

HEAD COVERING FOR CHRISTIAN WOMEN

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In 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 we find there are two distinct lessons which deal with the head. The word *head* in this context is the figurative one of authority, the implication of which is subjection to that authority.

Fundamentally the text is a lesson on **headship**, and the **glory** which is attached to it.

Man

Man must not cover his head in the assembly because he is “the image and glory of God” (1 Cor. 11:7, Gen.1:26-27). Image is representation, and glory is manifestation.

When Adam was made, he was given the responsibility of representing God and implementing His will upon on earth. The physical head of the man is a symbol which expresses the authority and glory of Christ, his spiritual Head.

In a church gathering, Christ’s authority and glory must not be concealed. Any covering on the man would veil Christ’s glory and deny His authority (1 Cor.11:3).

For this twofold reason man must not cover his head when he comes in the presence of God.

Woman

Man’s authority, as a stewardship from God, is not to be held in dishonour (1 Cor. 11:5; cf. 1Tim. 2:12). Therefore, a woman should place a sign of authority on her head (1 Cor. 11:10). The symbol on her head is a manifestation of her submission to God’s designed order in creation.

As the long hair for a woman represents the proper covering (Gk., *penhobion*, 1 Cor. 11:15b), of her subjection in the natural realm, so the head-covering is the proper symbolic covering (Gk., *katakalypto*, 1 Cor. 11:10), of her subjection in the spiritual realm.

In the natural, it is a glory or honour to her if she keeps her hair long (1 Cor. 11:15), and a disgrace if she doesn’t (1 Cor. 11: 6). The same principal applies

to the spiritual sphere. A woman with a head covering brings honour and glory to God. If she chooses to be uncovered, she dishonours her figurative head – “and the head of the woman is man”, 1 Cor. 11:5. She is in effect, disclosing his glory. In doing so, she fails to display the Headship of Christ.

In 1 Cor. 11:7, the woman is not spoken of as the image of man, but as his glory. The glory of man must not be manifest in spiritual exercises; therefore that glory must be covered. No glory but Christ's is to be displayed at the gatherings.

Therefore, when man sees the women's heads covered, he is reminded that his glory and her own glory are covered.

Accordingly, the women are to wear head coverings, for two reasons. One reason is to make known God's authority, as conceded to man and the other reason is for the shielding of man's glory.

Angels

When a woman comes into a church gathering with her head covered, she performs a ministry to the hosts of heaven (1 Cor.11:10; Eph. 3:10). She becomes to angels an object lesson of submission to **divine Headship**. In beholding man with his head uncovered, they witness the **unshielded glory of God** and **His accepted authority!**

Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered (1Cor. 11:13)? Unequivocally, the only acceptable answer is NO.

Soli Deo Gloria