it has exposed females to all kinds of grief.

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by RoseM (), on: 2010/4/28 16:27

I started covering my head a few months ago. The first two articles that you can find here really helped my husband I see that head coverings were appropriate for this day and age.

The first article is an expository look and the passage and the second article goes into the historical use of head-coverings in the first century.

We found the articles not overly biased in one direction. It seems as though the author carefully looked at the facts and came to conclusion that woman were to cover their head today.

Re: - posted by KathleenP (), on: 2010/4/28 16:54

If you read the verses more closely, it says "when praying or prophesying" twice. I had never read this until a couple of months ago. It gave me such peace and now I know if I'm praying or prophesying what to do!

Krispy, I know what you mean about context. So many have been in agony about wearing dresses, but when you read the scriptures concerning this, (someone help me please with the verses), it also points out that men are not to wear women's apparel as well. When I read the entire thing, I realized that it was in reference to dressing as to appear as a man or woman by the opposite sex which is an abomination. We must remember that people have been sinning in this manner for a long time. There is nothing new under the sun!

I wear woman's clothing, and also needed peace about this because I am a mail carrier and had to wear slacks for this job. My route is my ministry so this is important.

Alas though, the Word says, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Please forgive me if I have gotten this scripture a bit off; I'm just home from work.

The most important thing is that I fully respect anyone for the choices that they make and have peace with. If I am around anyone that wears a headcovering or skirts, I will abide by their desires. I have a very dear sister in the Lord who is a Mennonite who insists that I dress as I feel, only with modesty.

I hope this blesses someone.

Re: Question Concerning Head Covering: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2010/4/28 17:07

My suggestion is to read the text in 1. Cor 11 with the intention wanting to observe what it says. The text is not hard to understand, you do not have to be a theologian or greek scholar. If you want to contextualize it before you want to obey it, you will not understand it properly. I do believe head-covering is an ordinance that expresses a biblical understanding of headship. God is the head of Christ, Christ is the head of man, man the head of women. It is a small commandment, not meant to oppress women, but a privilege.

My wife observes it and I do not judge all the others in our church who don't. It does not make her more spiritual. Here is an extensive study about it from G.W. North

<http://mp3.biblebase.com/pdfs/signofauthority.pdf>

Re: - posted by wind_blows, on: 2010/4/28 17:54

Hi

For me I have prayed about this and I feel strongly that it is a heart issue. I believe it is all about having a willing heart to be submissive to the covering/authority God has placed over you. I agree that it is a heart issue, if you feel convicted to wear an actual hat or some kind of cloth then you should do so. For me I do feel that a woman hair is her covering and so I do not wear a hat or other outer covering, my hair is my covering.

As far as a woman cutting her hair, I do think that its fine to cut your hair and again its a heart issue. I do not think that women should cut their hair so short that they appear to be a man. I think you should still be able to see that she is a female:) I have had really long hair in the past and then had some cut off, just recently I had my hair cut up to the top of my shoulders to get some of the weight off for summer. I do not feel that this is going against scripture because you can still easily see that I am a woman(at least I hope so:)

For those sisters who feel the Lord is leading them to wear a covering I say that is awesome and walk in what the Lord has for you ladies!

in Him
ellie

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2010/4/28 18:32

Hello...

I have looked into this issue intently and prayerfully several times. I looked at the Scriptures about this and the history of both the Church and society. I arrived at a personal conclusion that this passage is speaking about a natural covering of hair and not an earthly, material covering made by people.

I just can't find enough Scripture to actually base a definitive doctrine on such a matter. I Corinthians 11 is the passage that is often quoted as the proof for such a practice. However, the passage itself concludes, "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: FOR HER HAIR IS GIVEN HER FOR A COVERING" (I Corinthians 11:14-15). Thus, it appears that this covering is...a woman's hair.

I am interested in the claim that women have historically covered their heads. I have heard this argument before. However, outside of sectarian practice, I have never found a specific, credible reference that reinforces the idea that this was universally embraced by the people of God around the world. Rather, the entire passage seems to consider NATURE. It was unnatural for women to shave their heads. It is unnatural for men to wear their hair like a woman.

Now, I will admit that I could be wrong about this -- as is true with any practice or view that is not clearly spelled out by Scripture. This brings up something that I think we should consider. There are many sects that take a single passage and turn it into an "indisputable doctrine." In fact, cults like the Mormons have taken a single passage about "baptism for the dead" (I Corinthians 15:29) and turned it into a central practice.

Other cults and some legitimate sects and local congregations have done the same. They take a personal view about a matter in Scripture and then surround themselves by others with the same view. Some churches literally make such things a mandatory practice. I have been to congregations where certain peculiar doctrinal views or practices were a REQUIREMENT to continue fellowship in that particular congregation.

I have no problem with a woman who chooses to cover her head with a manufactured material covering. However, I think that it is unwise to demand such adherence from others...or make such practice a criteria for fellowship. My brother-in-law and his family attended a congregation like this. The pastor and congregation were eager to get them involved in the various ministries of the local church. However, after a few months passed where they still didn't embrace those particular doctrines, they were politely told that they no longer could permit their involvement. I don't think that our love for one another -- and a condition for fellowship -- should be based upon something so unclear from God's Word.

Re: , on: 2010/4/28 19:06

What I find interesting about this subject is this. I have travelled in many parts of the world, and almost without exception, Christian men would not wear a hat inside of a Church, regardless of culture. Yet in the case of a Christian woman covering her head, many times we fall back on the cultural argument. If it crosses all cultural barriers for men to take their hats off when going into church, I wonder why it is not the same for woman? I think the Scriptures are clear, but each must be persuaded, for we answer to the Lord in these matters I believe. God knows the heart, if there is any other reason why the ladies would not want to cover their heads in church, then He knows the things of the heart.....brother Frank

Re: - posted by KathleenP (), on: 2010/4/28 20:01

Yes Frank, we must be persuaded for our own conscience sake. My prayer and research on these things were for my personal benefit, because I so desire to please the Lord.

To love my neighbor as myself should be the plumbline to measure things by.

Some of the most cold, judgemental people I've met had all of the physical standards honed to perfection. The problem was that their hearts gave them away. His meaning of holiness and our holiness are often opposed to each other.

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiiss (), on: 2010/4/28 20:12

Hi Brother Frank...

I don't see this as a "cultural" argument.

I simply don't think that this is enough in Scripture to make it a required practice or a standard that must be upheld to participate in a congregation. Further, I think that it is unwise to break fellowship with a believer (or a congregation) over something as silly as whether or not a woman wears a manufactured piece of cloth on her head.

Quote:
-----God knows the heart, if there is any other reason why the ladies would not want to cover their heads in church, then He knows the things of the heart.

I suppose that we could also see the reverse as true too. There are some women who do not cover their heads with a manufactured cloth simply because they see nothing in Scripture that indicates that they would need to. The majority of believing women in the Church do NOT feel compelled to wear such material atop their hair BECAUSE they don't see such a mandate in Scripture. It has little-to-nothing to do with culture and everything to do with seeing a Scriptural mandate.

Unfortunately, there are some congregations (including one that I visited last year) where they equate the cloth covering as a mandate of "apostolic Christianity." They make it clear that a lack of such a cloth is a "rejection" of a tenet of the apostolic faith.

The Scriptures say that something is established in the testimony of two or three witnesses. Perhaps the same is true of doctrines and practices in the Church. Are there other New Testament passages that would specifically support any such mandate? I know of the I Corinthians 11 reference (which I feel is speaking about a woman's hair as a covering -- as explained in I Corinthians 11:15), however, are there any other passages?

General Topics :: Question Concerning Head Covering:

Re: , on: 2010/4/28 20:45

Hi Chris, I was making no reference to you in my reply. The last thing I want to do is get into a disagreement on this subject. I agree with Kathleen's statement. If congregations mandate this then I certainly do not agree with that. Let each be persuaded on this issue.....brother Frank

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/4/28 22:10

Many years ago "Christianity Today" printed an article dealing with this issue. As I recall the writer made a very interesting point that I would like to share.

If 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 is not asking godly ladies to wear a head covering, then how are you going to deal with the headship issue as pertaining to God, Christ, and men?

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiiss (), on: 2010/4/28 22:56

Hi Sister Ginny...

I think that the answer to your question is that Christians do believe in spiritual coverings (God, Christ and men)...but that most Christian women believe that the physical covering in 1 Corinthians 11 refers to their hair.

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

But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: FOR HER HAIR IS GIVEN HER FOR A COVERING."

- 1 Corinthians 11:14-15

Re: , on: 2010/4/28 23:39

Hi Ginney, thought this may be helpful. This is what Matthew Henry says about the contentious part of the Scripture in regard to this subject.....

"VII. He sums up all by referring those who were contentious to the usages and customs of the churches, 1Co_11:16. Custom is in a great measure the rule of decency. And the common practice of the churches is what would have them govern themselves by. He does not silence the contentious by mere authority, but lets them know that they would appear to the world as very odd and singular in their humour if they would quarrel for a custom to which all the churches of Christ were at that time utter strangers, or against a custom in which they all concurred, and that upon the ground of natural decency. It was the common usage of the churches for women to appear in public assemblies, and join in public worship, veiled; and it was manifestly decent that they should do so. Those must be very contentious indeed who would quarrel with this, or lay it aside."brother Frank

Re: - posted by RoseM (), on: 2010/4/29 20:30

My issue with the idea that the woman's hair is all that Paul is talking about in this passage is found in this verse:

"Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head--it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head."

This makes zero sense if we're simply talking about hair. For the sake of making my point, let me re-word these verses with the hair as a covering interpretation in mind:

"Every man who prays or prophesies with his hair long dishonors his head, but every wife who prays or prophesies with short hair dishonors her head--it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if a wife will cut her hair short, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her keep her hair long."

Read like this it is absolutely nonsensical.

General Topics :: Question Concerning Head Covering:

I think that Paul is talking about two coverings, one that nature give (ie. hair) and one that is of fabric, that we put on to show our place. I think that he uses the natural covering of long hair to point out how natural the fabric head covering truly is.

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2010/4/29 21:19

Quote:
-----Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head--it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head."

Had a nice discussion with my husband and feel that my question was answered:)

God bless
mj

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiisss (), on: 2010/4/29 21:36

Hi RoseM...

Oddly enough, I don't find it nonsensical at all. How do you explain the conclusion of the entire passage? "But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: FOR HER HAIR IS GIVEN HER FOR A COVERING." - I Corinthians 11:15

Now, are there any other passages in Scripture by which those who adhere to such a strict interpretation base their belief?

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/4/29 21:56

Quote:
-----Now, are there any other passages in Scripture by which those who adhere to such a strict interpretation base their belief?

No. But how often does God have to tell a person something in order for it to be understood? God told Adam and Eve only once to not eat of the tree....

Scripture teaches us more about headship, head covering and the reasons for it then he does communion (the taking of the bread and wine).

Blessings,
ginnyrose

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiisss (), on: 2010/4/29 22:19

Hi Sister Ginny...

Quote:
-----Scripture teaches us more about headship, head covering and the reasons for it then he does communion (the taking of the bread and wine).

I very much disagree. This passage in I Corinthians 11 is certainly not abundantly clear to all believers -- and certainly not as clear as communion as described in three of the Gospels (and a couple more times in the epistles...including this same chapter to the Corinthians). In fact, many sincere believers (men and women) simply do not embrace an interpretation of I Corinthians 11:3-15 as pertaining to a manufactured piece of cloth worn somewhere on top of a woman's hair. Many of us feel quite convinced through prayerful study that this passage refers to hair (as specifically concluded in I Corinthians 11:15).

As said before, I don't have a problem with men and women who interpret this passage as a mandate for wearing a manufactured piece of cloth on top of their hair. However, I am concerned about pastors and church rules that mandate such a practice as a requirement for fellowship, ministry or involvement or as a physical standard of holiness in others. My wife and I have attended local congregations that held to such a mandate. When we told them that we were believers, we literally saw the eyes look at the lack of a piece of cloth on her head with that "suuuuurrrre you are" look in their eyes. In fact, they even made an extra effort to evangelize us (or "explain the Word of God more adequately") every time we visited.

While I don't think that the believers who adhere to such a practice here on SermonIndex are guilty of such a thing, there are some local congregations (and even sectarian organizations) who do so. There are many Christian women here on SermonIndex and in churches around the world who do not embrace such a practice or see it in Scripture. Yet many of those same women believe in the Scriptural headship of Christ and their husbands. I think that it would be wrong to believe otherwise.

Re: - posted by RoseM (), on: 2010/4/29 22:22

ccchhhrrriiisss said

Quote:
-----Oddly enough, I don't find it nonsensical at all. How do you explain the conclusion of the entire passage? "But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: FOR HER HAIR IS GIVEN HER FOR A COVERING." - I Corinthians 11:15

I don't consider this to be a conclusion. I consider it to be the final argument. Long hair is a natural covering, we know in our hearts that it is good for woman to have hair. The natural covering is pointed out to show that covering one's head with fabric really is natural and good.

Another thing that speaks in defence for Paul speaking of a fabric covering is the testimony of the early church writers. Tertullian points out that the Corinthian woman in 200AD wore physical coverings and claimed that this practice went back to the time of the apostles (I'll find the reference to this if anyone wants it). Clement also mentioned fabric coverings. I find it hard to believe that the interpretation of Paul's writings would have changed so dramatically within only 150 years.

I find it helpful when pondering the interpretation of a certain passage to look to the early church writers to see how they interpreted the passage. They weren't perfect but they were a whole lot more likely to not have mixed in cultural baggage or translation peculiarities into their interpretations.

Re: - posted by sleepless, on: 2010/4/29 23:31

so for a man it is a shame to have any hair since hair is covering. he dishonors his Head (Christ)

I see two different words used when refer to covering.
in verse 6 and verse 15 we do not have the same word for what is translated in English cover.

6 For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head.

15 but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering.

G2619

κατακαλύπτω
katakaluptō
kat-ak-al-oop'-to

From G2596 and G2572; to cover wholly, that is, veil: - cover, hide.

G4018

περιβόλαιον
peribolaion
per-ib-ol'-ah-yon

Neuter of a presumed derivative of G4016; something thrown around one, that is, a mantle, veil: - covering, vesture.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/4/30 7:47

Chris, you and I have been down this road too many times. I know that whenever this topic comes up I know what you will say. I know I cannot help you see it and by the grace of God I hope to remain steadfast in my obedience to this scripture.

I have worn a head covering for many years. There were two times when I was severely tempted to discard its use/application. But God gave me the grace to withstand it. One of the temptations came in the form of "but there are so many of her women out there who are Christians and they don't wear it, so why do I have to?" Another temptation says "I do not want to be different from everybody else on the street!" And I don't...

The wearing of a head covering has given me umpteen opportunities to witness - happens when people ask me "why do you wear that thing on your head?" This gives me many opportunities to speak for the LORD. And I do it with delight and joy, unspeakable. This is just one of the blessings one receives for wearing it.

To me the subject of women in leadership over males become a ridiculous question when application of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 is followed. It becomes a non-issue.

God bless.
ginnyrose

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiisss (), on: 2010/4/30 12:52

Hi Sister Ginnyrose...

Quote:
-----Chris, you and I have been down this road too many times. I know that whenever this topic comes up I know what you will say. I know I cannot help you see it and by the grace of God I hope to remain steadfast in my obedience to this scripture.

Like you, I participate in threads about this subject when it comes up. Like you, I know where you stand. But also just like you, I think that I have the grace to share the insight that I feel the Lord has given me. I am not trying to be contentious...just as I am sure that you aren't either. I just would like to point out that there is some divergence of opinion about this practice even in the Body of Christ here on SermonIndex.

I suppose that I have already articulated views about this passage of Scripture and my concerns about mandating such a practice in the Church. To be clear, I am not at all opposed to women wearing a piece of cloth on their heads. I am not even opposed to women wearing a piece of cloth on their heads because they think that the Scriptures encourage it. Rather, I am concerned that many have taken this practice to an extent that it reminds us of the argument about circumcision in the early Church. It can literally be used to divide the Body of Christ based upon a particular interpretation of a single passage.

There are some congregations that use a particular interpretation of Scripture in how it relates to such a practice as the measuring stick for holiness or involvement/ministry in the local Church. There is no room for an alternate prayerful opinion about this in many of those congregations. While some of them will not consider it essential for salvation, many will still use it as a requirement for any sort of involvement in the local church. Some will even "cast off" those women who do not adhere to the practice.

There are many believers who have sought God about this and have simply arrived to a different understanding of the passage. Just like you, it seems very clear to us. The Textus Receptus of I Corinthians 11:15 speaks about how LONG HAIR ("koma" -- grown, long hair) is for a woman's glory...and HAIR ("kom" -- a head of hair) is given to her for a COVERING ("peribolaion" -- a mantle or veil...from the root "periball" meaning "to put around, surround, or clothe").

I have spoken to my wife, her family and other godly women about this. Several of them have expressed that they could not practice such a thing "in good faith." Many of them explained that the Scriptures do not seem to indicate a requirement or mandate for such a practice, so they simply do not practice it. All of them see their long hair as the natural head covering provided by God. Some of those same women have expressed that they would quickly and gladly practice it IF they thought that the Lord (or even their husbands) required it. Interestingly, many of these women are the most submissive women that I have ever met! They do not even question the notion of women in leadership over males.

Please understand that I am not opposed to women who prayerfully choose to practice such a thing in good faith. It isn't the practice or ritual of the idea that concerns me at all. Like you have pointed out, it is possible for women to wear cloth on top of their head and still be extremely non-submissive to both their husbands AND Christ. It reminds me of being outwardly circumcised yet lacking the "circumcision of the heart" (Romans 2:25-29).

Ultimately, I think that believers (including pastors and overseers) should be careful to allow other believers to have the grace to prayerfully obey as the Lord guides them. I do not think that believing women should be looked down upon as though they are "disobedient" or less spiritual IF they do not interpret that passage the way that others might. I do not think that the placement of a piece of manufactured cloth atop of the head of a woman (or lack thereof) is any sort of definitive indication of the level of submission in a woman. Nor do I think that it should be a condition for involvement in a congregation.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/4/30 15:25

Chris, I would like to ask you a question, OK?

Supposing one day your wife comes to you and says "Honey, you know what? The Holy Spirit has been convicting me that I should wear a head covering as taught in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. Would it be OK if I go ahead and do it?"

What would you say? Would you try to talk her out of it or would you encourage her to go ahead?

ginnyrose

Re: , on: 2010/4/30 16:54

Hi sister Ginnyrose, I thought I would run this past you. I think that you are a balanced woman of God. My wife, whom I love dearly, loves her hair. She spends a lot of money on it and a lot of time on it before leaving the house. In fact, her whole day can be ruined by having a "bad hair day." When I wrote a piece on money a few years ago, what people spent on dogs and ice-cream and alcohol and so on, one of the highest spending activities in the US was the beauty salon and beauty products, it was countless billions.

Would you agree, when it comes to vanity in a woman (and I know many vain men) it would start with the hair? I guess the point I am trying to make is that the Scripture relating to covering ones' hair if you are a lady, could well have something to do with vanity? Much like the call in the Scriptures that calls for "modest," clothes to be worn by the Godly woman. Just some thoughts on the Scripture and how it may be related to humility in its practical application.....brother Frank

ps my wife is not a Christian, I was just using her as an example of a woman who loves her hair :)

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiisss (), on: 2010/4/30 17:10

Hi Sister Ginnyrose...

Quote:
----- Supposing one day your wife comes to you and says "Honey, you know what? The Holy Spirit has been convicting me that I should wear a head covering as taught in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. Would it be OK if I go ahead and do it?"

What would you say? Would you try to talk her out of it or would you encourage her to go ahead?

You have provided a hypothetical scenario in which you provide only two possible choices. However, there is a very real third choice.

I would neither "try to talk her out of it" nor would I "encourage her to go ahead." Rather, as the priest of my home, we would set apart time (again) to prayerfully study this issue.

Now, it would be easy (and unwise) to accuse such an answer as being manipulative, self-serving or derivative of some form of circular reasoning. It is vital to realize that the decision is NOT mine to make. The decision belongs to God.

As the priest of the home, it is my desire to try and know God's heart about the matter. I certainly do not want to be guilty of "talking" her INTO such a decision...or "talking" her OUT of such a decision either. Instead, we want to be led by the Holy Spirit.

Nonetheless, I would encourage my wife to refrain from making a decision or taking a stand on the issue UNTIL we feel that the Lord gave us a directive.

This is a problem that I see with many of the sectarian doctrinal views or practices that tend to divide the Body of Christ. People often feel that they have to make a quick, one-way-or-the-other decision about such matters. However, "I'm not sure yet" is a perfectly viable alternative answer when we are seeking to be led by the Holy Spirit -- because all of us are still confined to seeing "through the glass, darkly" on this side of Eternity (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Unfortunately, the Body of Christ is often fractured by requirements for taking an "absolute" position on a matter of doctrine or practice. I have attended local congregations where they asked me to become a member. However, "Church" membership (and subsequent involvement or participation in sanctioned ministry) required a person to sign off on a list of prerequisite doctrines -- most of which are not essential to Christianity.

There are many things that are undeniable doctrines of the faith. These things serve to unite the Body of Christ under the banner of love. Many of these are listed in the first few verses of Hebrews chapter 6. They are above argument (although there could be some room for discussion and even disagreement). Yet, there shouldn't be anything in them that would cause division, rifts or fractures within the Body of Christ.

A person can open the local phone book and call up any number of local congregations from every denomination. When asking about the requirements for membership or involvement, you begin to notice a trend. Most congregations (and even entire denominations) often serve to gather like-minded believers together in regard to practices or doctrinal peculiarities. That is not necessarily a bad thing in and of itself. However, by default, these congregations often separate fellowship from other believers who merely disagree on certain things. It is almost as if they are saying, "You can be a part of our local Church ONLY IF you adhere to the specific practices and beliefs that we teach." Like I said, these often stray from the indisputable doctrines of the faith and meander into issues that are not clear from the Word of God to all but are presented in a manner that makes one think that they are.

I suppose that this is the greater concern that I have. It isn't about whether or not a woman (or her husband) believes that at some outward physical piece of cloth must be placed upon a woman's head when she prays or prophesies. Rather, it is whether or not such individuals who practice it would hold such an idea as central to their fellowship with other believers. Is it taught from those particular pulpits (and congregational bylaws) as being "absolute" primers for Church involvement and beyond dispute? OR is this taught in a manner that provides for a divergence of opinion about such a practice?

General Topics :: Question Concerning Head Covering:

Unfortunately, I have attended congregations where the former is true, and Christian fellowship was often broken based upon whether or not a woman wears a cloth atop her head.

Now sister, I would like to ask you a question about your own experience. Is this particular practice a prerequisite for involvement in the congregation that you attend? What would happen if a Christian woman entered your congregation who did not feel God leading her into such a practice -- even after years of attendance? Would she (or her husband) be permitted to all of the same opportunities for ministry as you and your husband?

I am not asking this divisively or with any malice. Rather, I am interested in what the experience would be for someone I like my wife to attend such a congregation. We have been to congregations where we would certainly be permitted to attend meetings...but we would not allowed to have any involvement in "leadership" or active ministry simply because of our views on such a matter as this (even if we held to the same views on the roles of women in the home, church and leadership).

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiisss (), on: 2010/4/30 17:13

Hi Frank...

Quote:
-----I guess the point I am trying to make is that the Scripture relating to covering ones' hair if you are a lady, could well have something to do with vanity?

Does the Scripture relate to covering ones' HAIR or covering ones' HEAD?

Re: , on: 2010/4/30 17:42

Chris, to me, he is clearly using the natural example of a woman with her long hair as a covering, to back up his point that a woman should cover her head. You are taking the example and making the point out of it. Even nature, when speaking in those days, and I would argue even these days, teaches that a man with long hair is effeminate and a woman with short hair can look like a man.

Even going back into Genesis we see woman covering themselves with a veil.

Gen 24:65 For she said to the servant, What man is this that walks in the field to meet us? And the servant said, It is my master. Therefore she took a veil and covered herself.

I would just like to add again what Matthew Henry said...

VI. He enforces his argument from the natural covering provided for the woman (1Co_11:13-15): "Judge in yourselves - consult your own reason, hearken to what nature suggests - is it comely for a woman to pray to God uncovered? Should there not be a distinction kept up between the sexes in wearing their hair, since nature has made one? Is it not a distinction which nature has kept up among all civilized nations? The woman's hair is a natural covering; to wear it long is a glory to her; but for a man to have long hair, or cherish it, is a token of softness and effeminacy." Note, It should be our concern, especially in Christian and religious assemblies, to make no breach upon the rules of natural decency.

VII. He sums up all by referring those who were contentious to the usages and customs of the churches, 1Co_11:16. Custom is in a great measure the rule of decency. And the common practice of the churches is what would have them govern themselves by. He does not silence the contentious by mere authority, but lets them know that they would appear to the world as very odd and singular in their humour if they would quarrel for a custom to which all the churches of Christ were at that time utter strangers, or against a custom in which they all concurred, and that upon the ground of natural decency. It was the common usage of the churches for women to appear in public assemblies, and join in public worship, veiled; and it was manifestly decent that they should do so. Those must be very contentious indeed who would quarrel with this, or lay it aside.

You see brother, Paul is enforcing his argument by appealing to nature. There are definitely people who are deliberately contentious of the customs of the church. One could argue that for over 1900 years and also back into Genesis woman

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covered their heads with a veil in certain situations. Now, why, in the last 100 years or less have they decided against that? I cannot answer that question since I am not a woman. All I can say is that I would never wear a hat in church, I just would not. Having said all that, for me personally, I am not going to make an ordinance out of it. If a woman, without a head covering, are acting outside of God's will, then it is they who will suffer for it in their relationship with the Lord....brother Frank

Re: - posted by passerby, on: 2010/4/30 17:59

Are we referring to 1 COR 11:4-15 or rather 1 COR 11:3-16.

It seems to me that the main interest of Paul in the passage is in v3:

...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...

As for the head covering does v16 say anything about it:

...BUT IF ANY MAN SEEM TO BE CONTENTIOUS, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God...

Re: - posted by wind_blows, on: 2010/4/30 18:39

Hi guys

Quote:
-----Chris, to me, he is clearly using the natural example of a woman with her long hair as a covering, to back up his point that a woman should cover her head. You are taking the example and making the point out of it. Even nature, when speaking in those days, and I would argue even these days, teaches that a man with long hair is effeminate and a woman with short hair can look like a man. Even going back into Genesis we see women covering themselves with a veil.

Some of this thread is now starting to become confusing to me? This head covering that some are talking about wearing ...is it a hat or something else? When is worn, is it just in public, while at church, or all the time? Also why would a church make it a issue of fellowship? This is not a salvation issue is it? Also with so much talk about a woman's hair being her covering and glory are you saying that if a woman wears her hair cut to a shorter length that this is sin? If a man wears his hair long is that sin? Didn't men wear their hair longer in Biblical times? I thought they did....????

ellie

Re: , on: 2010/4/30 19:23

Hi Ellie,

This is one of these issues that is no big deal to me. My best advice to anyone is read the Scriptures and go as your led. It was never meant to be a contentious issue. There were certain things that were just accepted, but if there is contentious people that come along and want to do something else, that is between them and the Lord, that is how I read it. The Scriptures talks about when a woman is praying or prophesying, that seems clear enough. There is no sin in long hair, short hair, middle size hair :) Again, the issue is, the Word of God and a persons conscience. In the culture of the day, women would have had long hair, and in fact in almost all cultures up to a relatively short while ago. Dressing "modestly," would be another issue women would have to specifically deal with. Who defines modest? You do, its between you and the Lord. If you stand up to pray or prophesy, then, as a woman, you would have to decide to cover your head or not, again, between you, the Lord and the Word of God. This is not about rules, this is about relationship....brother Frank

General Topics :: Question Concerning Head Covering:

Re: - posted by RoseM (), on: 2010/4/30 20:01

ellie said:

Quote:
-----Some of this thread is now starting to become confusing to me? This head covering that some are talking about wearing...is it a hat or something else? When is worn, is it just in public, while at church, or all the time? Also why would a church make it a issue of fellowship? This is not a salvation issue is it? Also with so much talk about a woman's hair being her covering and glory are you saying that if a woman wears her hair cut to a shorter length that this is sin? If a man wears his hair long is that sin? Didn't men wear their hair longer in Biblical times? I thought they did....????

I'll try to answer some of your questions. In some of the really conservative branches of the Mennonites and the Mennonite Brethren head coverings are considered a standard. I wouldn't say that they are exactly a rule but the members of those churches are convicted that women are to wear a cover. They don't allow women that don't cover into their membership because they consider this an issue of obedience. They consider the commands to be plain and desire to have a church that is pure.

For the Mennonite groups it's usually a bun cover that's always worn. With the Mennonite Brethren it's usually something more like a doily that the women wear during services (while praying and prophesying). I'm sure other groups have other variations. I don't know of any groups that use hats but I'm sure that they're out there somewhere.

Here's an interesting link to pictures through out the ages of women with head coverings: <http://www.scrollpublishing.com/store/head-covering-history.html> If you google head coverings you'll see a wide variety of styles that are used today. Sometimes they're also called veils, although I've never seen Christian covers that cover the face.

In my particular church we have some women that cover their heads all the time and others that don't at all. I wear a normal bandanna all the time for this purpose. I consider it simple and not very attention grabbing.

For the people that claim that the hair is a covering I really would like to know if they consider a woman cutting her hair short or men growing theirs long to be a sin. That would only seem logical.

Archaeological research suggests that Roman and Jewish men had short hair. It's probably a myth that Jesus had long hair. If he did have long hair I imagine it was probably really greasy, unlike the pictures that we usually see of him :)

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/4/30 20:22

I see there are a couple posts directed towards me so I will answer each individually....

Your question about beauty and the money spent on it and that it would start with the hair. Good question...

Frank, I would have to say 'yes'. The one reason is that people will spend money on what is so very important to them. And then there is another thing that may surprise some here on SI.

I have friends who used to wear a head covering but discarded its use because they did not believe its teaching is applicable for today.

After they discarded it, they went to beauty salons to have their hair done. One of these ladies was actually honest enough to admit that now that she cuts her hair she spend a whole lot more time fixing them than what she did before when she put them up (and she did it nicely) and wore a head covering.

(This is an aside but so many times when females discard its (head covering) use, they lose a lot of natural beauty. One lady who discarded it made the remark that she was pretty before she cut her hair and ditched the covering.)

Beauty means a lot to most females, even those that wear a head covering. This love for beauty is inherent to a female, I think. You will find it expressed in various ways...

I do not know if this answers your question. If it doesn't just ask again...

Blessings,
ginnyrose

General Topics :: Question Concerning Head Covering:

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/4/30 20:53

Quote:

-----Is this particular practice a prerequisite for involvement in the congregation that you attend?

Quote:

The answer is 'yes'.

Quote:

-----What would happen if a Christian woman entered your congregation who did not feel God leading her into such a practice -- even after years of attendance? Would she (or her husband) be permitted to all of the same opportunities for ministry as you and your husband?

What would happen? You would not feel comfortable and look for another church more to your liking.

Chris, scripture informs us - in 1 Corinthians 1:10 - about unity in the brotherhood. It is impossible for any brotherhood to think exactly alike, but there are some doctrinal issues that are vital for the health of the brotherhood to all be in agreement. This will impact its ability to function as an organism - 1 Corinthians uses the analogy of the body to illustrate this concept.

There are too many divisions in the 'church' simply because men have chosen to listen to another man instead of Christ or the WORD, including the epistles.

1 Corinthians 1:11-13. Amos 3:3.

The church that resided at Corinth had many problems and these were addressed in 1 Corinthians. As one reads through this book you could easily think he is addressing the modern day church. If culture/doctrine matters nothing there would be no 1 Corinthians. But consider what Brother Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:37.

Did I answer your question, Chris? And I could imagine the next one.....:-)

ginnyrose

Re: , on: 2010/4/30 21:07

Now that we have covered this topic
we can now discuss the wearing of wigs and hair pieces.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/4/30 21:34

Ellie,

I will share some exposition on 1 Corinthians 11:1-16.

Paul praises the church at Corinth for keeping the ordinances as they were delivered to them. v. 1

Headship: v. 3

1. The head of every man is Christ.
2. The head of woman is the man.
3. The head of Christ is God

Praying:

1. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. v. 4 (According to v. 3 this would be Jesus)

2. Every woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head. (According to v. 3 it would mean a man and by extension, Jesus.) To pray uncovered is as though she were shaven.

3. For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head.

A. For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man

1. Man did not originate from women.
 - a. Man was not created for woman's sake
 - b. Man is the image and glory of God.
2. Woman originated from man.
 - a. Woman was created for man's sake
 - b. Woman is the glory of man.
3. However, neither male nor female is independent from the other - all things originate from God

Purpose of Headcovering

1. Woman needs to have a sign of authority on her head because of the angels. (Think about that!)

Practical application:

1. Long hair on males honors his head.
2. Long hair on a woman honors her head.
3. Her hair is given to her for a covering.

This is something all the churches practiced, not just the one at Corinth.

NOTE: I also used the NASB in some of my wording.

NOTE: v.6: cover in the Greek says:

κατακαλύπτω
kat-ak-al-oo'-to
From G2596 and G2572; to cover wholly, that is, veil: - cover, hide.

Hope this helps...

ginnyrose

I set this up in outline form but it does not appear such in the post. SIGH

Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2010/4/30 22:33

Quote:

-----Is this particular practice a prerequisite for involvement in the congregation that you attend?

Quote:

The answer is 'yes'.

Quote:

-----What would happen if a Christian woman entered your congregation who did not feel God leading her into such a practice -- even after years of attendance? Would she (or her husband) be permitted to all of the same opportunities for ministry as you and your husband?

What would happen? You would not feel comfortable and look for another church more to your liking. {quote}

This is really sad to me and I think this is where so many miss what the scriptures are actually saying.

We are to preach the whole counsel of the word of God. Paul has stated that he became all things to all people that he might win them to Christ.

In Acts 15 we are told that the Gentiles did not have to keep the law but needed to do 4 necessary things. We have been called to liberty but we are not to use it for occasions of the flesh but by love serve one another.

If we could only get the heart of what Paul was trying to convey in 1cor 11:3-16 we would not be using this passage 2000 years later to make Christian women feel like they can't fellowship with other Christian women because they don't wear a piece of cloth on their head or because they cut their hair.

I believe a person can come to a place where they don't desire to dress in a worldly way to attract attention to themselves nor do they desire to dress in a religious way that would also attract attention to themselves. Jesus reproved the Pharisees for their outward appearance but their inside wasn't right with God.

It took Paul several paragraphs to talk about headship and the women to recognize her husband as her head and not to shame him. Many like me and my wife were never raised in a custom that was religious with veils and head coverings. I was saved from all kinds of hellish sins and behavior. My wife has been saved and filled with the Holy Ghost also and God has used her to pray and set people free. She honors me as her husband. She has a meek and quiet spirit and never puts herself forward. Many ladies have called upon my wife to pray for them. My wife has never tried to usurp authority over me and I have never felt at any time that my wife is not submissive to me because she doesn't wear a cloth on her head.

I believe Paul was talking about customs and what was appropriate at the time. He saw that the Godly women were to observe the customs of that day to distinguish themselves from the loose women that were so prevalent at Corinth. I think it has a lot to do with the customs of the day and what society is doing. We are to be trying to win people to the Lord Jesus Christ and be conformed to his character. We shouldn't let a custom cause Christian people not to be able to fellowship.

Blessings to all!

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/4/30 23:26

rbanks,

FYI, churches that require their sisters to wear a headcovering also stipulate their members to be born-again and have the evidence of the indwelling spirit. It is not all about headcoverings. This application is a tiny part of what it means to be a brotherhood.

Brotherhood means we are there to help each other in times of need, whatever that need may be. We exist as a body to encourage each other. While this is a function of a brotherhood, these behaviours are not limited to just the brotherhood. We do work to help others as the need presents itself, be it spiritual, or material. That is how I as a woman who believes in the headcovering can come onto SI and work to encourage others in their walk with the LORD. This is everybody's mission in life: to build up the Believers and challenge sin wherever it is encountered.

rbanks, I am glad you and your wife were saved from a sinful lifestyle. Walking with the LORD is a growing experience. We are being changed from glory to glory. Personally, I am appalled at the immaturity what was me in the past. The LORD had to teach me a lot and am still learning. Today, most of it is in the area of trust.

rbanks, are you familiar with Denny Kenneston? He and his wife were called out of the hippie culture. Mr. & Mrs. David Bercot were JW's when God called them. There are other Christians who came from ungodly backgrounds who later embraced the headcovering. One does not have to be born in this culture in order to embrace it. There are many who were born into it and later abandoned it. And the opposite is true as well.

Quote:

----- I think it has a lot to do with the customs of the day and what society is doing.

I know some people say this, but I was also told this custom was not wide spread. Some would differ with me on this, but really it matters little, don't you think? Scripture does not promote prevailing culture unless it is one instituted by God. Actually, all culture should be inspired by the WORD...now what would a culture like that look like?

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/4/30 23:28

Quote:

-----Now that we have covered this topic we can now discuss the wearing of wigs and hair pieces.

So what is the question? Color? Curly or powdered?

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by wind_blows, on: 2010/4/30 23:47

Hi Ginnyrose and RoseM

Thank you for your replies. You both answered my questions:)

Ginnyrose you wrote in your post about your church and attending that those who do not wear a head covering would probably want to go somewhere else to a church that was more to their liking. That is a really honest answer and I appreciate that.

Edited: Decided to remove my question... it was unfair to ask and I do not want to upset anyone or make them uncomfortable.

There has been much shared here and I can see this is a very important topic for all who have contributed.

I did share this over with my husband and after reading and praying about this he told me he does not see that scripture supports me wearing a covering on my head and would be uncomfortable with me doing so.

in HIM

ellie

Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2010/5/1 0:08

It seems like maybe those who decided to come out from the head covering is because they didn't want to isolate themselves from the majority of the women.

Like you said earlier my wife couldn't fellowship with your group because of the head covering. She would either have to conform or she couldn't fellowship with you all.

I believe God would have us to reach as many people as possible and this requirement isolates your group from reaching and fellowshiping with the majority.

Maybe this makes you truly happy but I couldn't be happy isolating my ministry from the majority.

Blessings to you!

Re: Question Concerning Head Covering: - posted by savannah, on: 2010/5/1 0:39

"1 Cor. 11:2-16 clearly states that women should have their heads covered while praying or prophesying. It also ranks among the most difficult of all passages in the NT. The intent of this article is not to give an exhaustive analysis of this passage, and so no attempt will be made to deal with every issue that surrounds this passage. Rather, this chapter will show whether or not Paul sees head covering as a normative church custom; or indeed, whether Paul sees this as a valid custom for any church, even for those of his own time.

Interpreters of this passage have found themselves in one of two camps when deciding what relevance this passage has for the church today. On the one hand, there are those who see this passage as having relevance for churches in Paul's day (though perhaps not all churches in Paul's day) and either no relevance for today or a modified relevance for today. Those in this camp include Christian feminists who see absolutely nothing in this passage to speak to the church today, as well as traditionalists who see an abiding principle of headship and submission but no binding custom of head coverings for women. In the other camp are those who see not only headship of men and submission of

women, but also a command from Paul that head coverings for women are to be a custom of church practice throughout the ages.

Concerning the position of those in the first camp, it is unwise to explain away NT commands using the guise of cultural relativity. Cultural relativity is a very dubious principle upon which to operate. It can, in fact, be used to dismiss any or every part of the NT. Needless to say, we can't have that!

But even if one wanted to make an exception to the rule that commands in Scripture cannot be considered culturally relative, there still is no basis for doing so in this passage. There is absolutely nothing in this passage to suggest that Paul sees a cultural limitation to his injunction about head coverings. On the contrary, every reason Paul gives for his injunction is arguably timeless and universal in scope. His reasons include the chain of headship (God-Christ-man-woman, v 3), the priority of creation (vv 8-9), the angels (v 10), and nature itself (v 14). None of these things is temporary or culturally limited, but rather timeless, and indicate that Paul's injunction must be seen as timeless. Moreover, Paul calls this practice a "custom" of the church (v 16), and a "tradition" which he has handed down and to which he expects churches to hold (v 2).

Those of the second camp (i.e., those who see head coverings as a binding church practice) obviously enjoy the luxury of being able to argue the previous points. They also have the advantage of taking Paul's words at face value and can apply the passage without compromising hermeneutic integrity. There is the stronger position based upon the preponderance of evidence. However, four or five points of grammar in this passage force a look at a third position.

Before positing the third position it will be necessary to look at several key elements of Paul's argument in this passage. First, it is notable that Paul takes one tone from vv 3-10, but from vv 11-16 takes quite another tone. Verse 11 seems to be the pivot point of the two tones. The key phrase in v 11 is "In the Lord, however." In the passage immediately preceding this phrase Paul makes several observations that, after v 11, he seems to balance. For instance, in vv 8-9 Paul seems to be arguing that man is completely independent of woman and, indeed, that woman is completely dependent on man ("for man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man"). Paul's point seems to be two-fold: 1) man does not rely upon woman for his existence, and 2) woman does rely upon man for her existence, and, indeed, her existence is for the very purpose of benefiting man.

Yet, beginning with v 11, Paul seems to add balance to what he said in vv 8-9. Paul argues in v 11 that, yes, while it is true woman is not independent of man, "in the Lord" neither is "man independent of woman." The statement in vv 8-9 is true in itself, but does not go quite far enough. Man and woman are interdependent; neither one can claim independence. Paul expands upon this in v 12. In essence he says, yes, it is true that woman was made from man, but "also the man is born of the woman"—hence, interdependence, and hence, vv 8-9 are balanced by vv 11-12.

One last balance seems to be between v 7 and v 12. In v 7 Paul seems to argue that man was made in the image of God but woman was not. Instead, she was made in the image of man. The phrase "image and glory" is what is technically referred to as a hendiadys (lit., "one through two") and means simply that Paul uses two words to refer to one thing. So, when he says that man was created in the "image and glory of God" and that woman was created in the "glory of man," he means the same thing in both instances (Paul uses only one word, "glory," in the second phrase to represent the entire phrase "image and glory"). However, the idea that woman was made in the image of man (not untrue in itself, but misrepresentative of the fact that both man and woman were made in the image of God—see Ge 1:27) is balanced in v 12: "But everything comes from God." If v 9 makes the point that woman has her source in man, v 12 places it in proper perspective by pointing out that "everything" (i.e., both man and woman) has its source in God.

So, why does Paul make statements in vv 7-10 that he later must balance in vv 11-12? Before answering this question it will be necessary to reconstruct the occasion of Paul's response in this section of his letter. The best starting point is in v 16. There Paul gives us a clue as to what is going on. He says, "If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God." It seems relatively clear from Paul's words that someone (or, perhaps more likely, some group) was insisting that the church take a specific position on women's head coverings. Most standard translations (including the NASB and the NIV) render Paul as saying, "we have no other practice." This would indicate that the "contentious" group was insisting that women should not wear head coverings. Paul then would be correcting this group by appealing to a universal church custom of head coverings for women. What is so surprising (and what is the very thing that caused me to rethink this passage) is that the Greek word translated "other" in v 16 (toioutos) never means "other" anywhere else; and, in fact, means only "such" ("we have no such custom"). Needless to say, this drastically changes the meaning of Paul's words. If Paul is saying "we have

no such custom of women wearing head coverings,Â” then obviously the Â”contentiousÂ” group was insisting that women should wear head coverings.

Moreover, when viewed this way, it becomes increasingly clear why Paul would make several points before v 11 only to counter them after v 11. It also explains why at the beginning of this passage Paul praises the Corinthians for not giving in to the pressure of the contentious group but, instead, for Â”holding to the teachings just as I passed them on to youÂ” (v 2).

Based upon this information we may assume the following to be true of the Corinthian situation. The Â”contentiousÂ” group had been trying to get the rest of the Corinthians to adopt a custom of women covering their heads with some kind of garment when praying or prophesying. The Corinthians, uncertain as to what to do in this situation, include a section about this teaching in a general letter which they wrote to Paul (see 7:1 for evidence of this letter). In the letter they may have said something to this effect: Â”There are some Christians who have come to us and told us that we are supposed to have our women wear head garments during the meeting. We don’t recall you saying anything about this. So far we have not changed the way we have been doing things, but we would like to get your thoughts on this teaching.Â” To which Paul replies, Â”I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings just as I passed them on to you.Â” In other words, Â”I praise you for not changing the way I taught you to do things, especially in light of the fact that you were under pressure by this group to modify your meetings.Â”

Paul then begins to outline in vv 3-10 the building blocks upon which those in the Â”contentiousÂ” group have built their teaching that women need to wear garments as head coverings. The important thing to remember here is that Paul does not disagree with the building blocks used by those in the Â”contentiousÂ” group to develop their theology of garments as head coverings. On the contrary, he agrees that a woman does indeed need a head covering when praying or prophesying. Everything that Paul says through v 10 is something that Paul firmly believes. He believes that woman was created in the image of man; he believes that woman is dependent on man and that man was created independent on woman—he believes all of this to be true. But he does not believe it to be the whole truth. Yes, woman was, in a sense, created in the image of man (v 7) (it was from Adam that Eve was created), but ultimately she, too, was created in the image of God (v 12). Yes, woman is dependent upon man for her initial existence (v 9), but so is man dependent upon woman for his further existence (vv 11-12).

So, while Paul does not disagree with the theological foundation of those in the Â”contentiousÂ” group, neither does he think they have gone far enough in building their theology. At best they have a lopsided view of a woman’s status before God. Likewise, Paul does not disagree that, on the basis of male headship, women should have a Â”coveringÂ” on their heads when praying or prophesying. His disagreement is with the application of this principle (i.e., the type of covering).

All through this passage (vv 3-10) Paul has been insisting that a woman must have a Â”coveringÂ” on her head. The Greek word he uses here is *katakalyptos*. Here he is in agreement with those of the Â”contentiousÂ” group. They, too, have been insisting that a woman have a covering on her head. But then Paul shifts his tone in v 11: Â”In the Lord, however,Â” and from that point on begins to explain how this principle correctly applies to the church.

In vv 13-14 Paul asks the Corinthians two questions: 1) Â”Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?Â”; 2) Â”Does not the very nature of things teach you that . . . if a woman has long hair, it is her glory?Â” The two questions are to be answered as a set. The second question is intended to buttress the first. In other words, by answering the second question first, the answer to the first question should then be obvious. A wise sales manager might ask his sales team: Â”Is an increased sales effort something that we want to do away withÂ” and then buttress that with: Â”Don’t we want to see an increase in our bonuses next month?Â” By answering the second question first (yes, we do want to see an increase in bonuses), the answer to the first question then becomes obvious (no, an increased sales effort is not something that we want to do away with).

Paul uses the same reasoning here. To answer the second question first: yes, a woman’s long hair is her glory (that is, it keeps her from the Â”shameÂ” of being uncovered). This makes the answer to the first question obvious: no, it is not proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered.

But here Paul is thinking about a specific kind of covering. Up until this verse Paul has consistently used the word *katakalyptos* (Â”coveringÂ”) to insist that a woman be covered while praying or prophesying. Paul agrees with the contentious group that a woman does need a covering. What he disagrees with is their application. The contentious group insisted that the covering be a garment (a veil or shawl), whereas Paul is arguing that, in the case of the church (Â”In the Lord, however,Â” v 11), the covering is the woman’s own hair. Long hair, Paul argues, is the glory of a

woman (v 15). he further argues this point in the very next phrase: "For, long hair is given to her as a covering." The word "as" here is *anti*, and means literally "instead of." The word for "covering" in this verse is not the same as has been used by Paul up to this point. Everywhere else in this passage Paul has used *katakaluptos*, which is a very generic term for "covering." Here Paul uses the word *peribolaos*, which means literally "that which is wrapped around."

In other words, Paul is saying that, yes, women do need coverings (*katakaluptos*) on their heads when praying or prophesying. But, "in the Lord" that covering is not a *peribolaos* (cloth wrapped around the head) but rather the woman's own long hair. In fact, "in the Lord" (i.e., in the church), long hair is given to a woman "instead of" (not "as") "that which is wrapped around the head." Women in the church have a ready-made covering and are therefore not necessarily in violation of the principles expressed in vv 3-10. Overall then, 1 Co 11:2-16 is a very liberating passage. In it, women are freed from the bondage of wearing religious head garb.

On which side of this issue do I then fall? In practice I do not at all differ from those who see this passage as culturally relative and who therefore do not practice garment head coverings for women. Hermeneutically, I am more closely allied with those who see no cultural relativity in this passage and who believe Paul is here laying down a custom for the church of all ages and cultures. Although I disagree with it regarding the exegesis of this passage, this view is far more faithful to Paul's intent than is the former view. Still, neither view seems to grapple with the literary structure of this passage (the point/counterpoint dialogue that pivots around v 11) or the points of grammar brought up in this chapter (the use of *anti* in v 15, and the use of *toioutos* in v 16). My reconstruction, though admittedly not without its own inherent weaknesses, goes much farther in unraveling a difficult passage about which there is much dispute. I hope that it will be of help to those who seek to follow apostolic tradition."
(Eric Svendsen)

Scripture is the supreme interpreter of Scripture. We must consult other passages to confirm our interpretation of a particular passage. If there appears to be a conflict, we must seek to reconcile them in a way that respects the principle that God is always consistent. If a passage under consideration could be taken a couple different ways, then it is our job to look at the rest of the revealed Word to guide our interpretation.

In the case of head coverings, we search in vain to find any other reference to the practice. Scripture itself expounds the principle that a matter is established by the testimony of two or three witnesses (Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16), but there is no other witness to this practice at all, much less to its being a universally binding obligation for all times and places. It is not that God has to repeat himself to be taken seriously, but when there is a question of interpretation we may rightly expect another passage to confirm the correct reading of a text.

The evidence points in the opposite direction from that espoused by those who teach head coverings. Two other New Testament passages address the precise issue of women's dress in the context of submission to male authority (1 Tim. 2:9-15; 1 Pet. 3:1-6) and neither of them mentions the head covering. If this were an ordinance of the church for all ages, is it likely that it would not be mentioned in these passages or anywhere else in the holy pages? It is more reasonable to conclude that in 1 Corinthians 11 Paul was correcting an errant practice in a local situation.

Another way in which the rest of Scripture fails to support the pro-head-covering conclusion is in its consistent emphasis on the internal over the external. Even in the Old Testament with its plethora of types and signs and outward observances it was the heart that God was interested in, not the mere external practice (1 Sam. 15:22; Isaiah 1:10ff.). In the New Testament the emphasis is even stronger on the internal character of our faith. The Law is applied beyond the outward behavior, to the heart (Matt. 5:21-28ff.). The Old Testament external forms of temple, priesthood, sacrifice, etc. are cast aside because the fulfillment, Jesus Christ, is here (Hebrews 2-10). Christian worship is not tied to place but is in spirit and truth (John 4:21-24). External observances are reduced to a bare minimum as the new emphasis is Christ in you (Col. 1:27), and Christians are warned against those who would bind them by external observances (Col. 2:16,17,20-23; Gal. 5:2ff.).

In this context it would be extraordinary indeed for God to mandate a dress code for his people. It would run counter to even the Old Testament (which does not mention the head covering), much less the New. Does the context of the whole New Testament lead us to expect a regulation about clothing? Quite the contrary, it leads us away from such external definitions of holiness. It is not that dress is unimportant to holiness; it is just not regulated by rules but rather by principles to be applied under the Spirit's guidance. These considerations mitigate against taking 1 Corinthians 11 as an ages-long rule for the church.

Another reason we do not believe head covering is required is that we do not see it meeting the definitions of a New Testament church ordinance. The church is bound to only two simple external observances: baptism and the Lord's Supper. These are the New Testament externals which apply to every time and place. Why? Because they were instituted by Jesus himself and confirmed by his hand-picked church builders, the Apostles (our two witnesses: Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38, etc.). And because they both are symbolic of the core of the gospel: union with Christ in his death and resurrection (Col. 2:12; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:26).

The head covering pointed to a vital, eternal principle, but it did not speak directly in symbolism of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Nor was it instituted by Jesus himself. We are bound to follow the apostolic example even where it does not rest on the explicit words or example of Jesus (Phil. 3:17; 1 Cor. 7:12), but we tread on dangerous ground if we create another universally-binding external observance apart from very clear biblical warrant. First Corinthians 11 does not provide such warrant when viewed in light of the whole New Testament. There is ample support for baptism and communion; there is not for head covering.

Those who believe the church today is bound by the head covering obligation, to be consistent, must also insist that we observe the practice of foot-washing (some groups are thus consistent). Jesus said, after washing his disciples' feet, Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you (John 13:14-15). Considering this passage apart from the rest of the Scriptures, we might conclude that Jesus expects all his followers to engage in literal foot-washing as part of their external observance of the Christian faith. Taken in itself, this passage carries a similar force to 1 Corinthians 11.

But here, too, we must consult the larger context of Scripture. Is there any other reference to foot-washing? The only one we know of is 1 Timothy 5:10 which describes the virtuous widows who used to wash the feet of the saints. This is clearly, in context, a reference to their life of service to others: helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds. Clearly foot-washing refers to the humble service of others and not to a specific rite of the church. Jesus' concern for his disciples was that they serve one another in whatever ways were needed, including literal foot-washing in their case. His concern for us is not that we practice the culturally bizarre practice of literally washing the feet of other Christians (we don't travel dusty roads in sandals) but that we practice other appropriate, humble service for one another. Literal foot-washing is not meant to be an ordinance of the church any more than head covering.

Now we must grant that those who teach head covering appear to have an advantage on us: they appear to be taking the safest course in response to 1 Corinthians 11—when in doubt, do exactly what it says. They may regard us as careless and unwilling to follow the simple sense of Scripture.

The question remains, however, what the Holy Spirit intends to teach us through the passage. It is not more virtuous to practice something God never meant for us to do. Also, the danger of defining the Christian life in terms of externals is a real danger indeed. It is not accidental that the groups mentioned earlier that practice head covering also enforce among their communities rules taught by men in dress and lifestyle matters, contrary to Jesus' and the Apostles' explicit warnings (Matt. 15:9; Col. 2:20-23). We value these brethren and are spurred on by their example in many positive ways, but such a focus on externals cannot be supported by the New Testament.

Jesus left us with two external forms which call us back to his cross and his victory over sin and death. As the Old Testament shadows pointed to Christ and his work, so baptism and communion point us to this core of the gospel of grace. Other externals, however strongly their proponents argue their Scriptural origin, risk taking our focus off of Christ and his work and onto the appearance of our outward obedience. The Pharisees, no doubt, began with a true desire for holiness; they ended up, however, far from the God who looks not on the outward appearance but on the heart.

A word to those who are considering the head cover:

The decision to implement this practice belongs to the head of the woman, her husband. One of the peculiar ironies in how this issue plays out in some homes is that it is often the wife (or daughter) who feels convicted to wear the cover and leads her husband (or father) to accept it; or worse yet, she wears it despite his disapproval, perhaps removing it in public! This is a doctrinal and lifestyle issue with important ramifications, and it belongs in the hands of the man. No woman should wear a head covering unless her husband directs her to. She can appeal to him to consider the matter, but it is his conviction, not hers, that should decide the case. Even if he is ambivalent but willing to allow her to follow her conviction, it would still be best for her to await his conviction that this is the right way to proceed. It would be strange indeed if this very expression of proper order in the home were in practice an expression of disorder.

END NOTE: Have any here on S.I. pondered the thought that here we have clear instruction from the Word of God regarding male and female roles, and yet women on both sides of this issue(as well as other issues of doctrine)not only attempt to teach men, but even insist upon doing so, as is evidenced here before many witnesses.

Re: , on: 2010/5/1 2:40

"Cultural relativity," is a very dangerous phrase. Years ago when I questioned a Pastor about allowing his wife to teach from the platform, he used that very same argument, the cultural relativity argument. Even although I was a relatively young Christian at the time, I knew that what I was hearing was very dangerous. I immediately asked him "then who is the judge of what was just a cultural thing back then and what does not apply now, who decides and where would that end?" I got no answer, he was intent on having his wife teach.

Listen to what Tertullian wrote around the year 200 in a piece entitled "The Veiling of virgins."

"Throughout Greece, and certain of its barbaric provinces, the majority of churches keep their virgins covered. In fact, this practice is followed in certain places beneath this African sky. So let no one ascribe this custom merely to the Gentile customs of the Greeks and barbarians.

Moreover, I will put forth as models those churches that were founded by either apostles or apostolic men. . . . The Corinthians themselves understood him to speak in this manner. For to this very day the Corinthians veil their virgins. What the apostles taught, the disciples of the apostles confirmed.

Hippolytus, a leader in the church at Rome around the year 200, compiled a record of the various customs and practices in that church from the generations that preceded him. His Apostolic Tradition contains this statement:

"And let all the women have their heads covered with an opaque cloth, not with a veil of thin linen, for this is not a true covering."

Re: Question Concerning Head Covering:, on: 2010/5/1 9:52

I think Paul is saying much more here than meets the eye.

Woman

Hair

Head Covering

Husband

Christ

God

No such customs

Paul makes some heavy declarations concerning the authorities of man, women's submission to that authority, her hair being a sign and then end the discussion with "we have no such custom, neither the churches of God".

It's like sharing the gospel to a sinner and then end it with, "Jesus didn't shed His blood".

There is more here than just hair and what we perceive as a head covering.

General Topics :: Question Concerning Head Covering:

Re: , on: 2010/5/1 11:18

Quote:

-----So what is the question? Color? Curly or powdered?

ginnyrose

I think it is a matter of preference. Some like myself like curls.

And also what about bald men and women that do not wear
rugs?

Re: - posted by wind_blows, on: 2010/5/1 11:20

Quote:

-----END NOTE: Have any here on S.I. pondered the thought that here we have clear instruction from the Word of God regarding male and female roles, and yet women on both sides of this issue(as well as other issues of doctrine)not only attempt to teach men, but even insist upon doing so, as is evidenced here before many witnesses.

Hey

I read this last night and was thinking about it some more. It is a really interesting point that since the head covering is a way of showing my submission to the authority God has placed over me I thought I would share my own experience in this.

When I truly came to know the Lord as my Savior and had understanding what it meant to die to self, I was separated from my husband, and living with my mom. My dad was out of my life(had been for many years) so there really was no "male" christian to go to at the time to submit myself to. I did speak with some sister on this topic and we all decided after much prayer that since at this time I had no real "male" head I should pray seek God and walk in what the Lord was showing me concerning this and some other issues on modesty and how I dress and lived. So I prayed and just basically said "ok God you know my husband is not here and my dad could care less so please You lead me. Show me these things that I must die to and show me how You desire for me to conduct myself, the clothes I wear, makeup, hair, how late I stay out, who I am out with, all of it. I turn it over to you Lord." After this I just began to let the Holy Spirit guide and teach me as I lived daily. There were lots of things that I threw out of the closet, and toned down my makeup, I felt led by the Lord that even though I was basically single and on my own I was to live as a married woman. No dating, no hanging out with the opposite sex, staying out late, these were issues I felt the Lord leading me in. The more time I spent in the Bible the more I prayed and God showed me those things that He wanted me to submit my life to HIM in. Lots of attitudes had to be weeded out and died to. One of the things that was hardest for me was my husband had not decided on if he wanted a divorce or not, his only request of me was not to be in contact with him to bother him about our marriage. He wanted me to wait and give him time, this was extremely difficult for me. With all my heart I wanted to settle things, I wanted to know but all the while the Holy Spirit was leading me to submit to my husband, even in this request of not communicating with him, so I did. During this time I really began to learn what it meant to submit to the authority that God had in my life, and I can share with you that after much prayer and seeking the counsel of both sister and brothers in Christ I have never felt the Lord leading me to wear a head covering so I have not. This thread has brought up the fact that now that my husband and I are back together, he is my covering, the head of our household(although we are not fully living together again yet) so I felt I should share this topic and the thread with him. Jase read through these passages, he read through the posts and he spoke with some older mature christian men who are in his life and then he shared with me that he did not believe it was a Biblical mandate for me to wear a covering on my head such as a cloth, he believes strongly that the Lord has shown him that my hair is my covering and that is what the passage is speaking to.

I shared all this with one hope that is that for those sister who do practice wearing the head covering that you will know that I do take this seriously and not wearing it is in no way attempting to subvert my husband's authority as the head of the

General Topics :: Question Concerning Head Covering:

e house hold. I do understand the role God has placed me and am willing and prayerfully lovingly walking in that:) I know you sisters are doing the same and I give thanks for this.

in Him
ellie

Re: , on: 2010/5/1 11:44

Ellie writes....

"After this I just began to let the Holy Spirit guide and teach me as I lived daily."

Does not get any better than that. Never depart from that sister and you will not go far wrong.....brother Frank

Re: - posted by learn (), on: 2010/5/1 12:58

Decide to delete post.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/5/1 13:34

Quote:

Some like myself like curls.

So you want to look like George Washington?

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/5/1 13:39

Quote:

-----"After this I just began to let the Holy Spirit guide and teach me as I lived daily."

And don't for one miinute think you have arrived - yet.

Growth is a life long process. We are like a tree that is planted by the rivers of living waters...I am told a tree keeps growi
ng until it dies.

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/5/1 13:56

Quote:

-----END NOTE: Have any here on S.I. pondered the thought that here we have clear instruction from the Word of God regarding male
and female roles, and yet women on both sides of this issue(as well as other issues of doctrine)not only attempt to teach men, but even insist upon doi
ng so, as is evidenced here before many witnesses.

Savannah, this idea did float through my mind as I posted what I did in going through this scripture. But I felt there were
enough sisters here on SI who I could reach out to: the men - have their minds made up: they already either support this
application of this doctrine or will dance around it and explain it away.

I am not sure where you copied/pasted your post from...but please allow me to share one important point.

Many males take their headship to the point where they will ask their wives to do what pleases them, not what Jesus say
s. Consider this story:

General Topics :: Question Concerning Head Covering:

Remember when Ananias and Sapphira appeared individually before Peter? Ananias was struck dead because he lied, a premeditated lie. Sapphira appeared wondering where her husband had gone to. Peter then asked her "did you sell this property for so much money?" She said they did. And so the Holy Spirit struck her dead as well.

The point is that each one was individually responsible for the final execution of this declaration. Sapphira could have saved her life had she told the truth. Her husband told her to lie and she did and it cost her her life. And where do you think she is in eternity?

Something serious to think about.

Blessings,
ginnyrose

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/5/1 15:56

rbanks,

I am so sorry you take this position...that you feel like you cannot fellowship with us because of the head covering issue.

Brother, may I suggest that if you cannot fellowship with us there are other issues barring that fellowship, not the head covering one.

The fact that you could not hold office in our church because of it should give you no offense. I am also barred from holding office in other churches similar to mine but this does not bother me in the least: it does not prevent me from fellowshiping with them. The right to hold office is not important to me at all. It may be to a male but not to me. And let's face it: not everyone in church can hold an office and it could be for a number of reasons: more people than offices to fill and some lack the abilities to do some things.

You know what brother? I meet up with a lot of people and most are very different from me, but this does not prevent us from meaningful fellowship. If there is a barrier it is because of some other ongoing sin. In fact, sin impedes fellowship between people whether a covering is worn or not.

Another thing: I will not say that the wearing of a headcovering will ensure a guaranteed entry into heaven. Anyone who thinks so is deceived. Scripture does not say so. There are many in the past who have worn it and still ended up in hell. I agree with Paul Washer when he said that he "cannot tell anyone they are going to heaven: that assurance must come from the Holy Spirit."

rbanks, does this make sense?

rbanks, I wish you and your wife the best. May God give you much grace to follow Him wherever he may lead you....

Blessings,
ginnyrose

Re: - posted by wind_blows, on: 2010/5/1 16:39

Quote:

----- And don't for one minute think you have arrived - yet.

no worries there sister:) I know that there is still much work to be done. I know that I have lots of learning and growing to do in the Lord:)

I was interested in your post to Savanna you brought up Ananias and Sapphira and said she could have saved her life if she had told the truth. I agree we are accountable and if a wife feels that her husband is asking her to directly go against scripture then she must submit to the Lord regardless. I do however want to add this, for me I also trust my husband and when he said that he truly prayed about this and sought the Lord on this issue then I have no problems following. I know he loves me and more importantly that he loves God, in both cases I trust he would not want to do anything to cause himself or me to stumble and sin. So I feel confident for myself that not wearing the head covering is what God has for us.

I just wanted to say that I am so glad to share these topics with one another. I am also glad that this is not an issue for either of us, that we can still come and share with each other in love and have fellowship to encourage one another in the Lord:)

with much love in my heart for you sister
ellie

Re: , on: 2010/5/1 17:24

Ellie writes.....

"I just wanted to say that I am so glad to share these topics with one another. I am also glad that this is not an issue for either of us, that we can still come and share with each other in love and have fellowship to encourage one another in the Lord:)

Amen to that sister. At many of the revival conferences I have been to, we have met Christians from all over the world and from many backgrounds. I just love the 'knowing,' that so many of these are my brothers and sisters in Christ. There are conservatively dressed ladies, jeans and t-shirt ladies, men in suits, mennonite dressed men, men in jeans and t-shirts. What bonds the brothers and sister together is Christ in us. When we had the Greenock revival conference, brother Denny Keneston and I were assigned to go speak at a place called "The Ambassador hall" in Port Glasgow. Do not let the name fool you. It was in the middle of one of the toughest "projects," or "housing schemes," as we call them in Scotland. I have to be honest, I was a little worried for brother Denny. He was dressed exactly as you would expect a man from Lancaster County PA to be dressed, little beard and all. I stood up and gave my testimony and then brother Denny's time came. As soon as he started speaking, you could hear a pin drop. The Lord Jesus spoke through brother Denny and everyone knew it. It does not matter the way one dresses or looks or backgrounds they come from. A man or woman, full of the Holy Spirit of the living God is what counts. It's the Spirit that brings the Body together, not the way that we dress. A hungry and thirsty saint is a hungry and thirsty saint. Praise the Lord for the beautiful fellowship of His saints. I long to see that on a bigger scale. I long to see the remnant of God's people come together from all their various backgrounds and be able to say this.....

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!

Psa 133:2 It is like the precious ointment on the head that ran down on the beard, Aaron's beard, that went down to the mouth of his garments;

Psa 133:3 like the dew of Hermon that came down on the mountains of Zion; for there Jehovah commanded the blessing, life forevermore!

This oil was fragrant and costly and it flows from the head, down the beard and to the very hem of the garment of Aaron. It covers the whole body from head to toe. Surely we as the people of God seek for the oil of the Holy Spirit to flow down that we may flow in the glory of the risen King, that we may walk in the Spirit of the Living God. Can there be any other way?brother Frank

Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2010/5/1 19:07

Ginnyrose,

It is amazingly sad how you have turn your requirement of head covering around to make it look like I am taking a position of not being able to fellowship with your congregation.

Just so you know sister that if I and my wife were to ever to meet you in a worship gathering some where this side of heaven and you had a piece of cloth on your head that it would not hinder us from worshipping our Lord along with you and we wouldn't even think that you were less of a Christian or more of a Christian because we have learned to not judge people by an outward appearance.

Blessings to you!

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/5/1 22:25

rbanks,

Did you read my post that I addressed to you at 2010/5/1 11:56:25?

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiiss (), on: 2010/5/2 1:35

Hi Sister Ginnyrose...

I wrote: "Is this particular practice a prerequisite for involvement in the congregation that you attend?"

You answered: "The answer is 'yes'."

I wrote: "What would happen if a Christian woman entered your congregation who did not feel God leading her into such a practice -- even after years of attendance? Would she (or her husband) be permitted to all of the same opportunities for ministry as you and your husband?"

You answered: "What would happen? You would not feel comfortable and look for another church more to your liking."

I suppose that this is the essence of what troubles me. Sincere believers who know and belong to our Lord are rejected from fellowship, involvement, ministry and participation with the congregation that you attend based solely upon the interpretation of a single passage of Scripture. Is this what God intended? Is this particular outward practice so vital that it is worth rejecting those believers who prayerfully have arrived at a different conclusion regarding the interpretation of that single passage -- that most of us agree is non-essential to the faith?

I just don't know if this is how the Church was designed to be set up. Are congregations supposed to be so selective that they make a list of requirements for fellowship and involvement...and just assume that those who don't practice as we do will "feel uncomfortable" and leave? This goes beyond seeking an official "office" in the Church. This delves into whether a person can fulfill the call of God if they attended your congregation yet didn't agree on every last dot and tittle of the Church by-laws. There is no room for a person who "conscientiously objects" in regard to this particular practice -- even after much prayer and study.

Sister, if I was the pastor of a congregation near you, I would have no problem with you or your husband being heavily involved in some sort of ministry of the Church (whether teaching, evangelism, a ministry of encouragement, etc...) even if I might personally disagree with your particular interpretation of I Corinthians 11. Why? I do not think that it is an essential doctrine of the Church. I believe that it is possible to focus on what is undeniably essential from the Word of God without creating a list of other particular prerequisites for involvement that would serve to divide the Body of Christ rather than unite us together in love.

Yet, you are saying that the congregation with which you fellowship would make the wearing of a fabric cloth to be a prerequisite for involvement and, possibly, prolonged fellowship. This means that any woman who does not wear the piece

of fabric is prohibited from such involvement – even if they do so with a clear conscience before God and their husband. Likewise, I suspect that the husband of such a wife would be similarly shunned from fellowship and involvement based upon the inability to adhere to something that they just don't see as a requirement in Scripture.

Like I mentioned before, this desire for an outward, physical sign reminds me of the demand for circumcision by certain believers in the early days of the Church. I think that Paul made it clear that God was far more concerned with the inner circumcision of the heart than some outward sign of compliance.

Ginnyrose wrote: "Chris, scripture informs us - in 1 Corinthians 1:10 - about unity in the brotherhood. It is impossible for any brotherhood to think exactly alike, but there are some doctrinal issues that are vital for the health of the brotherhood to all be in agreement. This will impact its ability to function as an organism - 1 Corinthians uses the analogy of the body to illustrate this concept."

I understand that. One thing that I have learned on SermonIndex over the years is that it is difficult to find any two Christians who believe exactly the same way in everything. Yet, I have to question whether or not certain things like this should be considered VITAL for involvement or fellowship in a local congregation. Should a congregation really prohibit involvement over something as trivial as our views about this? Do you really think that adherence to wearing a piece of fabric on top of someone's hair is vital to the Church's "ability to function as an organism?"

You mentioned the analogy from 1 Corinthians about the Body of Christ to illustrate the concept of the unity. Ironically, I see that same passage to illustrate just why we shouldn't allow particular doctrinal views or practices to divide the various members of the Body of Christ. The decisive measure of a believer has to do with whether or not that believer belongs to Christ...and less to do with some supposed "unity" of belief about specific outward practices. Yet many congregations are willing to "cut off" a member of the Body of Christ simply because they haven't reached the same conclusion that we have.

I suspect that in most congregations, you will find certain believers who might not agree on every last issue. But do we need to agree on everything? Does a pastor really need to create a list of prerequisite views upon which everyone must agree in order to remain in fellowship with the local congregation? Or is it possible to maintain spiritual unity without completely agreeing on every last thing? There are some essential doctrines that I think we should all agree upon. However, to be candid, there are some doctrinal issues that I just don't care to know where every last person in a congregation stands. I suspect that this is an issue that supersedes a person's view about 1 Corinthians 11. There are a whole host of "doctrines" that "unite" like-minded believers...but ultimately divide the greater Body of Christ from genuine fellowship. Denominations and sects are often created by well-meaning individuals based upon a range of personal views.

How clear is "clear?"

One thing that I must disagree with is the notion that this single passage of Scripture from Corinthians (upon which the practice is based) is "clearly" talking about a piece of cloth. It is far from "clear" – because most believers simply do not share the same understanding about this particular passage. There are many believers that I have spoken with who say that the passage is "clearly" speaking about hair. There are some believers who say it is speaking about a piece of fabric on top of the hair. And there are some believers who just don't know what the passage is saying (and, thus, it isn't "clear" at all to them). I guess "I don't know" is as good an answer as any regarding many such non-essential issues (and probably much more accurate for many of us).

I have to wonder why this practice is not mentioned elsewhere in the Scriptures – especially if it was important enough by which some congregations would make it a prerequisite for fellowship. I also must wonder what those people who wear the cloths upon the hair feel would be the end result of a believing woman who lives her entire life without ever having come to the same conclusion.

More than anything, I want all of the brethren who hold to such views to know that I hold love and respect for them. This is heartfelt and true...and comes from a knowledge that we are each longing to see the face of God and know Him more.

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2010/5/2 2:36

I can not speak for Ginnyrose but I do not think she meant that people would be shunned from her church, or that she would be unwilling to fellowship with another believer over this. I think she meant that if you came to her church you may personally feel out of place because you and your wife do not wear head covering.

I once attended a church and everyone there spoke in tongues during worship and prayed out loud. I felt really awkward and out of place because I don't speak in tongues. No one was unkind toward me, or made me feel bad, it was my own personal choice that I did not go back because I did not speak in tongues and I was uncomfortable. I was the one who made this choice. Again I can not speak for her but maybe this was what Ginnyrose meant, that your wife might feel odd with everyone else wearing a covering so you and she would probably decide to go to another place to fellowship. You would choose to go somewhere else??

I will just say this, I have no doubt in my mind at all that Ginnyrose would have a willing heart to extend herself in love and care to others here in SI.

God Bless
mj

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiisss (), on: 2010/5/2 3:31

Hi Sister MaryJane...

I don't think that Sister Ginnyrose was trying to say that she would "shun" other believers from personal fellowship. Rather, I gathered from her posts that she said that any believer who did not agree with the practice of wearing the piece of cloth atop their hair would NOT be permitted to join the local church in any functionary manner.

We have attended congregations from time to time where the women wore a piece of cloth atop their hair. To be forthright, we didn't feel comfortable at all. However, it had less to do with the piece of cloth on the heads of those women than it did the fact that we could sense that our relationship with the Lord was being scrutinized. If those believers had not made us feel that way, we would have gladly considered fellowship with them. Yet, the "rules" for church involvement were included in the "welcome" package that was handed out to visitors in two of those churches. It seems that our "welcome" was limited to strict adherence to that particular practice (amongst several others).

Why should we choose to attend somewhere else? Is the love of God and acceptance of the brethren (and the acknowledgement that they also know the Lord) limited by whether or not they participate in this particular practice?

I have a sneaking suspicion that the underground Church in persecuted nations would not be so selective regarding those who choose to operate as part of the local Church. I am often reminded that the epistles were written to a single Church in the cities and towns. Even in Revelation, John was told to write a single letter that was meant for THE Church of Ephesus, Philadelphia, etc... Perhaps persecution would cause the Church to rethink just what things are "essential" for people to be accepted as a part of the local church?

To be clear: I have no doubt that Sister Ginnyrose or any other woman who embraces such a practice would be willing to extend themselves in love and care to others who might not agree with their interpretation of I Corinthians 11. I just wonder whether or not that same extension could be shown to individuals who desire good and godly fellowship with the people of God but who might have a difference of opinion after prayerfully searching out this passage.

I certainly don't mean to sound harsh in my view of this. Nor do I want to seem like I am pointing out our dear Sister Ginnyrose...because I certainly esteem as a faithful and godly woman in the faith of our Lord.

This goes beyond any one person...and even beyond the very practice that is the center of this discussion. I just wonder whether a personal view about this practice (and other non-essential views) should serve to withhold the hand of full fellowship to believers who might not see this issue like we do.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/5/2 9:38

Chris, time restraints prevent me from giving your post serious considerations. But I do think you are misunderstanding what I am saying.

You said:

"Rather, I gathered from her posts that she said that any believer who did not agree with the practice of wearing the piece of cloth atop their hair would NOT be permitted to join the local church in any functionary manner."

The reality is that there are people who attend our fellowship who participate in our worship services or whatever we have going on. They attend our Sunday School classes, share thoughts, partake in our fellowship meals. They may teach in our VBSs - we get people from without our fellowship to assist. If they desire they can even take part in the ritual of communion unless there is known sin in their life. They just cannot hold an elective office nor vote on issues because they have not committed themselves to our brotherhood.

Chris, it is essential there is basic agreements for all members in the body: that the entire body will pull together in the same direction. That there be no contentions among the body. Consider: if you were to come to our church and be there a while and speak among us like you do here on SI whenever an issue comes up that you disagree with, you can become well...this kind of behaviours would destroy a brotherhood, resulting in a split. Remember what the Scriptures say about contentions?

Several years ago, in a church I am well familiar with, had a gifted young person come in. This was his wife's home church. This fellow never did join this brotherhood but he did hold offices. He started out by leading the singing. Soon he was chosen to be a Sunday School teacher, then SS superintendent. All the while he was taking a dig at the current leadership. In the end he left a devastated church, many members left and today it is a shell of its former self.

Must go get ready for church. Wanna come? The one scheduled to preach today is a good preacher, smart and his spiritual journey has not been without its bumps...and the church hostess will invite you and anyone else with you for dinner. And I promise you it will be delicious....might even decide we are not so bad afterall! :-)

Blessings.
ginnyrose

a question to all the brethern, on: 2010/5/2 10:03

read thru as much of this thread as i could, and i don't think anybody's "bad". when i abide in the rural section of Wisconsin i love, i frequently see Amish on the road, i feel joyfull. at times i've gone to one of their mini "factories", where they make wood houses, good ones, and actually had the Grace, to speak with the foreman, and after talk of prices, told him i follow Jesus, and asked him a simple question, "you brothers regard your work as a form of worship?" He said "yes". i looked him in the eyes, and said, "God bless you", and left. many of these have a Godly cohesiveness, a "communitas" lacking in 21st century American life, which is sad. But cobalanced with this "cohesiveness" there IS an exclusionary aspect of such "communitas", which begs this question:

is the Church, a country club for the saints, or a hospital for the sick, sin-sick?

but as i read the thread, this Precious Bit of Scripture came to me, and i don't know why:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord".
Matthew 23:37-39

General Topics :: Question Concerning Head Covering:

Re: , on: 2010/5/2 10:29

MJ says.....

'I will just say this, I have no doubt in my mind at all that Ginnyrose would have a willing heart to extend herself in love and care to others here in SI.'

Amen Maryjane, I totally agree with that.....brother Frank

Re: , on: 2010/5/2 10:35

Hey Chris,

If you have ever been to a SI revival conference you will see quite a few of these ladies who are 'conservitively dressed,' with coverings on their heads. We have had great fellowship. I think the circumstances of the state of the American church is already bringing "strange bedfellows," together and I think it is an awesome thing.....brother Frank

Re: - posted by ginnnyrose (), on: 2010/5/2 16:20

Chris,

After I left this morning, I thought a lot about what I wrote at 5:38:43 and thought I may have given a wrong impression. This has to do with who we allow to assist us at our VBSs in the summer.

We have people from other churches help us. The job is too big for our small congregation. The sisters that help are like minded with us on this head covering issue.

I know right well what would happen if a lady with uncovered head would teach. Her students would pepper her with questions about why she does not wear a head covering. ("The others do, why don't you?") They watch you very closely and are not bashful with their questions - they are very bold. I know that from experience. They notice every little thing and ask 'why?'

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Chris, and rbanks: if your ladies were to come and participate in a teaching program as a teacher you will be grilled by your students about how different you are from the rest of the group. Your answers could cause confusion and then strife and contention among the other ministry team. What kind of testimony is that leaving to others about you? We did not make up this principle: God did. So why should you work to discourage others from observing it?

ginnnyrose

PS: BTW: I do find it disconcerting that you will refer to the head covering as 'that piece of cloth on your head'. Mind telling me why you use this expression instead of head covering?

Re: , on: 2010/5/2 16:27

Sometimes I wonder if Paul should have kept quiet on some issues. Since he said that if any man be contentious we have no such customs neither the churches of God, this raises a huge question as to whether or not his words were inspired of the Holy Ghost. (On this issue)

He has on occasion said that he is speaking and not the Lord, so there is room here for doubt.

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiisss (), on: 2010/5/7 19:03

Hi Sister Ginnyrose...

I apologize for being a bit slow to respond to your last posts. I do want to make certain that I am not "reacting." Rather, I hope to inject some personal thoughts about this that can add to the discussion within the bounds of the undeniable love of God. We may never reach an agreement on this issue in regard to what I Corinthians 11:1-16 is saying (at least on this side of Eternity). However, I think that all believers have the ability to contribute to a discussion about such matters.

My attempt is certainly not to "dance around" the Scriptures (and it would be strange to assume as much). Such a charge suggests a view that anyone who disagrees with a particular interpretation of the passage must be "contentious" – when this is merely a discussion between various believers about what this passage is saying. Moreover, I think that this discussion extends beyond the notion that this passage results in some specific New Testament dress code that must be adhered to by believers. A greater question (at least in the minds of some believers) is whether or not this issue is so "clear" as to withdraw the full hand of fellowship and involvement to believers simply because they disagree with some congregation's or denomination's view of the issue.

You wrote: "The reality is that there are people who attend our fellowship who participate in our worship services or whatever we have going on. They attend our Sunday School classes, share thoughts, partake in our fellowship meals. They may teach in our VBSs - we get people from without our fellowship to assist. If they desire they can even take part in the ritual of communion unless there is known sin in their life. They just cannot hold an elective office nor vote on issues because they have not committed themselves to our brotherhood."

I suppose that the difference that I am trying to point out is that such believers would be welcome to your congregation – but with a very limited ability to function. This limited role in the local Church is based solely upon a difference of opinion about whether or not the 11th chapter of I Corinthians requires women to wear a piece of cloth atop their hair or if hair itself is the covering mentioned in the passage. In other words, this particular custom is considered so important that individuals are not permitted to become members of that congregation if they don't comply! From what you said, it seems that compliance with this practice is considered vital to having "committed themselves to your brotherhood." I just cannot help but wonder if this should be a requirement at all to demonstrate a "commitment to the brotherhood" of believers (even on a local level).

You wrote: "Chris, it is essential there is basic agreements for all members in the body: that the entire body will pull together in the same direction. That there be no contentions among the body. Consider: if you were to come to our church and be there a while and speak among us like you do here on SI whenever an issue comes up that you disagree with, you can become well...this kind of behaviours would destroy a brotherhood, resulting in a split. Remember what the Scriptures say about contentions?"

There are plenty of brethren that I don't completely agree with here on SermonIndex on every last issue (and I know that at the opposite is also true). For instance, there are brethren who feel that the Lord will gather His Bride only AFTER the period of God's wrath upon the Earth. I don't necessarily believe this. Yet, I still see those believers who do believe such a thing as being dearly beloved brethren who are an important part of the family of God. I think that – despite our disagreement on the subject – we can still "pull together in the same direction" in consideration of the entire Body of Christ. Why? I don't believe that a personal, prayerful and studious view or perspective on such a subject just is so vital whereas to make it a condition of extending the full hand of fellowship. Yet there are congregations where believers are rejected from "membership" or public ministry merely because they disagree with the interpretation of what this one passage of Scripture is saying.

Now, how is it that a disagreement on a subject is the result of a person being "contentious?" That is quite an accusation to make! If that is the case, then the Lord, Paul, Peter, John and others were quite a contentious bunch! It would be very easy to say that someone is being "contentious" in a discussion – because both sides of a discussion could claim as much. Someone could make the same accusation of pastors, sects or congregations that would refuse to accept believers into full fellowship based solely upon adherence to this particular rite or practice.

You wrote: "Several years ago, in a church I am well familiar with, had a gifted young person come in. This was his wife's home church. This fellow never did join this brotherhood but he did hold offices. He started out by leading the singing. Soon he was chosen to be a Sunday School teacher, then SS superintendent. All the while he was taking a dig at the current leadership. In the end he left a devastated church, many members left and today it is a shell of its former self."

I'm not sure what you are saying. There is a world of difference between merely disagreeing with someone's interpretation of this passage of Scripture and "taking a dig at the leadership." I'm not sure, but it seems like you are concerned that a believer who doesn't agree with your interpretation of this passage might endanger the unity of the congregation. Of course, my underlying question has been whether or not this should even be considered a doctrine or practice upon which a group of believers MUST unite behind.

There are many nations where believers are persecuted on a daily basis. There are believers who are imprisoned or killed in Communist, Muslim and other closed nations. I'm not totally sure, but I don't think that those believers divide themselves according to such interpretive matters. As such, I think that it is better to unite behind those undeniable, essential doctrines of the faith rather than upon some interpretation of such a matter. Since we know that persecution is always at the door...and is coming...I would hope that we wouldn't be so contentious as to limit "membership" (if such a thing would even exist for the persecuted church) and full involvement to those who adhere to a strict list of interpreted practices. And, I do think that the liberty to share a voice (or vote) in regard to the order of the local church (such as the election of a local pastor or other decisions of the Church) is the equivalent to being a part of the full hand of fellowship.

On a tangible level, I find it difficult to believe that members of the early Church – in provinces like Philadelphia, Sardis or Smyrna – would have limited full inclusion into the Church based upon some outward sectarian practice. Again, the passage indicates dishonor to a woman who prays with her head "uncovered" (I Corinthians 11:5). Yet, we are also told to "pray always" (I Thessalonians 5:17). My wife prays throughout the day. She prays as she lay down to sleep, as she walks through her daily life (shopping, at work, etc...), on windy days, and even in the shower. It seems that this particular interpretation – that it is a physical piece of cloth that must be worn on top of the hair while praying or prophesying – would be difficult to accomplish under all such circumstances.

This is part of the reason that I arrived to such a view of this passage. The purpose, as best as I can see it, is that there is a "sign" upon the head of a woman that she is under the authority of a man. From what I read in I Corinthians 11:15, it is the HAIR that was placed there naturally by God to be that sign. Of course, this is simply what I believe. Others also share that view – believers like my wife...her family...and many other godly men and women.

What's more, it is a bit beside the point that I am trying to make too. If I were the pastor of a congregation, or the leader of a fellowship, I don't think that I should make my view of this matter a requirement for full fellowship and involvement (including voicing a vote for important decisions) in the local church or fellowship. I think that it would be unwise to reject individuals (even on a surface level) if they are godly believers who simply have a different opinion about this one passage of Scripture.

You wrote: "I know right well what would happen if a lady with uncovered head would teach. Her students would pepper her with questions about why she does not wear a head covering. ("The others do, why don't you?") They watch you very closely and are not bashful with their questions - they are very bold. I know that from experience. They notice every little thing and ask 'why?'"

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Chris, and rbanks: if your ladies were to come and participate in a teaching program as a teacher you will be grilled by your students about how different you are from the rest of the group. Your answers could cause confusion and then strife and contention among the other ministry team. What kind of testimony is that leaving to others about you? We did not make up this principle: God did. So why should you work to discourage others from observing it?"

First, your use of the term "uncovered" is the idiom in question. As discussed, many believers feel that a woman's HAIR is the covering spoken of in this passage. So, we don't see a woman as having an "uncovered head" if she understands her role in the home and Church and that her hair is a natural cover for her head that symbolizes as much. Still, what would be wrong with any woman sharing what she believes about such a matter?

I wouldn't have a problem with you or any other woman who believes like you do sharing their view in the Church that I attend. I would be happy for you to share your opinion of the matter AS LONG AS you indicate that this is YOUR view and a view that is shared by many others like you. However, I would hope that you would make it clear that this is NOT an undeniable, absolute physical requirement amongst all believers (and certainly NOT an essential doctrine of the Church or a requirement for salvation). I suppose that is what I am trying to get at through all of this discussion.

You wrote: "PS: BTW: I do find it disconcerting that you will refer to the head covering as 'that piece of cloth on your head'. Mind telling me why you use this expression instead of head covering?"

I call it a "piece of cloth" because that is what it physically is. This is meant to make a distinction between those who view hair is given by God as a natural "covering" for the head. There is nothing disconcerting meant by my use of this phrase. I simply want to point out that the entire discussion revolves around the definition of "head covering" – and whether or not this is natural hair or an additional piece of cloth (or something else) meant to be worn on top of the hair. Most of the churches that I have visited where the women adhere to such a "requirement" wear a small but pretty piece of cloth atop their hair that doesn't really cover the head at all. Moreover, a great many believers consider the hair to be the covering for the head mentioned in this passage (and seemingly explained in verse 15). That is why I do not refer to the cloth itself as a "head covering."

My hope for my participation in this discussion is NOT to convince those who wear such things to stop (not at all!). Rather, I hope to provide a reason why many of us don't adhere to this practice or requirement. Furthermore, I hope to provoke others to consider whether or not a person's particular interpretation of this passage is "clear" or "essential" enough to make it a requirement for extending the fullness of liberty in regard to fellowship with a local congregation or fellowship.

Regardless of anyone's view on this matter, my love and esteem for them is real.