

(The Head Covering) 03 - Theology of Authority, Modesty and Clothing

by Tom Chaplin

The sermon explores the theological implications of authority and modesty as they relate to the practice of wearing head coverings in a biblical context.

Duration: 1:09:15

Scripture: Matthew 28:18

Topics: "Head Covering"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing Christ as the head of our lives. He shares a story about a boy who appeared obedient on the outside but was unhappy on the inside, highlighting the need for true heart transformation. The preacher then connects this concept to the issue of head covering, stating that unless our hearts are aligned with God's will, we will not understand its significance. He references Bible verses such as Matthew 28:18 and 1 Corinthians 11:3 to emphasize that Christ is the head of every man, man is the head of woman, and God is the head of Christ.

Transcript

Go ahead and begin our Bible study. The last couple of weeks we've been considering this topic, understanding the head covering, a whole Bible approach. This is our third lesson on this subject, and we've been considering what I call just some underlying fundamental principles that while they don't specifically, or at least I haven't specifically tied them to the head covering yet, they're issues that are always there, lurking perhaps in the back of our minds, kind of conditioning us as to how we look at the head covering issue when we're studying it.

And so far we've considered the role of culture in biblical interpretation, we've looked at principles of Old Testament interpretation, and today we're going to combine these two right here into one lesson, and this will finish up our, I hate to say preliminary study, but I guess that's what it is. This will finish up our covering of these fundamental issues, and next week we'll actually get into looking at the Scriptures that deal specifically with the head covering, but we do want to look today at these two issues right here, and I would entitle our lesson today The Theology of Clothing as it Relates to Authority and Modesty. So that's what we're going to cover today.

Of course, we need the Lord's help as we study any issue of Scripture, so let's, before we actually get into it, ask His blessing on our study. Father, we do once again thank You for this opportunity to look at Your Word, and Lord, we do acknowledge our dependence upon You, and the fact that unless You give us light and understanding that we won't understand the truth, and just pray that You would meet with us here this evening through Your Holy Spirit, that You would guide and help me to present those things that really are true to Your Word and not just my own personal opinion, and that You would give us all hearts to receive and to understand that which You have for us concerning this issue of the head covering. Lord, I feel it's a very important lesson tonight, and just enable me to share my heart and be true to Your Word, and just bless it, Lord, and may Your Son get all the praise and honor and glory.

Lord, I'd ask it in His name and for His sake. Amen. Well, as we noted last week, there are many that consider an issue such as the head covering to be, you know, an issue that's pretty minor, and a lot would say, you know, why are you spending any time at all looking at something like that? However, I think for most of us, at some point an issue like clothing does become serious.

For instance, as I mentioned last week, if some authority was to tell me that my wife had to wear hot pants, I'd just have to take issue with that. I mean, it's just not something I'm open to in my understanding of Scripture and morality and how we should dress. And so we all draw the line somewhere.

I mean, at some point, for most of us, clothing is going to be an issue. But the problem is, how do we draw the lines? You know, all conservative Christians, anyway, would acknowledge that we should dress modestly. I mean, that's what it says in Timothy, right? We are to dress modestly.

So what does that mean? And you can almost get a different answer to that question for everybody you ask. And so what we want to know is, is there any biblical guidance on that issue? Are we really just each one of us left by God up to our own subjective judgments? Or does God actually give us some direction? And I personally believe that God hasn't left us on our own, but that he has given us some guidance and direction. And today I want to look at some of those principles and share them with you.

Now, I think this is an accurate statement. You might want to correct me if I'm wrong, but when most of us think of the issue of modesty, we usually think of it in terms of, at least in terms of women, of them being dressed in such a way as not to be a sexual enticement to somebody. And I think that generally the sexual dimension of the issue is what we think of most when we think of the subject of modesty.

Am I, I mean, is that correct for most of you here? I mean, that's always the way I looked at it. That's the first thing that came to my mind when I thought about modesty. Well, you know, if that's the way you think, and you probably do, you might be kind of, you know, kind of quizzical about why I would link authority and modesty together.

Because we don't, I don't think, normally think in those terms or link the two together. But what I want to do today is show you that they're very closely related. And in understanding these concepts here gives us a lot of instruction and direction as to how we understand the importance of clothing or how we are to dress in a way that would please God.

So, surprisingly enough perhaps to you, I'm not going to be talking a lot about the sexual dimension. We'll be talking about authority, the dimension of authority as it relates to this subject. And frankly, from a scriptural perspective, it's probably more important than the other thing that we think of when we think of the issue of modesty.

So, to begin with, what I want to do is first just lay out God's chain of command. We want to talk about that first. And we are going to look a little bit at 1 Corinthians today.

Look in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verses 1 through 3. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you. But I would have you to 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.

Now what we want to focus on this evening for a little bit is that verse 3. We see this word occurring over and over again in this verse. It's the word head. Now, what does that mean? If I say that somebody is my head, what am I conveying to you? What do I want you to understand? Well, let's think about the physical head.

What is the physical head? The physical head is your traffic control center, isn't it? It is that part of your body that directs and controls the rest of your body. For instance, my hand moves. Why is it moving? Because my head is telling it to move.

What happens if I was unconscious? Would my body do anything? It would just lay there limp, wouldn't it? Because my head is out of control. I mean, it's not functioning at that point. And so when you say that somebody is your head, what you're saying is that person is your authority.

He's the person that directs you, that controls you. It's the person you're to be in obedience to. My head is someone that I have to obey.

Any problems with that? Would you say that's proper analysis? Okay. Well, in this verse it uses that term and it says that the head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God. Well, let's start at the top of this chain first.

How is God Christ's head? In what sense? Now, this is somewhat of a mystery because I believe in the Trinity that you have the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit and that these three are one God and that they are co-equal. And yet, you know, three persons, one God. And yet this verse indicates that God the Father is the head of Christ, meaning that Christ himself is subjected to the Father.

So how can that be? And I'm not going to tell you that I have all the answers to such questions. I did look in several commentaries for help and John Calvin, he said this, he said that it is spoken of Christ as the mediator. It's dealing with Christ as the God-man and that in that sense, Christ is inferior to the Father in as much as he has assumed our nature that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

He is inferior to the Father in as much as he has assumed our nature that he might be the firstborn. So it's not as Christ considered as the second person of the Trinity, but Christ is considered as the God-man, our mediator, the man Christ Jesus that was to be a propitiation for our sins that he is in subjection to God the Father. Well, since Christ is our example, how did he manifest subjection? What did that mean to him? Look in John 4, verse 34.

John 4, verse 34. He said, Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work. For Christ, what God the Father wanted him to do was like eating the most delicious meal you can imagine.

It's that which he enjoyed doing. It's that which nourished him. It's that which made him happy.

His meat was to do the will of him who sent him. Look in John 5, verse 30. I can of mine own self do nothing as I hear I judge and my judgment is just because I seek not mine own will but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

So I think we see the heart of Christ. From his perspective, he existed to please his Father. When he did something, he wanted it to be exactly what God the Father wanted him to do.

And it was enjoyable to him. It was his meat. It was that which nourished him.

And so he had an unabandoned giving of himself to his Father. And that's an example to us. And as you and I consider this whole subject of headship and what it means to be submitted to our head as it's laid out in scripture, we need to keep that in mind, that that is the way Christ submitted to his head.

And that's a pattern for us as we continue in the rest of this study. Well, it's said that God is the head of Christ, but Christ is the head of man. Now what does that mean? Let's look at that for a second.

Look in Colossians 1.18. Colossians 1.18. And here, I'll start in 17. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church.

Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in him all things might have the preeminence. So, to say that he's the head of man, I believe, implies initially that he is the head of the church and all individuals in it. He is in authority.

He is that head. And as we function as a church, it's his direction coming to us as a body of believers through his spirit that directs us and guides us. And we, as his members, act according to the direction he gives us through the spirit.

So, first off, he's in charge of the church. He rules in the church through his spirit. Look also in Matthew 28.18, though.

His authority is not just restricted to men and women in the church. Matthew 28.18. He said, Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. I think I started one verse below, where it says all authority is given to him.

Excuse me, verse 17. And when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. But he said that all power is given to him by God the Father. He's in total control, not only of the church, but of everything.

And that's brought out again in a passage, such as Philippians 2, verses 9 through 11. Look there for a second. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

So we see that the authority of Christ reaches to his church, but not just to his church. It embraces all men and all things. He is absolute head over everyone.

But what does this mean to us, for you and me personally? I mean, we're talking maybe abstract theology here, but we need to get personal with it now and bring it home to our own hearts. How are we to relate to Christ as our head? Well, how did he relate to his head? He gave total, unbounded, joyful submission to his Father. And if we really from the heart recognize Christ as our head, that's the type of subjection that we should have towards him, isn't it? I'll tell you a little story.

There once was a little boy, and he was being somewhat rambunctious. And his mother thought he was getting a little bit too rambunctious. Maybe you've had that problem at times.

I do sometimes. So Mama said, Son, just calm down now. I think what I want you to do is get a book, and you go sit on the couch.

And her boy, he was dutifully obedient. And he went and got a book, and he went and he sat down on the couch. But his mama looked at him and knew that something was wrong.

I mean, you can tell. You can tell when your child is not happy. Well, this boy didn't look happy.

So Mama comes and says, Son, what's the problem? And the boy says, Mama, I'm sitting down on the outside. But I'm standing up on the inside. I'm sitting down on the outside, Mama, but I'm standing up on the inside.

Well, we've got to give him credit. At least he was being honest. But I bring that little illustration out to make this point.

Our submission to Christ is not just external. It's got to be from the heart. And it's possible that we can engage in all sorts of external acts of submission, maybe because we fear Him, and we're afraid He might send us to hell if we don't.

But that's not sufficient. We can obey Christ in a hunting jillion little points, but if we're not submitting to Him because we love Him, because we want to please Him, because it really is our joy to do His will, whatever it may be, then we've not submitted to Him as required by this scripture to submit to Him as head. So how do you stand up with that judgment? Can you truly say from the best of your heart, can I truly say as I look at the things that I'm trying to do in subjection to God, that I'm doing it from that heart of true love for Him, and not just to keep from getting spanked or something.

That's not sufficient. God wants our heart. He wants our love.

And He wants obedience prompted by that love. So how do we stack up? Consider that. Well, let's move on.

Let's consider some human relationships. God is Christ's head. Christ is the head of man.

But the verse goes on and says that the head of the woman is the man. And what does that mean? Well, let's elaborate and develop that a little bit. Look in Ephesians 5, beginning in verse 22.

Man is the head of the woman. And Paul says, Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. Interesting.

He's saying that women should submit to their husbands in the same way that the church submits to Christ. Or as they should submit to the Lord, excuse me. The same type of submission.

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. And He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ.

So here we go with the, they're to submit to their husbands as unto the Lord, and they're to submit to their husbands the way the church submits to Christ. So let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. So we see in terms of the home that the woman is to be in subjection to her husband.

To the man that God has placed in her life to be her head. So it at least applies that far. Well let's look at it and see if we can broaden it out.

Look in 1 Timothy chapter 2. 1 Timothy 2 beginning in verse 8. And we'll be coming back to this passage later in the message as well. I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. In the like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel with shame, defacing this in sobriety, not with boarded hair or gold or pearls or costly array.

But which becometh women professing godliness with good works. Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

For Adam was first formed in Eve, and Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. I think I'm not going to go into a lot of detail in this passage other than to note that it says in verse 12 that Paul did not suffer a woman to teach or to usurp authority over a man and it's clearly in the context of the church.

So we see the concept that man is the head of the woman is not just in terms of my relationship as a husband to my wife, but this concept applies in the church that women preachers and such things as that, as I understand this passage, don't seem to be in line with what it's teaching. But that God has placed in the church man is head in terms of teaching and the exercise of authority, he is to be in charge, he's to be the head. And the women are to be in a place of submission to the rulers that God raises up in the church that should be men.

So we see it applies in the family, it applies in the church. Look at Isaiah 3. And I'll read several verses here. Well, I'll tell you what, I'll start, I'll just read one verse, verse 12.

This is a passage where God is pronouncing judgment, the context is one of judgment, and he says in verse 12, As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee, cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths. Now here again, I think it's quite clear that the headship of man not only applies in the family, not only applies in the church, but it was really a bad state in Israel at this time that this passage was written, that women were their rulers.

This is God speaking. And he's saying, this is, if I can paraphrase it, this is not good, this is a terrible situation, and it's the result of you being in rebellion against me. Women are your rulers.

Now we could relate to other passages, but I think that should be sufficient. God has ordained when he says that the man is the head of the woman, that we as men are to be the leaders in our homes, in the church, and in society in general. That's what it means to say that Christ is the head of the woman, or man is the head of the woman.

And that, to me, is a teaching that really needs to be shouted from the housetops in our society. I mean, it's something the church really needs to rise up and proclaim with great strength. Because look at America today, where are we? Now, if you go talk to somebody that's just in the world, they will probably tell you that the fact that we have women's lib, women's equality, and the fact that you can probably go down, well, I mean, the last governor of Texas was a woman, and they would tell you that that is good, that that means we've made progress as a country.

Do you believe that? I mean, I read articles, and it talks about how children are afraid to go to school. They're afraid for their life. Divorce is rampant.

Families are falling apart. I mean, the church can't stop abortion. We seem to have no power.

Why do you think that is? Well, I think it's, well, maybe this isn't the total answer, but a good part of the reason is we as a society have thrown off God's chain of command. We're in rebellion. The women have risen up, and the men have laid it down.

And what's the result? Our society is heading towards chaos, unless God is pleased to send revival. We have great needs in America, in this realm. Probably most of us, since I know my group here is very conservative, would say amen.

But since you're so conservative, I have to be hard on you. Probably harder than I would be if I was preaching to some other groups, because we have to bring this home to our hearts. And I have to ask myself the question as I ask you.

Do you embrace these principles of authority? Do I embrace them? Really? Now, I think everybody here embraces them intellectually. But do we really embrace them in, like I said, right here? Let me ask the men. I'll pick on the men first.

Are you leaders? Are we leaders? Are we? We're to be the head. It's not optional, is it? God says, I mean, I didn't have any choice on how I was going to be born. I couldn't say I wanted to be a woman and not be a leader.

I didn't have that option. God made me a man. Chris, he made you a man.

Right? I mean, we were made men. And so what does God say to us? He says, you're a man, you're to lead. Not optional.

But are we leaders? And let me just make a few observations here. And I can't speak to any of you personally. I'm glad I don't know any of you really.

So, I'm not meaning to step personally on anybody's toes if I do, because I don't know if this applies to you or not. But let me share some of the things that I have seen over the years. I've been in, let's talk about the church.

I've been in churches where it was a struggle to get the men to pray, to give a testimony. It just, there was no heart to do such things. And there was no real effort in many of those families to, say, have devotions with the children or to do anything with the family in a spiritual way.

And I've been in some churches where I was greatly encouraged. I've had an opportunity to be in a church that I'm thinking of right now where you had all these men and they weren't trained men. They were just

simple, hard-working men.

They hadn't been to seminary, hadn't been to Bible school. But just about every man in that congregation could get up in front of 100 to 150 people and bring a halfway decent message at least. And these same men were not backward at the end of the service if an opportunity was given to give testimonies.

A bunch of them would stand up and they'd actually speak in front of great numbers of people. And what was so impressive to me about this was that they weren't trained men. They were just like you and me, you know.

I mean, they were just men, being men. Now, they weren't super gifted. You know, I wouldn't say they were super preachers, but they had the courage and the manliness to be able to stand up and lead.

That encouraged me. But I'll tell you, that's been a rare experience. For the most part, in the churches I've been in, it's been pretty much the opposite.

The men have been largely passive and find it very difficult to get any type of participation. And I don't know where you all are on this, but to me, this is what we as men have to wrestle with. Are we really leaders? It's not just enough for you and I to say, yes, I believe that I'm the head of the woman.

That has practical implications for you and me. It means I've got to be an initiator. I've got to be bold.

I've got to stand up before men. You know, it says in Corinthians, it says, if any man hath a psalm, if any man hath a teaching, hey, you know, it doesn't say, does the preacher have a psalm? Does the preacher have a teaching? And it expects that the men will be leading as men in the church congregation. And I'm sad to say that if you went in and tried to implement that in many congregations, you'd have a very dead service.

Because you'd be doing good to get one or two to do anything. But we can't be that way. Can we? We have to be men.

And I just bring this out as one application for us to consider. As we consider our life in the church, are we exercising that leadership position that God has given us? I doubt any of us go to churches that have women preachers. I mean, we're too conservative for that.

We would say, men are to lead, women are not to be preachers. But brothers, it goes much farther than that. It touches me and you personally.

We've got to lead. Not just what we don't have, women preachers, but what do we do? What do we have as men? That's an issue. So, do you embrace God's chain of command? Do I embrace it? We need to consider that.

What about in the home? Where do we stand there? You know, it's a sad thing in America that most homes don't have any type of spiritual direction. And I would expect that most of us here would not be in such a sad state. At least I hope not.

But in many homes in America, if there's any spiritual direction at all, it's from the wife. She's the one that reads the Bible stories. She's the one that prays with the kids.

She's the one that maybe puts them on the bus to go to First Baptist Church on Sunday. Or she's the one that actually takes them. And where's the man? Anytime the man is still in bed, or maybe he's gone out hunting, if it's hunting season.

But as far as the man of the home actually setting the spiritual tenor of the home, as far as him laying the groundwork for his family, setting the standards, pressing on, and drawing his children and his wife after him, it's rare that you'll find a home where that's the case. And I tell you, I need to have needs there too. And I ask you to pray for me.

I need to be more of a leader in my own home than I am. But I want to be better. But it's not an option for me, and it's not an option for you men here today.

And it's not an option for you young men who are soon to be fathers. You'll be married before you know it. And God has called you, young men, when you grow up, to be heads in your home.

He's called you to be leaders in the church. And you need right now to start becoming that. Don't wait until you're 20 or 25 to start addressing these issues.

You need to address them now. And ask yourself, what do I need to be doing now as a young man preparing to be a leader? What do I need to do to prepare myself for that? And you need to be applying yourself in that direction. Before you know it, you're going to be a man.

And you're going to be called upon by God to be a leader. Now's the time to address that. So where do you stand as a husband, as a leader of your children in this matter? Are you leading? Are you actively setting the tenor, the atmosphere of your home spiritually? Are you leading your wife and your family towards Christ and His kingdom? Or are you passive? Are you letting these things slide? Is your wife the spiritual power in your house? I just leave you with those questions.

Because if that's the case, you may have an intellectual grasp. But it's not in the heart. And it's not good enough just to have it up here.

It's got to be here. And it's got to be working itself out in the way you live. In the way I live.

Do you embrace, men, do you embrace these principles of authority? Really? Do you really? Not what you got in the Bill Godford seminar. That's wonderful. I'm glad you went and heard it.

But what you hear is not important if it doesn't live in your life. Okay. Women, now it's time for you.

This issue of headship applies to you, just like it does to us. Let me ask you this question, ladies. Is it your meat and drink to serve your husband as the church is to serve Christ? Is it your meat and your drink? Is it that which gives you pleasure? Is that the central focus of your mentality? You know, it says in Genesis that God gave woman to man to be a help, meat, help fit for him.

The creation mandate for you is to be your husband's helper and his greatest exponent. That's what God wants for you. Is that the way you are? You know, again, back to our society.

We live in a society that would actually teach that the way a woman should be fulfilled is to go out and get a job and make her own destiny. In other words, the man, he has his life and he has his objectives that he's pursuing and the woman, she is pursuing her own objectives and somehow they live together and they have a marriage. But you and I know that doesn't work.

What happens is the wife falls in love with the boss and ends up divorced and running off with the boss. Or the man falls in love with the secretary and ends up, you know, telling what. It just doesn't work that way.

Now I know that that is not any type of problem here among you, but it can be in a lesser way. I mean, what is the center of your life? Is it your children? That's going to be the snare. Not that you shouldn't have a love for your children, you should.

But your children can never supplant your husband. Because you were given to him to be his helper. And the focus of your ministry in life, if God has called you to marriage, is to promote the objectives that God has laid upon your husband.

And if you let anything else take precedence over that, then you are not properly honoring the chain of command. So where is your heart in regard to your husband? When you think about your husband, is it your meat and your drink to please him? To make him happy? To further his cause among men and before God? Is that really the focus of your life as a woman, as a wife? Or is it something like your children? Or in a more extreme case, your desire to be a success in a career? You know, it says in 1 Peter 3, verses 5-6, that Sarah called Abraham, Lord. I mean, that is the respect that she had for her husband.

That's how far it went with her. I don't know that I've ever heard an American call her husband, Lord. And I suspect most of us, if we were in a group and we heard a woman say to her husband, Lord, and call him Lord, we'd be shocked.

I mean, that's so far from our 20th century equality mentality, women's lib mentality, that it would just probably give some of us a heart attack. But that is commended in Scripture. That was a good thing that she did.

She had given her heart to her husband who she recognized and honored as her Lord. And God said that's right. That should be her heart.

And she's an example for the ladies that are here this evening. So is that where you're at, ladies? And let me ask you this question. Again, we're back to the I'm sitting down on the outside, but I'm really standing up on the inside type question.

Let's say your husband doesn't want you to do something that you... He doesn't want to do something you want him to do. Or he doesn't see things the way you see them. How do you respond to that? Can you lay it down? Can you still love him? Can you be quiet? Can you submit to him and if necessary maybe wait on him? Or are you like Columns 19, 13? The woman there, the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.

Where's your heart? How do you relate to your husband? Where are you? See, I'm being harder on you because I'm getting really to the heart with this group. I might be broader. I might talk more about working women than I've talked tonight if I was in a different group.

But you people are the most likely to be misled in a sense because you're probably very close on all the externals to where you should be. So that's why I've got to really get to the heart with you all. Where's your heart? Do you really have that heart of subjection and submission to your husband? You can lay down issues when he doesn't agree with you.

You can submit to him. You can be quiet. You can wait on him.

And you can still, even though he's irritating the stew out of you maybe, you can still promote his honor and his glory and be doing all that you can to make him the man God wants him to be. Now if you can say that and say amen, then you've mastered this. But if you can't, then like me, you've got some work.

You still have to do it. Because again, it's not just learning the concepts. It's getting them into the heart and living them out.

That's all that matters. And that's what we've got to get to. Anybody want to make any comments on that? Well, you might have one question.

It's what in the world does this have to do with clothing? So, Tom, your message has been somewhat challenging to this point, but what in the world does it have to do with this Bible study and this issue of the head covering? Well, let's move on and look at that because I think it has a real important part in this whole issue. In fact, I will tell you this. I don't believe that unless we get our hearts right on this subject that we'll be able to receive the head covering.

And I think that will become clearer as we go through the study. Of course, I'm assuming that I have properly understood the issue. You may need to instruct me.

Maybe I've missed the boat. But I think you'll see that the head covering is hard to receive unless your heart has embraced these principles. Very difficult.

Well, let's move on. I want to try and tie this all together for you. What in the world does all this have to do with clothing? Let's look in Genesis chapter 2. Let's begin reading in verse 19.

And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them. And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle and to the fowl of the air and to every beast of the field.

But for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept. And he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof.

And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh. In verse 25, and they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. The first thing we need to note is that clothing was not always necessary.

I mean we tend to think of clothing in terms of, you know, sexual aspects. But in the Garden of Eden there was just a man and his wife. They didn't need any clothing.

They were not ashamed. But how could that be? Why weren't they ashamed? Well, I believe that the reason that is the case is because God has ordained, or he did ordain, to make a connection between our outward physical condition and our inward physical condition. For instance, it says of man that he was created upright.

Of all the creatures God created, man is the only one that was created that stands upright. Now that is significant. Because it relates to our inner state.

We're created in the image of God. We were created righteous. And so we stand up.

We're the only creature that stands up. And our uprightness reflected what we wore inside of us. And that's the reason also that we didn't need any clothes initially because man, being a righteous creature, no sin, had nothing to hide.

He didn't have to run from God. He could stand before God and there was no moral impurity in him that he needed to run away from God over. And that internal state of perfection and the fact that there was nothing for him to hide from God was reflected in the fact also that he needed no clothing.

He had nothing to hide. He was perfect. And what was inside was reflected externally in the fact that he was naked and not ashamed.

Well, where did clothing come from? Well, I'm going to hopefully demonstrate to you something very interesting. That the need for clothing arose out of an overturning of God's chain of command. That's interesting.

It wasn't because it got cold in the Garden of Eden, was it? I mean, even after the fall, the Garden of Eden was still pretty nice. And they had already put on fig leaves before God even came to them. It wasn't weather.

And it wasn't sexual desire, I don't think. Let's read Genesis chapter 3 to find out what happened. Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.

And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. Now what happened? When was it that they knew that they were naked? When they realized they had something they needed to hide.

Before, when they stood before God, they had nothing in them to displease God. They were righteous. But now they had sinned.

Now there was a moral impurity, and they knew they had it. God opened their eyes, and they realized what they'd done, and God gave them a conscience, and the conscience was condemning them, and they knew they had offended Him. Now they had some reason to run away.

Now they had something to hide, and suddenly they sensed a need for clothing at that point, because what happened on the inside affected the outside too. The spiritual internal realities also affected the external realities as well. Now they could no longer be unclothed, and be okay in the eyes of God or of

themselves.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. See, they're trying to hide. And the Lord God called unto Adam and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.

And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman who now gave us to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent did guide me, and I did eat. Now, let's look, let's stop and consider that.

What happened? What brought the need for clothing? What is the chain of command? It's God, Christ, man, woman, and what's last? The creation. The creation, right? God put this creation under Adam's foot, and he was given dominion. What do you see in this account? The serpent's on top, right? Then the woman's right behind the serpent.

Then the man's right behind the woman, and where's God? He's way down here. The whole chain of command is turned upside down. Instead of God leading, the serpent, the creation is on top.

And the whole order of the chain of command is inverted. Isn't it? You see that? The serpent misled the woman, the man was misled by the woman, and God just totally out of it altogether. And so the whole reason we need clothing is because man rebelled against God and his chain of command.

That was the origin of clothing. An overthrow of God and his order of creation. In the process of the fire, what happened? The woman acted apart from her husband.

She didn't go and seek counsel from Adam. She listened to the serpent. And instead of going right back to her husband and saying, the serpent told me this, what do you think? She just listened and obeyed the serpent.

And then the man, instead of going to God with his wife coming to him and tempting him to fall into sin, he went ahead and listened to her. And so here we are, wearing clothes. And because we listened to a serpent and inverted the order of the chain of command, that's why we have clothes.

Well, let's look and consider in Genesis 3.21 that what Adam and Eve did or started or tried to do was in the right direction. They should have tried to cover up. Well, they needed a covering.

Genesis 3.21 And the Lord God said, excuse me, under Adam also and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothe them. So Adam and Eve had sowed fig leaves. They made some attempt to cover up their sin.

And they were shamed. But it wasn't enough, obviously. God had to provide his own covering.

And we see that the covering he provided was an animal skin, which meant that an animal had to be killed. And so it was taking that animal, shedding that animal's blood, taking the skin and making it into some type of covering. That's what God gave to Adam and Eve to cover their nakedness.

But notice that God himself acknowledged that there was such a thing as nakedness and that it needed to be covered. But we're also taught here, though, that man's attempt to cover it was insufficient. That God

was saying, I've got to provide a covering for your nakedness.

Now, do you see the spiritual dimension of that? What covering do we have to have to be acceptable in God's sight for our sin? What do we need? We need the righteousness of Christ, don't we? That's the covering we have to have. And what did Christ have to do? He had to shed his blood. It took the shedding of blood to provide a covering that was fully adequate to make us acceptable to God once again.

And in a picture form, that's what clothing is saying. When you and I wear clothing, we're acknowledging our shame at our rebellion and we're acknowledging that we are not able in our own goodness or righteousness to stand in the presence of the Holy God anymore. We have something that needs to be covered up.

Our sinful beings need to be covered up. Our body itself is decaying because of sin. And all this stuff God looks at and it's horrific to him and it needs to be covered up.

And when we wear clothing, we're acknowledging that we know that we have sinned with God. And it's very proper that we do wear clothing. But you see that when you and I wear clothing, we're making a theological statement.

We're saying that we're ashamed of our rebellion and we're saying that we know that we need a covering to protect us from God's rapid sin. And you get somebody that practices a nudism, and what is he saying? He's making a theological statement too. He's saying, I'm sufficient in and of myself.

I'm okay. You know, I can stand up there and take whatever comes my way. He's self-righteous.

He's rebellious. You show me a society where, like, if you go to Africa and you see the natives and they wear no clothing, that's a very rebellious, satanically oppressed society. You'll invariably in those societies find witch doctors and idolatry and the grossest forms of paganism in those societies.

And their nudity is nothing but a reflection of their spiritual state. Well, the most important thing I want you to get out of what we've said so far is this, that clothing is primarily a theological issue. And that it originated out of the overflow of God's chain of command.

We wear clothing because we are ashamed of our rebellion, so wearing clothing is good and appropriate. But notice that the wearing of clothing is not primarily cultural. I hope I've made that clear.

Because I think that's a problem that at least a lot of people have. They think that clothing is just something that people do because they just do it. But that's not the case.

I mean, we wear clothing for theological reasons. It's a theological and moral issue. Now granted, there may be some cultural variations that can exist, but the essence of the fact that we wear clothing is a theological and moral concern.

But I want to develop a little bit more of this idea of this relationship of God's chain of command to clothing. We've seen that that was the origin, what caused clothing to come into existence was a breaking or a turning upside down of the chain of command. But there's some other things we need to consider in that regard, too.

Look in 1 Timothy 2, beginning in verse 8. This is where we were earlier, but I do want to read it again. I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. And like

manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with voided hair or gold or pearls or costly array.

But which becometh women professing godliness with good works? Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to use self-authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first born beneath, and Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. Now consider this passage very closely, in light of what we've been sharing about this chain of command business. Because now I want to kind of tie this in to clothing more clearly, particularly as it relates to women.

The context, as I see it in this passage in Timothy, is an assembly of believers of some sort. It says, I will that our men pray lifting up holy hands. But now what does it say about the women? Does it say the women are to pray lifting up holy hands? Now notice that what he says to the women, we probably need to see about on the same level of spiritual service as the men praying, because they're made to be equivalent.

The man's to do one, and the woman's to do the other. What does he say the woman is to do? She's not to pray, but what is she to do? It says, in like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with boarded hair or gold or pearls or costly array. Now he says the men are to pray, they're to lead.

What are the women to do? They're to be dressed modestly. And in this word shamefacedness, it means to be bashful in the presence of men. Women are to be shamefaced.

Now he doesn't give you a lot of detail as to what that means, but he tells you what it is. Not with boarded hair and gold or pearls or costly array. That is not being shamefaced.

That's not being bashful in the presence of men. And then he goes on and talks about the women being in silence and learning without subjection, and not teaching and teaching. You see, the whole concept of wearing clothing is in what we're talking about here, the chain of command.

Men are to lead, the women are to be in subjection, and the way they manifest that is by being silent, by not teaching, and by the way they dress. Do you see how the chain of command relates to clothing? It's very much a part of it. Men are to lead, women are to be dressed modestly.

So when we talk about modesty, we're talking about, here he doesn't really refer primarily at all to the idea of problems we might have with sexual desire. It has to do with a woman dressing according to her station. That's the concept of modesty that we're dealing with in this passage.

She is to dress in accordance with her place in the chain of command, which is to be shamefaced, which is bashful in the presence of men. And that's the concept that's involved in modesty, more so than anything we might think about in terms of sexual impropriety. Now I saw that a while back, that was a revelation.

I had just never even thought of this issue in those terms. But I hope you all see the point. Look at one other passage where this is brought up, too.

1 Peter 3. It's basically the parallel passage to what we just read. Verses 1-6. Likewise ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands.

So we start out the passage talking about being in subjection. What does that mean? If any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives. While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear, whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, and that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves being in subjection unto their own husbands. Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, whose daughters you are, as long as you do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. So here again we have this whole issue of how a woman is to dress in the concept of her being in proper relationship to her head, her husband.

So, as I have considered those issues, I have come to realize, and I hope I am biblical, that when we look at this whole issue of modesty, a lot of the talk about concern has to be, at least concerning women, if I was a woman I would have to ask myself this question, am I dressing in accordance with my station in God's chain of command? That is a central issue in this matter of modesty. Because my adorning is to be that meek and quiet spirit, not the plaiting of hair in gold and pearls and costly rags. Am I making sense, or have I lost everybody? I hope I am making sense.

This is very important, believe me it is. Because if one of the central issues in this whole matter of modesty is dressing according to station, we will see next week how it relates to the head cover. Okay? But I believe it is.

And I believe it is probably even scripturally more important than issues of sexual temptation or lust. God expects women to dress in accordance with their station. And that is very much a part of the issue of modesty.

Let me just kind of summarize several points that I would like to leave here with. Number one, clothing is an inherently theological moral issue. I hope I have demonstrated that.

It is not primarily a cultural issue. Number two, while we usually think of modesty in terms of sexual patriarchy, it is obvious from the scriptures we have studied today that another very key issue is involved. Namely, God's chain of command.

And three, to be modest and appropriately dressed, a woman must attire herself as fitting her place in God's authority structure. To ignore this principle is to nest the sinful concern of our Lord and to risk displeasing Him in this aspect of our lives. So, that is what I hope I have established here today.

It may be totally new to you. I know at one time it was to me. But I believe it is very key.

And as you will see, I think next week and in the last few weeks of our study, it is very key to understanding the head covering. Because as I hope to show you, of all the pieces of clothing that a woman might wear, that most reflects her appropriate place in God's chain of command, scripturally there is no more important piece of clothing than the head covering. And that is what I hope to show you in the next couple of weeks.

Well, next week we will begin to try and tie these concepts together and we will actually be looking at the Old Testament scriptures directly relating to the head covering and then after that we will look specifically at 1 Corinthians chapter 11. So next week we will start taking all these general things we have said and try and bring them to bear and focus them on the issue that we originally started with, namely the head covering. Any questions? Well, I guess at this point we will pray and bless the food and we will go back downstairs and I guess everything is or shortly will be ready for us.

Let's pray. Father, we do thank you once again for your word. Lord, we thank you for its teaching, there to give us light and direction.

Lord, just make these issues clear to us. Show us by word, show us by truth. Lord, just keep us from error and misunderstanding.

Just lead us into a perfect knowledge of your will and your way. Lord, we just bless your name. Bless the Lord Jesus Christ this evening.

Thank you for him and all that he has done for us. Give us really the heart to give ourselves to him with abandon. Lord, that he might truly be our head, not only as we think of it in a theological sense, but from a very personal experiential sense with him.

Deliver us from this cold, dead religion. May it be live, may it be real. And may it be a religion that truly is in subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord, we thank you for your blessings. We thank you for the food you prepared for us this evening. We ask you to bless it to the nourishment of our bodies.

In Jesus' name we pray.

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