

# (The Head Covering) 07 - 1 Corinthians 11:4-10

by Tom Chaplin

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*The sermon explores the significance and implications of the head covering as discussed in 1 Corinthians 11, emphasizing its role in authority and honor during prayer and prophesying.*

**Duration:** 1:05:07

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 12:14, 1 Corinthians 11:3-6, 1 Corinthians 11:13, 1 Corinthians 11:15

**Topics:** "Head Covering"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker continues their study on the issue of head covering, referencing 1 Corinthians 4:9 to emphasize the importance of realizing that angels could be present and observing our actions. The speaker highlights the role of angels as guardians and observers of the created order, emphasizing the significance of submission to them. They quote commentator Linsky to explain that man, as God's image, reflects some of God's glorious attributes, particularly in exercising sovereignty under Christ. The sermon then delves into 1 Corinthians 11:1-6, discussing the hierarchy of authority with Christ as the head of man, man as the head of woman, and God as the head of Christ. The speaker emphasizes the importance of proper head covering during prayer and prophesying, stating that a man dishonors his head by praying with his head covered, while a woman dishonors her head by praying with her head uncovered.

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## Transcript

Okay, well, we'll continue this evening with our study on the whole Bible approach to the issue of the head covering. And as we have been doing, I'll just briefly review some of the things that we covered. Over the last several weeks, we've been looking specifically at 1 Corinthians chapter 11 in regard to this issue of the head covering.

And some of the questions that we've attempted to answer over the last several weeks are, you know, the following. For instance, what is the head covering? And I attempted to give you my understanding of that and to share with you the reasons why I feel like that the proper answer to that question is that the head covering is an item of clothing. Then we looked at the issue of, well, when is it to be worn? If it is an item of clothing, when do I have to have it on? And again, I felt like and attempted to show you why I believe the scriptures teach that this head covering is to be considered basically as just another piece of clothing.

And when you wear clothing, you just put the head covering on along with everything else. And when you'd wear your clothing, your normal daily clothing, that's when you should wear the head covering as well. So hopefully we were persuasive on that point.

And thirdly, we looked at this issue of why it is particularly important to wear the head covering while praying or prophesying. And as I tried to develop this idea that when we pray or when we prophesy, in reality, God has given us the right to bypass the chain of command. That if I'm a woman and I pray, I don't have to go to my husband to ask permission to pray.

I can go right to God, the throne of grace. If I'm prophesying and I'm a woman, I might prophesy to kings and that king may be in authority over me. But even though that's the case, he has to give heed to what I say as a woman.

So in praying and prophesying, in particular, we are going around the chain of command. And for that reason, it is particularly important in God's mind and in the mind of the scriptures that a woman have a reminder on her head that yes, even though she is going around the chain of command and God's given her permission to do so, nevertheless, she's still under that chain of command and she should not forget that fact. And she should still have a humble, meek, and quiet spirit even while she's engaging in these activities.

So just by way of review, that's what we've covered so far. Well, where are we going to go now? Well, today I want to look at several more questions that might come to our minds if we're studying 1 Corinthians chapter 11. And the three questions I want us to look at today is, number one, well, okay, hopefully we've established there is such a thing as a head covering that's to be worn.

Who is to wear it? Who are the proper subjects of this head covering? And number two, who is dishonored if this teaching concerning the head covering is not obeyed? And why is that person dishonored? We want to look at that. And third, we want to consider this very interesting verse where it says, mentions the angels. You know, that's just out of the blue, here come the angels.

And so we want to look at that and try and tie it into this whole subject. So those are the three questions, three topics that we want to consider from 1 Corinthians 11 today. But before we do, let's once again ask God's blessing upon us that he would lead us into a proper understanding of these matters.

Let's pray. Father, once again, we come to you asking your help and your guidance and your wisdom. Lord, again, we acknowledge the difficulty of this issue, something about which there's much disagreement.

But Lord, as your people, we just want to know your mind. We want to do that which is right in your sight. So as we continue in this exposition of 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and the head covering, we just ask that your spirit would be present here in our midst, that you would just open our hearts and minds to the truths of your word contained in this passage, that you would deliver us from personal prejudices, that you would deliver us from hazy thinking, and that you would by your spirit just give us a right knowledge and understanding of this whole subject.

Please, Lord, grant it unto us. Keep us from teaching things that aren't true, and just help us to see what really is truth in this passage. We are in it for his sake.

Okay, let me begin. Let's just read the passage 1 in verse 1. Be ye free even as I also am of Christ. Now I pray that you remember me in all things and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you, that 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.

Every man praying, sighing, his head covered dishonored his head, but every woman that prayeth or prophesied uncovered dishonored her head, for that is even all one as if he were shaven. If the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn, but if it be as she are shaven, for a man indeed ought not to cover his head. He is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of God.

For the man is not of the woman, but neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. For thus ought the woman to have power because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord.

For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman, but all things of God. Judge in yourselves, is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him, but if a woman have long hair it is a glory to her, for her hair is given her for a covering. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

Now we'll be looking primarily tonight at chapter 11 verses 4 through 10. The first thing we want to again address is this question, who is to wear the head covering? Just who is the proper subject of the head covering? Now that might seem to us somewhat of a strange issue, but it wasn't a very strange issue in the early church, in fact it was a very hot issue apparently. Well why was that the case? Well it just happens to be the fact that the words used in this passage that are translated man and woman can also be legitimately translated husband and wife.

There is really no way in Greek to determine which is the proper way to do it except by looking at the context of the passage, okay. So I think you can see if you were to just read through this passage and substitute husband for man and wife for woman that a lot of it would make sense if you did it that way. And in fact in the early church, at least in some of the churches, they understood that only married women had to cover their heads and that unmarried women were exempt.

In fact I know we quoted from Tertullian several times, I'd like to quote from him again. And he says this, and again he was writing about 200 AD, somewhere in that time frame, so it was not too far from the apostles. But he says this, throughout Greece and certain of its barbaric provinces the majority of churches keep their virgins covered.

But there are places too beneath this African sky where this practice obtains, lest any ascribe the custom to Greek or barbarian Gentilehood. Now the crux of this passage is that Tertullian obviously was arguing that both virgins and married women should cover their heads. And he's saying that in Greece most of the churches practice that and even in Africa some of them do.

Well now that obviously tells you that some of them didn't. And that in some of the churches unmarried women were not expected to cover their heads. Well that's why it's an issue.

And I, you know, I've come to the conclusion based on my study of scriptures that the head covering should not only be worn by married women but also by unmarried women. Well why did I come to that conclusion? Well first thing, I think we should observe that the arguments that Paul uses in this passage apply equally to unmarried women as to married. For instance he starts out by talking about how that man is created in the image of God.

Now ask yourself the question, is it just married men that are created in the image of God? Well obviously not. Man as man is created in the image of God. The passage talks about it being a shame for a woman to have her hair cut short or her head shaved.

But I'd ask this question, would that only be true for a married woman? Would any of you unmarried women like to have me shave your hair off this evening? Would you like to be walking around in public after the service for the next however long it takes your hair to grow out with no hair on your head? I don't think that applies just to married women. It'd be a concern and be a shame even for unmarried women. Another concern or another reason would be verse 12.

It's pretty hard to understand this if the words man and woman should be translated husband and wife. Let me just read this for you. It says, now I'm going to do the substitution.

For as the wife is of the husband, even so is the husband also by the wife, but all things of God. Does not make a lot of sense because what he's saying is that a man is born of a woman. Well, a man, a husband is not born of his wife.

So this verse makes it extremely unlikely, in fact impossible, that Paul is just referring to married women and married men. He's talking about men and women in the fullest broadest sense of the term. And another thing we did establish that head shift is a general reality and does not just apply to marriage.

We did that in the second or third lesson when we talked about how the men were to lead in the church, men were to lead in society, men are to lead in the home, in their marriages. But that gives us a broader context for male head shift than just between a husband and wife. And the last reason would be this, Isaiah 47 verses 1 through 3 and that pretty much, if you understand, take a whole Bible approach like I do, that pretty well nails it down because there God speaks of the virgin daughter of Babylon, it being shame and even nakedness for her to have her hair uncovered.

So for those reasons, I would have to agree with Tertullian that the proper subjects for the head covering would include married and unmarried women as well. Any questions on that? Okay, well that is the subject. Who is to wear it? Let's go on and look at the second thing.

Who is dishonored if this teaching is not obeyed and why? Let's look at that for a second. Let's read verses 4 and 5 once again. It says here, every man praying or prophesying having his head covered does something.

He dishonors his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head, for that is even all one as if she were shaven. So by not practicing the head covering, somebody is dishonored according to these verses.

Well, who is the one dishonored? And there are really only two possibilities. First possibility, let's look back up in verse 3 where Paul says, 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. So in this very passage, he speaks of somebody being a head.

Christ is the head of man and man is the head of woman. So we could say or interpret verses 3 5, verses 4 and 5 as referring to that individual who is in authority over us. In other words, if a man prays with his head covered, he dishonors Christ.

If a woman prays with her head uncovered, she dishonors her husband. Now that's one way we can look at it. 6 And that would be a very legitimate way to look at this passage.

You know, consider the case of David and Bathsheba. Look in 1 Samuel chapter 12 for just a second. Beginning in verse 14.

Now this is the account of David's committing adultery and the result being the birth of a child. 1 Samuel 12 verse 14. Have I got the right verse here? Or is it 2 Samuel? I think I wrote the wrong verse, but it's the verse I think you would be familiar with where it says 2 Samuel.

Okay. Sorry about that. This is where Nathan is speaking to David as following his sin and the child is sick.

And Nathan says to David, how be it because by this deed thou has given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die. Now what Nathan is saying to David is you committed this personal sin, but this personal sin is causing God's enemies to curse and blaspheme him. Your personal sin has brought reproach on that one who is in authority over you.

And that happens frequently, doesn't it? You know, it says in Scripture that a man cannot be an elder if his children are not under control. And those that are under my authority can have a very bad impact on me personally. They can bring dishonor to me.

And my wife can either be a source of glory and praise to me or she can be a source of dishonor to me. And likewise, I can be a source of praise and honor to Christ by my godly, reverent, zealous character for Christ. But I can also bring dishonor to him by my wicked character, my unrighteous deeds.

And so we can see that it's possible to bring dishonor to our head based upon how we live. And Paul says if you will not cover your head, speaking to a lady, that that brings dishonor on her head, namely her husband. For a man, if he covers his head, he dishonors his head, even Christ.

Now that's a legitimate way to understand the verse, and I believe it is a proper understanding. But there's another way, and that is, we can understand what Paul is saying here. You bring disgrace on yourself, on your own head.

You dishonor your own head. And that's true too. If I live a wicked life, if I do that which is disobedient to God, I disgrace myself, don't I? And you do too.

So we don't, I think, commentators when they get into questions like this, they like to choose one or the other. But I don't think that's necessary. It's not a question of either this is right or that is right.

It's a question of they're both right. Yes, if you, and he's saying if you don't cover your head, ladies, you dishonor your head, your husband, but you also dishonor your own head. You disgrace yourself.

And of course it applies to the men if they cover their heads. So, and the fact he brings it up indicates that to him it's a pretty serious matter. It's not a head covering issue is not properly understood.

We run the risk of doing that, of bringing dishonor to somebody. Okay. Well, why is this dishonorable? Why is it dishonorable to pray or to prophesy with an uncovered head? Let's go ahead and read a little bit here.

Every, in verse 5, but every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head. Why? Why is it dishonorable? It says, for that is even all one as if she were shaven. Well, Paul says it's dishonorable because it makes a woman the same as if she had her head shaved, her hair all shaved off her head.

Well, that's somewhat interesting. What is the significance of a shaved head? Well, as I studied this, there were several suggestions. Some commentators pointed out that in the ancient world a shaved head was a mark of being in slavery.

That was put forth as a possible understanding of the significance. Some commentators associated it with adultery and what was done to an adulteress, namely her hair was shaved off. However, there's not a, I mean, there's a lot of, that's pretty iffy.

One commentator indicated that it was the practice of Greek prostitutes to not cover their heads, didn't say shave their heads, but apparently what he uncovered was that if a woman was of ill repute that she didn't wear a head covering. And I guess those are all possibilities, but I can't say for sure that I found any conclusive evidence that that was the proper understanding. And I don't know that we really need those explanations because let's face it, a shaved head on a woman is just naturally repulsive.

Do we really need to be looking for explanations? Don't we just know that to be the case? I mean, how many of you have ever seen a woman with a shaved head? Okay, one has. I can tell you I have never seen one. I've seen pictures and the pictures I've seen were of punk rock stars.

Is that who you've seen? Somebody a punk rock star? Now, what is the characteristic of a punk rock rocker? They are in absolute total rebellion, right? I mean, that's the type of lady that shaves their head. And you might see somebody, if you have a relative or a friend that's in cancer treatment, I mean, you might see that, you know, one of the results of that type of treatment, chemotherapy, is you might lose your hair. But the people that are generally having that happen to them and buy wigs, I mean, they don't, normally want people to know that they've lost their hair.

Women don't want to be seen that way. And I want to prove my point and I forgot some of my implements, so you're just going to have to imagine with me something here. Those of you that know me, and I don't know that many of you know me that well, but, you know, I've been in the homeschool movement for a long time and I've read a lot of stuff and one of the big emphases in the homeschool movement is to get in business for yourself.

Come home. You know, get independent so you can be home with your children and be more of a father to your children. And that's been, that's gripped my heart and I have pursued that in many ways over the last several years and I've tempted a number of different businesses and I won't recount them to you because they've been numerous.

And so far, I mean, it's just been the will of God. I don't understand it, but every one of them has failed. I have not succeeded in coming home.

So tonight I decided to start a new business and see if I can turn that around. You're just going to have to imagine with me, because I didn't bring my implements, say I'm just destined to fail. I can't even get started right.

But I have here a chair and if there's any volunteers, I can go down real quick and get my tools. But if there's anybody here, be they married or unmarried, that would like to have a head shave, Tom's Beauty Parlor is now open for service. Not a man, a woman.

For a man, that's okay. It's only free for a woman. If there's any woman here that would like to have her head shaved, initial offering, it won't happen again, I'll do it free.

I've got shears downstairs, I've got a razor, I've got clippers, and we'll just go to it right here. Am I going to fail again? I mean, if you go up to Walmart and go into the place where they have a little hairstyle, you'll pay \$35 or \$40 to have this done and I'm going to do it for you for free. Nobody wants to have their head shaved.

Nobody. Well, why is that? It's because a shaved head on a woman is just as naturally repulsive today as it's ever been. It's just built into our character as human beings.

Now, bald men don't bother us, but we would consider a woman that was bald to be a spectacle. Still, in the 20th century, and let me make this point and I'll make it again, so much for the cultural argument, so much for the cultural argument. But Paul says that every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head, for that is even all one is that she is shaved.

And that is one of the reasons why it is dishonorable. Now, we might ask this question just to go a little bit deeper. Why is it or how is it that an uncovered head is as disgraceful as having no hair at all? I mean, that's kind of a leap.

If you're like me, you believe that the head covering is a piece of clothing. And the Bible seems to be saying that if I take this piece of clothing off my head, if I'm a woman, that it's no different than if I had no hair on at all on my head. Well, how does Paul get there? That seems to be somewhat of a leap.

Well, let's read. Let's jump ahead. Let's leap ahead here just a minute.

We'll get to verses 14 and 15 probably next week, but just as a preview, let's read then. Doth not even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given her for a covering. And that word in the Greek is peridolion, which is this outer garment, which I showed you a picture of.

The reason God gave long hair to a woman and why it is so attractive to us is because it is reflecting a natural reality. It is reflecting, as a woman wears it, in a natural sense, God's chain of command, because that hair is a natural peridolion. It's a natural outer garment.

And that's why God gave it, and I think that's why he put it in our heart as part of the law of our being to like long hair on women. So if a woman will not cover her head, Paul is saying that this is reflective of a rebellious heart. And if a woman has a rebellious heart, that rebellious heart disqualifies her from wearing even nature's head covering.

If there's rebellion in your heart as a way, Paul says you have no right to have a symbol of submission at all on your head. Okay? And so cut it off. If you're going to not wear the cloth version, you don't have any right to the natural version either.

Now does this mean that every Christian woman that isn't covering her head is in premeditated rebellion against God? Well, I don't think that's the case, and I don't want to leave you with that impression. I think there are several reasons why a truly godly woman might not have her head covered. One thing right off the bat is just a lack of teaching.

I mean, maybe she's never even heard about it before, never even considered it. Another possibility is, let's face it, we live in a world that doesn't like the subject of the head covering. The world doesn't like it, and most pulpits of the country, if they preach on it at all, they preach against it.

And so there's a tremendous amount of peer pressure exerted on anybody that would consider this doctrine seriously. And I know from personal experience that it's just very difficult to go against your culture. It's, I mean, it's a struggle.

And I could tell you some other humorous stories about some of my struggles and how one of them was overcome. There was one issue in particular that it took me a year before I was willing to yield and do what I knew, I'd known all year long I should do. So I'm very sympathetic to that problem, and it's a real struggle.

But people that are struggling with issues like that, they may very well have very tender hearts and want to do what's right, but there's just the weakness of the flesh we have to contend with, and that's not the same as just having a heart of rebellion against God. It's not the same. So I don't want any ladies here to think that I believe that.

In fact, it shouldn't be the case, but it's quite possible that there could be some women that don't cover their heads that are far more submissive and godly than those that do. I mean, I don't rule out that possibility. You can be a real Pharisee and wear the head covering.

It shouldn't be that way, but it can be. And obviously what's most important is what's in the heart, and wearing a cloth head covering or even wearing long hair is meaningless unless the heart is right before God. But even so, it seems like it is still important.

So why is it dishonorable? Well, we've seen, number one, that it is the same as if a woman has a shaved head. But let's look at another reason. In verses 7 through 9, Paul specifically ties the need for a woman to pray with a covered head to God's chain of command.

Let's look in verses 7 through 9. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, for as much as he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.

For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. Well, here you see that Paul specifically now ties the covering of the head to this chain of command. Just blatantly does it.

Notice that he refers back to truths that we've seen or taught in Genesis. Isn't that where we get this information? First off, that the man wasn't created for the woman, but the woman for the man, that comes right out of Genesis and other truths. So Paul is laying the foundation for the head covering in the New Testament right back in Genesis.

Again, another plug for the whole Bible approach to this issue. Paul uses the whole Bible, and I believe that's the proper way we should deal with the issue. That's why I started in Genesis back in our first

lesson.

But he ties it into the chain of command. Well, let's look at these verses. There are a couple of things that we probably need to consider.

Paul says that man is made in the image and glory of God. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head for as much as he is in the image and glory of God. Now what does that mean? Well, let me quote to you a commentator that I've really come to appreciate.

His name is Lenski. He many times has some really good observations. He says this, when we speak of God's glory, we mean the shining forth of the radiance of his attributes.

Paul has in mind the reflection of God's attributes in his highest visible creature. Being indeed God's image, man is also God's glory. He's a mirror that reflects some of God's glorious attributes.

Well, how is that the case? Well, God is sovereign. He rules and reigns over everything. Well, under Christ, man exercises sovereignty.

He rules in his home. He rules in society. He rules in the church.

And as men exercise that sovereignty, they are actually giving to all reality a picture of who God is. Because as we see man exercising authority, he is reflecting God who himself is an authority and who exercises authority. So as man exercises authority, he's mirroring what God does as God and exercising his authority.

So men are in the image of God. But it says further that woman is the glory of man. What does that mean? Again, John MacArthur, I like what he said.

He said this, the woman is vice regent who rules in the stead of man or who carries out man's will. Just as man is God's vice regent who rules in his stead or carries out his will. The point is that man shows how magnificent a creature God can create from himself, while a woman shows how magnificent a creature God can create from man.

So it works. We go down a step. Woman is the glory of man.

How does she function as his glory? In the same way that man functions as the glory of God. As woman functions in the home under her husband's authority, ruling the house, caring for the needs of her husband, submitting to him, following his directions, promoting his interests, she glorifies her husband. She exalts her husband.

And in a sense, as she exercises his authority, she's a reflection of him. Just like as man exercises authority under Christ, he is a reflection of Christ. So man, as he functions under Christ, is an image of God.

Woman, as she functions properly under her husband's authority, is the image and glory of the man. Does that make sense? I think it's pretty neat. But you know, it's not really a teaching that 20th century people want to hear.

Today, the last thing most women want to hear is that she was made to be a helper for her husband. She was made to be a helper in helping him chart the course and destiny of his life. I don't know if I told you

this, but there's a lady that I work with, and I've had occasion to counsel her.

She's thinking about getting married, but she's a woman's liver. And she very much believes that a marriage is a mutual thing, and that she's not going to submit to her husband. They're going to agree together.

She's going to work. He's going to work. And this lady would tell you that, of course, she was a Christian.

She's Catholic. But that mentality is what is so common. I mean, she's not an exception.

That's the general, that's the general mentality. And I, you know, I tried to share with her the concepts of Paul, and it's like, oh yes, Paul. So she went to a university, a Jesuit university, and took women's studies and the Bible, and she knows all about Paul.

She doesn't want to have anything to do with Paul. But if I shared with her, you know, it says that the husband is to lead in the home, and she wouldn't have anything to do with that. Now that's somewhat extreme.

Not everybody's, you know, a feminist as she is. But you know, that same mentality is still very prevalent even among Christians, even among fundamentalist Christians. I mean, what is the ideal family even for a fundamentalist Christian? Well, it's two income, two children.

I mean, you walk into most fundamentalist churches with seven children, and you'll get some eyebrows raised. I mean, that isn't, that isn't the norm. And it's just accepted that the ideal family is a family in which both parents work.

And so the concept that a woman is actually there to further the interest of her husband, to nurture and raise children, it's kind of fading into the sunset in Christianity. And yet I think that is what Paul is teaching here. That a woman is to be the glory of her husband.

She's not to be out establishing her own glory. She's to be the glory of her husband. She's to be promoting his interests, his well-being, helping him to accomplish whatever God gave to him to accomplish.

And 20th century Americans and women, by and large, don't want to hear that. And that's why I think the head covering is such an offense to so many, even among professing fundamentalist Christians. Because that's what the heart of this passage is getting at is not what's in the heart of the fundamentalist Christian.

And if you don't want the principles, it's going to be hard for you to receive the symbol of the principles. I mean, that just makes sense to me. I hope it does to you.

Well, this is a point where I could wax eloquent and preach for many, many minutes, but I'll, I will leave it with that and for your consideration. But for these reasons, because man is created in the image and glory of God, and woman is the glory of man, for these reasons, because of this chain of command, a man should not cover his head, but a woman should. That's the argument.

It may be hard to understand and even harder to under, to accept, but that is the argument. Okay, let's go on to our third question. What in the world do angels have to do with this? Paul brings them up, I believe it's at the end of verse 10, where he says, for this calls out the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

Now, he hasn't mentioned angels before that mention, and he doesn't mention them again, but here they are. And because there's so little information given us, there's a lot of debate as to what the significance is. Well, let's take a look at it.

First off, let's consider the significance of the phrase, for this cause a woman ought to have power on her head. Now, what does that mean? It's not only the concept of angels that gives commentators problems, but just that statement, a woman needs to have power on her head, that causes a lot of problems as well. And I'll tell you how it's usually understood or has been traditionally understood.

First off, the word translated power is the Greek word *exousia*, and it can either be rendered power or authority. Either one of those is an acceptable translation of the word. But what does it mean to say a woman needs to have power on her head? Well, let me introduce you to a word that I'm sure you've never heard in your life, but it's an important word for our subject here today.

It's the word metonym. Now, let's go back to your senior level English course and try and remember, you young people should know what a metonym is, but it's a figure of speech. It's like a simile or a metaphor, like you might say, she looked like a rose.

You know, that's a figure of speech. Well, a metonym is another type of figure of speech. And as we have it defined here, a metonym is a literary device which uses the name of one thing for that of another associated with or suggested by it.

Let me give you an illustration. We might say this, the White House decided to send troops to Bosnia. Now, if I was to say that, or a news commentator was to say that, you'd know what he meant.

But can a White House do anything? I mean, can a White House send troops? Can houses think? No. But we know if somebody, if a newscaster were to say the White House did this or the White House did that, we know that he was referring to the seat of authority vested in the presidency and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And we associate the White House with those people.

And so we're using that term in place of the people themselves. That's what we see, a literary device which uses the name of one thing for that of another associated with or suggested by it. Now, in that case, we substitute a symbol, don't we? The White House is a symbol.

And we're using the symbol in place of the reality, the real people that are doing it. Are you following me? Now, normally when we use a metonym, that's what we do. Another example might be this.

He took up the sword. Now, what would, you'd know what I meant if I said he took up the sword, right? I'd be meaning that a person went to war. And the sword is a symbol for going to war.

So we, I mean, we do this all the time, but we never knew it was metonym that we were doing. We were creating metonyms. But usually we replace a reality, namely war with a sword, reality with the symbol for the reality, or the White House for the people.

But now there is a case where it's just kind of the opposite, where instead of substituting a symbol for the reality, we do the exact opposite. We put the reality for the symbol. Now, that's not as common, but it does happen.

And in fact, a commentator named Godet, he gave an illustration of this from ancient literature. He said this, Diodorus describing the statue of the mother of the Egyptian king, Osemen Dias, says that she has three kingships on her head. Now, how can you have three kingships on your head? You can't.

What she's referring to here is he's wearing a crown and that crown had three points. And those points representing how many kingdoms he ruled over. They're called diadems.

And so what the fellow was saying when he said he had three kingships on her head, he means evidently three diadems, symbols of three kingships. So in that instance, we have a person substituting the reality, namely the kingships, for the symbol, the diadem. So we've gone the other direction.

And that seems to be what's happening here in 1 Corinthians chapter 11. And because of that, in some versions, this passage will be translated, for this cause ought the woman to have a symbol of authority on her head because of the angels. You follow what's happening here? He only says authority, but most commentators believe he's using a metonym and what he really means is a symbol of authority, which is the head covering, the symbol.

Okay, what is the significance of because of the angels? Let's consider that for a second. First, let me make sure I don't have my notes out of a line here. Well, he says the woman needs to have this symbol of authority, or this authority as he actually says it, because of the angels.

Why? That has to cross your mind, it certainly has crossed mine. Well, let's consider just two of the angels. Well, I think we all, I'm going to try to prove this with their spirits.

They're associated with the throne of God. They're very intelligent, very powerful. In Job, we learned that they were present at creation.

You might look with me at Acts chapter 7, beginning in verse 51. You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you do always resist the Holy Ghost as your fathers did. So do you also.

Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them, which showed before the coming of the just one, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. And so, I'll stop there, but you see that when God gave the law to Moses at Sinai, it was done through the angels. So they were present and very much involved in what? Giving to man God's laws of obedience.

They were there, and they were involved in telling us as humans how we were to live so as we could please God and man. So they were there at the giving of the law. Look in Luke 15, verse 10.

Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repented. So we see that angels, they're watching man, and they are excited when they see a sinner repenting. That excites them, that makes them happy.

But they're there watching. They see these things. They're not unconcerned.

They're not up in heaven doing other things or tied up with, I don't know what we could say, trivial things. They're actually watching man, and they're concerned with what's going on on the earth involving you and me. Look in Matthew 18, verse 10.

Take ye that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. I know we've heard of the phrase guardian angel before. Hey, there seems to be truth to that.

That there are angels, there are ministering spirits that watch over little children. 1 Corinthians 4, verse 9. For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last as it were appointed to death, for we are made a spectacle unto the world and to angels and to men. So here we have again, it's like we need to realize that there could be angels here tonight in this room.

And Paul seemed to feel like the things that I'm doing, I'm not only doing before men, but I've got a heavenly audience that's watching my activities. So if I was to summarize this, and I could look at more scriptures, that we see that angels are the guardians and the observers of the created order, and they are there to help us and to aid us. Now can you see how submission would be a very important truth to the unfallen angels? You see how concerned, I mean they were there at the giving of the law.

They were concerned that we as human beings would obey God. Why? They're the angels that resisted the rebellion of Satan. They're the angels that said, no, we will serve God, we won't follow you, Satan, and your rebellion.

They stood the test, and they remain in subjection to God. So you can see that for them, they would be very concerned with our heart, and our attitude, and our actions in regards to the Heavenly Father. Submission would be a very important truth to the unfallen angels, because they decided not to rebel with Satan.

And it would appear that being unsubmitive, as reflected in not wearing a head covering, would hinder their ministry to the saints. That's what I see in this. Why should a woman wear the head covering? Well, it's because of the angels.

Because the head covering is that symbol of submission. And for angels to be turned loose to minister on our behalf, what must we have? We must have that submissive heart. And so when an angel looks down and sees an uncovered head, I believe that it grieves that angel.

And I believe that that angel, though perhaps would like to help us in our need, is perhaps, from a human perspective, hindered in his desires. And I can say that reverently, because we don't have our heads covered. As ladies.

Because of the angels, you should cover your head. What about the evil angels? Look with me for a second at 1 Peter chapter 5, beginning in verse 8. Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil has a roaring lion. Walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

Now that tells you the characteristic of the evil angels, doesn't it? Tells you that they are our adversaries. It's their heart to tear us apart as a roaring lion, to devour us if they can. Now look in John chapter 14.

14 verse 30. Now this is our Lord speaking. He says, Hereafter I will not talk much with you, for the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me.

Now what Jesus is saying is that there's no sin in me that gives the devil something he can use as a lever over me. And I think the fact is that the sin in our lives that's undealt with and unconfessed and put away, and there are evil spirits around, they have a claim on you in some sense. They have an end to you.

They can torment you. They can attack you. Because they have something in you.

Jesus could say, Satan has nothing in me. He can't, he has no right, no grounds to challenge me or to do anything to me because of sin in my life. But if there is sin in your life or in my life, an evil spirit can, he has something in you and he has an inroad into your life that he can lay hold of and use it to torment and make you miserable and even to destroy you as a roaring lion.

So what's the significance of the head covering? Well I think it protects you from the evil angel. Because if you have that head covering on and it really is a reflection of a submissive heart in your being, then those evil angels have nothing in you. And you have protection.

You have power with the evil angels to send them on their way. And Paul says you need that head cover because of the angels. You need it because of the good angels to set them free to minister to you.

And you need it to protect you from the bad angels. Because when they see that symbol of submission, they hate it. And if that symbol of submission is really what's in your heart and that's why you're wearing it and both are present, there's tremendous protection granted to you in terms of what evil angels can do in your life to torment and afflict you.

So we need the head covering because of the angels. Now we may find that hard to understand and accept, but that's what Paul says. And the reason I was looking at my notes is because there was something else I wanted to share with you, and I might have left it down there.

I think I've left the page out, and I'm going to try and do it from memory. So we'll do our best here. But it says a woman needs to have authority.

I don't think we addressed this, but whose authority? She needs to have authority on her head. But whose authority does she need to have? There's two possible answers to that. And the one that most people come up with and suggest is referring to a symbol of her husband's authority.

She needs to have authority over her head. She needs to be under a symbol of that authority, namely her husband's. But there's also another possibility, and that is she needs to have her own authority.

She needs to have authority or power over her head. And I want to look at that second possibility, even though I believe the first is the primary understanding. That in wearing that head covering, that symbol of authority, you're saying, I'm in subjection to my husband.

That protects you from the evil angels, and at the same time gives the good angels the opportunity to minister to you. But I also believe that second possibility is something we need to think about. That a woman needs her own authority.

And I believe the head covering even gives her that. Now how can that be? Well, since I'm missing my page, I don't have the scripture reference. But you all probably remember the account of the centurion who came to Jesus.

And he wanted Jesus to do something for him. He healed his son, I believe it was. But the son wasn't there.

And the centurion said, you don't have to come to my house, because I'm a man under authority, and I say to one, do this and do that, and he does it. And Jesus commended that centurion and said, I've not seen

such great faith even in Israel. And what was it about the centurion? The centurion recognized that as a centurion, because he was under the authority of Rome, he had authority to deal with his men and to tell them to do things.

So his authority was based on what? The fact that he was under authority himself. Right? Isn't that the point? And that's why I think perhaps we can understand this statement. A woman needs to have power on her head.

And there's really no contradiction between the first understanding that a woman should have a symbol of her husband's authority on her head, and the second, which is she has her own power if we understand that where does a woman get her authority? From being under subjection to her husband. And that gives her authority. That gives her power, if she's in that right, proper relationship to the authorities that God has placed over her.

She rules in her home under her husband. And you can take a case such as Esther in scripture, who because of her relationship to the king, was able to take his seal and save her people. She acted in her proper role as queen under her husband, but that place of subjection to her husband gave her authority.

And so it is when a woman is under the authority of her husband, or the case of an unmarried woman, under the authority of her father, and she's functioning there in submission, joyfully, that she does have authority. And she can tell the evil angels to hit the road. She can say, leave me alone.

And they have to listen, and they have to flee. But now if she's in rebellion, and she's not under authority, and she's acting kind of out on her own like perhaps a feminist who wants to be her own lady and doesn't want to be under God's chain of command, well she's open season for the devils who are seeking to devour her. So I think both things are true, that a woman needs to be under authority, as represented by the symbol of authority, but she gets authority.

She needs that authority that that symbol gives her as well, and it gives her power with the angels and with men. Again, I'm out of order, and I don't know if I'm totally confusing you. Does that make sense or not? And we might ask this one question finally.

Why didn't Paul say, symbol of authority, if that's what he meant? Why didn't Paul say in verse 10, 1 Corinthians chapter 11, for this cause ought a woman to have a symbol of authority on her head? Or why didn't he say for this cause ought a woman to have a head covering on her head because of the angels? Why did he use what we've just seen? Described as a metonym. Well I think there's a good reason why he did it. I think he did it that way because he really wanted to emphasize the importance of the head covering.

What better way to do it? He wants us to understand that power is closely relating, related to the wearing of the head covering. Ladies, if you would have power with the evil angels, if you have power with God and power with men, you need to be covered. And I think the reason Paul did it that way is to make that a stark reality.

He wants us to understand just how closely related scripturally and in the mind of God the head covering is with having authority and power as a woman. And as being under authority. While it is true, and I'll admit it, that what is most important with God is what's on the inside.

There's no question that that is true. And as I just said, it could be distinctly possible for a woman to wear a head covering and be in total rebellion. And I believe if that's the case, the head covering will do you no good in regards to the good or the evil angels.

I mean, if you're in rebellion against God, whether you're covered or not, it's irrelevant. God is most concerned with what's in our heart. But still, this passage, I believe, really brings out the fact that even though that is true, God does expect our inner heart attitude to be reflected in external ways.

And that even includes the way that we dress. For this cause, a woman should have power on her head because of the angels. Any questions? Okay.

Well, I'm finished for today. Next week, we want to consider the concept of mutual dependency that exists between men and women. That comes up right after this section that we've just considered.

And also, we want to consider the teaching of nature and look more in depth at this whole concept of a woman's hair being a parable on or a covering. So that'll be what we'll be occupied with next week. Well, let's pray.

Father, we thank you for this time. Once again, Lord, we ask that you would just give us your mind on these issues. Keep us from error.

Keep us from extremism. Give us a heart, Lord, to do whatever it is you would have us to do. Again, we thank you for the opportunity to meet together.

Thank you for these brothers and sisters that are here. It's been a long series, and they've stayed with it. And Lord, that's an encouragement to me to know that they're brothers and sisters that really want to do what you would have them to do.

Just lead us, Lord, as your people into all truth. Do keep us from error. And just may your blessings rest upon us.

Lord, now as we end this evening, just bless our time of fellowship afterwards and bless the food that's been prepared to the nourishment of our bodies. For we'd ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

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