

Message #38**I Corinthians 11:2-16**

God expects, in fact, He demands that when it comes to His church, men function as men and women function as women. Corinth was a wild society. Rebellion, role reversal, immorality and idolatry were the norm.

IN A CHURCH, MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE SPIRITUAL AND NOT CARNAL WILL DEMONSTRATE A PROPER SUBMISSIVE ATTITUDE TO THE GOD-ORDAINED AUTHORITY STRUCTURE OF HIS CHURCH.

A church service is NOT to operate according to a man's opinion or a woman's opinion; it is to operate according to God's Word. When it comes to the N.T. church worship service, it IS NOT an issue of men's rights or women's rights; IT IS an issue of God's righteousness and God's will.

REASON #1 – He wrote to praise the church. **11:2**

1) He praised the church because they remembered him. **11:2a**

The Corinthians never forgot that Paul was a gifted apostle sent from God.

2) He praised the church because they kept the traditions. **11:2b**

The word “tradition” particularly has in mind keeping or observing things that Paul had handed down to the church.

REASON #2 – He wrote to give authority structure to the church. **11:3**

God has ordered structure that is His and is to be maintained in His church. You will immediately notice from this verse that three times the word “head” occurs. This particular word refers to the chief authority to whom each is to be submissive and to whom each is accountable.

Authority Structure #1 - The man is to be submissive to Jesus Christ. **11:3a**

Every man in the church is personally accountable to submit to and to obey Jesus Christ.

Authority Structure #2 - The woman is to be submissive to the man. **11:3b**

It is very clear that God expects the leadership in His church to be male and the women are to recognize this fact and submit themselves to it.

One cannot help but think of a time in Israel's history when women became the leaders. This made God absolutely angry and He threatened that if they did not change, He would send swift, devastating judgment (Is. 3:12-26). It may impress our society when women lead men, but it doesn't impress God and it is not to be in His church.

Authority Structure #3 - Jesus Christ the Son is submissive to God the Father. **11:3c**

Christ willingly submits His will to that of His Father's. If Jesus Christ were not submitted to the will of the Father, you and I would not even be saved (i.e. Luke 22:42).

REASON #3 – He wrote to give worship structure to the church. **11:4-16**

Guideline #1 - The guideline for men. **11:4, 7a**

Any man who publicly prayed or prophesied was to demonstrate that he was in submission to Jesus Christ by NOT having his head covered when he prayed or prophesied.

Covering one's head or not covering one's head was a meaningful custom of the city of Corinth. We know that it was a cultural custom because the word "practice" (**11:16**) literally means a custom of habit (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 429).

Guideline #2 - The guideline for women. **11:5-15**

(The Observation #1) - The context of women covering their heads is public prayer and prophecy, not church attendance. **11:4, 5, 13**

Paul is not saying every woman in church must wear a head covering; he is saying if a woman publicly prays or prophesies she must wear one.

(The Observation #2) - The women who were allowed to publicly pray or prophecy were unmarried virgins, not married women. I Cor. 14:34-35

Clearly the context of I Cor. 14:34-35 is the revelatory gift of prophecy (14:30-31). If a woman were married, God would reveal spiritual truth to her husband and he, in turn, could instruct his wife. However, an unmarried virgin woman could receive a prophetic revelation from God at this time (i.e. Acts 21:9). Never are women to be allowed to teach men or have authority over men in the church. She is to receive instruction, not give it (I Tim. 2:11-12).

(The Observation #3) - The style of women's hair varied. I Tim. 2:9

Paul is saying that any woman who participates in a worship service is to demonstrate that she is in submission to the male authority in the church by having her head covered.

Reason #1 - Because it demonstrates that the woman admits that man was first created in the image of God. **11:7a**

Reason #2 - Because it demonstrates that the woman admits that woman was created in the glory of man. **11:7b**

The woman has similarities and differences to men that have been carefully designed by God with the man's glory in mind.

Reason #3 - Because it demonstrates that the woman admits that the man WAS NOT created from the woman. **11:8a**

Reason #4 - Because it demonstrates that the woman admits that the woman WAS created from the man. **11:8b**

Reason #5 - Because it demonstrates that the woman admits that the man WAS NOT created for the woman. **11:9a**

Reason #6 - Because it demonstrates that the woman admits that woman WAS created for the man. **11:9b**

Reason #7 - Because it demonstrates that the woman admits the angels are watching. **11:10**

There is an article present which I take to refer to the specific angels of the local church.

Angels are the spectators of the church (Eph. 3:10). They watch what is happening and when they see that the woman is willingly submitting to God-ordained authority, they take note and apparently are in position to give special blessings (I Tim. 2:15). When they don't see the woman responding properly, they also take note and that can lead to some negative things in the woman's life.

Both men and women need each other (**11:11**).

Guideline #3 - The guideline for one contentious. **11:16**

In other words, one who does not submit to this is not to be allowed to minister in any of God's churches. They are not to be allowed to pray or prophesy because they do not acknowledge and submit to their spiritual head.

The ERA and women's rights movement may change much in this twisted world of ours, they may get women into men's locker rooms, but they will never push and shove their way into God's heaven. God's Word will never change and the men and women who willingly submit to His Word will be honored.

In order for a church to be strong and be blessed by God, it needs men and women to willingly do their part in fulfilling their roles.