

From 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, Paul is once again handling a matter that had become a problem in the church @ Corinth.

Paul just dealt with some, in the Corinthian Church, who were abusing their liberties regarding idols. They were going into temples of idols and partaking of feasts that had been dedicated to the idols, to which Paul warned, I would NOT that you should have fellowship with devils.

1 Corinthians 10:31-32: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God"

Bottom Line Up Front: Is what you're doing offensive to God? Or is it glorifying to God? And then: Is what you're doing (your liberty) going to make your weaker brother or sister in Christ stumble? Is what you're doing (your liberty) going to cause them to violate their conscience? Or is what you're doing edifying and helpful to your brethren?

THAT, beloved, is the STANDARD by which we are to measure everything that we do. READ 1 Corinthians 10:33-11:1-2

I think when we read 1 Corinthians 11:1-2, Paul is still completing his instruction from (Chapter10) in eating food offered to idols.

"Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ"

And then he seems to praise and commend them for following his instructions, (and perhaps to prepare them for what he was about to tell them), but in this same place he also admonishes them to "KEEP the ordinances, as I delivered them to you"

Note for future reference: Paul praised them here, but from (Verse17), and what follows, Paul says, "in this, I praise you not"; because they were coming together NOT for the better, but for the worse.

Instead of being edified and strengthened in their faith in Christ when they came together, they were worse after coming together. May it never be that we are worse and not better after our worship gatherings.

The issue that Paul would deal with from 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 was authority and submission:

Specifically, in God given roles for men and women in the church, when it was assembled for worship. The context for this whole section is based on what Paul wrote in (Verse3):

"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"

There had obviously arisen (in the church @ Corinth) questions and issues regard the roles of men and women in the church.

1 Corinthians 11:3: is foundational to the whole text. In it, we understand God's chain of command, or God given authority and God commanded submission, from God the Father to the Lord Jesus, to the man, and finally, to the woman. Before we look at the distinct roles of men and women in the church, consider the roles of the Godhead in the history of redemption.

Understand, that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are ontologically the same. All (3) Persons in the Godhead are the same in Being, nature, attributes, and divinity.

Ontology is the study being, here, the Being of God. Ontologically, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all co-equal. But in the economy of redemption, in God's work, they had different roles.

There was a subordination/submission in the Persons of the Godhead, in the history of creation and in the salvation/redemption of fallen mankind.

This ought to help you see that being subordinate does not mean that you are LESS in being. The Son never ceased to be every bit God!

The Father sent the Son into the world die for the sins of the world. The Lord Jesus voluntarily put Himself in submission to God the Father. In His earthly ministry, (in His role) He was subordinate to God, ALWAYS doing His Father's will. Luke 22:42: "Not my will, but thine be done". Philippians 2:7-8.

Not only did the Lord Jesus submit to the Father, the Holy Spirit, in His role (submitted to the Father and Son) when He was sent into the world after the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

(After the Lord Jesus finished His work). John 14:26, 15:26, 14:6-10

The Lord Jesus & the Holy Spirit are subordinate in their roles, but co-equal ontologically in their Being & Persons with God the Father.

You will never read in all the Holy Scriptures where there is any disorder or changing of roles within the Godhead.

Now we come back to 1 Corinthians 11:3: "But I would have you to know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of every woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God"

There are God given, God commanded roles for men and women in the church, the public assembly, (and in the society of the family). In (Verse4-5) Paul wrote of men and women prophesying or praying.

What Paul was teaching the Corinthians was that both men and women should conduct themselves (in the church) in accordance with their God-Ordained and God-Given roles.

But when YOU venture outside of YOUR God-Ordained role, when men cease to be men and women cease to be women, we dishonor our Creator, and we dishonor ourselves!

There was disorder in the church regarding praying and prophesying, or in teaching the Word. Men and women in the church were operating outside of their God-Given, God-Ordained roles.

This is clearly seen in the world TODAY in men retreating from their God given responsibilities and authority, in which they are to lovingly lead, protect, and care for their wives and children. This has pervaded our society, and it has crept into the church! Men are relinquishing their God given role of leading to women.

Likewise, women (in many cases) have taken the place and the role of dominion and authority over the man, in that which was given to the man, and not to them! And men have allowed it! All of this under the guise of "equality in the world" between men and women, but in actuality, it is a sinful disguise for rebellion against God's created order.

In 1 Corinthians 11:4-5, Paul illustrated the teaching of (Verse 3) in regard to the Corinthian church in that day:

Paul identified men and women, who were acting in roles that were dishonoring to themselves, and consequently dishonoring to God.

Men praying with their heads covered, (which was a sign of subjection) which was how women were to pray. This was dishonoring to the man; and women praying with their heads uncovered, which was how men were to pray. This was dishonoring to the woman.

This brings in the whole subject of head coverings, which in the culture of that day, was a sign of the woman's submission/subjection to the man.

I am not going to get into head coverings; they were part of the culture of that time in Corinth. Today they are still used by women in many Middle Eastern countries and cultures.

I don't want to spend time on a visible veil, because that is not the issue, the issue is being obedient to our God given roles as Christians in God's economy for both men and women. Ladies, you could wear a veil, but a veil is only a sign of submission, it doesn't mean that you're ACTUALLY submissive to God in your God-given role.

Also, Paul clearly stated in (Verse 15) that your hair, ladies, is your covering. But back to the whole point here, Paul used the example of men with long hair and women with shorn or short hair, who in doing so have cast aside their God-Given roles.

God's Created Order for both men and women: Equality, Authority, Dominion, & Submission: Genesis 1:26-27

Equality: Both the man and the woman were created in the image and likeness of God; the woman IS equal with the man in this

respect; she is NOT to be considered less "in being" than the man. Genesis 1:27.

Authority and Dominion given to the man by God: Genesis 2:16-17

Submission: The woman made for the man, not the man for the woman: Equal, but a different role: Genesis 2:18, 21-23, 1 Corinthians 11:7-9

(Verse13-14): Women acting in the roles of men, is "not comely"; it is unbecoming and dishonoring to the woman, but most of all, it is dishonoring to God.

Men acting in the roles of women, is "a shame" to him, and dishonoring to God who commanded him to his God given role.

Complementarian View: There is equality between men and women, both were created in the image and likeness of God; therefore, equal in being, but with distinct and different roles in society, in families, and in the church. Women in their God-Assigned role are placed under the man's authority.

Egalitarian View: There are no gender-based restrictions, to include in the church. Women and men are therefore interchangeable in leadership, in the home, in society, and in the church.

(Verse16): This was Paul's way of saying, there is nothing to argue about; we have no such custom in the churches of God, that men and women venture outside of their God-Given roles as men and women.