

I Corinthians Chapter 11 - Handout 7

This chapter is divided into two major sections: v. 2-16 address the issue of men and women's head coverings, and the symbolism of authority and submission associated with them; v.17-34 behavior and state of mind at the special fellowship meals after which the Lord's Supper followed.

v. 3 - foundational scripture - "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."

This is not a statement of superiority, but authority and submission. Remember, Christ Jesus, the Son, is equal to God the Father (One God, three personalities), yet Christ always submitted to the will and agenda of the Father. And so in God's order, according to the Word, the male has authority over the female. He is to serve in a leadership role and as a covering and protection. He is not, however, superior to her; they have different roles to perform. There is an interdependence between them.

The subject of head covering in the book of I Corinthians is very specific to that time and to their customs. Although some churches practice covering, or not covering, the head, especially in worship, this seems not to be a teaching that transcends a particular culture and a particular time. What is more important is the principle of authority and submission as God establishes it.

v. 4 - a man should not have his head covered when praying and prophesying in worship because Christ is his head. Symbolic. In pagan worship Corinthian men covered their heads, but now Christ is the head, and must honor him as such.

v. 5, 6 - Much evidence shows that decent women of that time wore a covering on their heads, especially when they were in public. Head covering showed their submission to their husbands, and, according to Paul, to God's ordained order. Women were the glory of men.

v. 11, 12 - Shows the interdependence of the male/female relationship

v14, 15 - Discussion on long hair for a woman has less to do with the length of hair, and more to do with the intention to achieve a male or female appearance. (We know that hairstyles change from age to age).

The seems to have been a fellowship supper that preceded the remembrance of the Lord's Supper. Paul rebukes their behavior during this supper and their lack of reverence and remembrance of the meaning of the Lord's Supper.

v.17-19 - Divisions and cliques, evidenced during this supper

v. 20 - 22 - Drunkenness, gluttony, and selfishness

v.23 - 26 - A reminder of the original Lord's Supper and what it really means.

v.27-34 - We should examine ourselves and come with right understanding and a clean conscience to the Lord's Supper